



The state of the sector

**Shared Lives
care in Wales
2022-23**



About Shared Lives

In Shared Lives, a young person or adult who needs support is matched with a carefully approved Shared Lives carer by their local Shared Lives scheme. Together, they share family and community life. Over half of the people using Shared Lives move in with their chosen Shared Lives carer to live as part of their household; and the remaining people visit for day support or overnight breaks. People get safe, personal care and support, in a place which feels like home. They make friends and become more active. Shared Lives carers care for people with a range of support needs, including learning disabilities, ASD, mental health, physical impairment, dementia, and older age. Supported by 145 Shared Lives schemes, there are approximately 10,000 carers who are supporting nearly 10,000 people across the UK. In Wales, 7 schemes supported 902 people last year.

About Shared Lives Plus

Shared Lives Plus is the membership charity for Shared Lives carers, schemes and Homeshare organisations. Our vision is a kinder, stronger society built on sharing our lives and our homes. We help build communities where everyone lives a full life, regardless of the support they need. We do this by turning Shared Lives care and Homeshare into thriving, mainstream options, with the right structures in place to support and guide people who want to share their lives and homes. This year we supported 145 schemes, 6,222 Shared Lives carer members and 22 Homeshare organisations UK-wide, meaning we have a unique voice which we use to support local Shared Lives and Homeshare organisations and Shared Lives carers through policy, guidance, advice, and legal support. We support local organisations to establish new Shared Lives and Homeshare organisations and improve existing ones.



Foreword

Jo Williams,
Gwent Adult Strategic Partnership Chair,
Regional Partnership Board

The Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) have supported and commissioned Shared Lives for several years, utilising Welsh Government's Integrated Care Funding and more recently the Regional Integration Funding. We have established a service for individuals experiencing mental health crisis as well as providing preventative and hospital discharge arrangements. These approaches have been embedded across Gwent and are implementing evidence-based outcomes with a focus on promoting wellbeing, choice and independence.

The Shared Lives scheme has adapted and developed to ensure it continues to meet the needs of people living in Gwent, offering the flexibility of long term respite, and sessional arrangements. Shared Lives is able to adapt to each person's needs and desired personal outcomes, whilst also being cost effective and locally delivered.

In recent years the RPB have developed a new Shared Lives support service supporting people living with dementia. Shared Lives offers support to individuals with dementia in a Shared Lives carer's home. The scheme also offers daytime support and overnight respite stays, helping provide flexible respite options across the

region, whilst also providing a supportive environment for individuals transitioning home from hospital. The service aligns with the Welsh Government's All Wales Dementia Standards.

We are focussed on enabling people to remain at home with their families for longer. Shared Lives has developed as an alternative to residential care and inpatient admission, ultimately preventing admission for many and freeing up health beds. This has led to a greater understanding of Shared Lives with Health and Social Care colleagues, resulting in increased referrals, which is a good outcome for individuals and families. Positive feedback and improved wellbeing indicate Shared Lives' success, thanks to the strong collaborative leadership within the RPB.

During these challenging times for health and social care, with budgetary constraints and workforce pressures, Shared Lives offers a tangible solution by minimising the escalation of critical need and enabling people to live the life they choose. Shared Lives is totally aligned with the prevention and early intervention Welsh Government agenda, keeping people safe and well locally.

Introduction

With the current economic challenges, commissioners in Wales are realising the benefits of focussing on Shared Lives to provide rights based, person-centred care that delivers positive wellbeing outcomes for people with a support need. It remains a highly cost-effective form of adult social care.

Where Regional Partnership Boards were previously able to access the Welsh Government's ICF and Transformation Fund to grow and develop new Shared Lives services, we are now seeing how the Regional Integration Fund can support innovation in the model.

The versatility of the model has been showcased in recent years, not least by the World Health Organisation's inclusion of South East Wales's Mental Health Crisis Service as part of their Guidance on Community Mental Health Services, promoting person centred and rights based approaches.

All 22 Local Authority areas are covered by Shared Lives services, so the foundation for upscaling already exists. With social care reform and the development of a National Care Service high on the agenda in Wales, there's no better time for budget holders to be considering Shared Lives as a solution that enables people choice and control to live their best life.

Our thanks

We would like to thank all of the member schemes for their participation in the compiling of this report, and the Shared Lives carers and individuals who took part in interviews and supported the Shared Lives Plus Development team in Wales throughout the year.



Key messages

- There were 902 people supported by Shared Lives in Wales from April 2022 – March 2023. They were supported by 852 Shared Lives carers, registered with seven different Shared Lives schemes.
- Shared Lives offers a wide range of support in Wales. 52% of arrangements in the nation were Live-In, 40% were Short Breaks, and 27% were Day Support. There has been an upwards trend in demand for short term forms of care.
- Shared Lives strongly aligns with Welsh Government policy. Firstly, Shared Lives encapsulates all the fundamental principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act: voice and control, early intervention, well-being, and co-production. Secondly, Shared Lives promotes community cohesion which is highlighted in Wales's Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.
- Shared Lives remains a highly cost-effective model. An independent review found that Shared Lives resulted in an average saving of between £8,000 and £30,000 a year, depending on the person's support needs and local alternative services.
- Shared Lives is offering innovative approaches to care in Wales, such as South East Wales's Mental Health Crisis Service, which has supported over 200 people since it started.



South East Wales mental health service

David, a father of two, began to feel overwhelmed with the responsibility of bringing up his young family after the death of his wife. He found himself struggling to cope and was admitted to the mental health ward at the local hospital.

After a short period of time David began to make a steady recovery. On assessment, it was felt that he would benefit from having time and space to recover away from the busy ward environment. A short-term stay in a Shared Lives carer's home with tailored support was agreed.

David was carefully matched with a Shared Lives carer of similar age and who shared many common interests. His goals were to build confidence and self-esteem whilst maintaining contact with his parents and children during his recovery, and ultimately, returning home.

During his time with his Shared Lives carer, David was encouraged and supported to return to his flat, undertaking tasks that would support his recovery and reduce his anxiety. He learnt to cook nutritious meals and deal with domestic tasks as well as invest time to support his own wellbeing. He also secured new temporary employment and began to feel more confident to return to his family and be a father once more. Alongside Shared Lives he continued to receive support from the Home Treatment Team.

Shared Lives carers can provide reassurance and tailored support to those recovering from a mental health crisis.

People benefit from the ongoing, personal, and consistent support in a Shared Lives arrangement which takes place in a family home environment. There is space for care and companionship, but also room for privacy and quieter times should the individual need it.

David, supported by the South East Wales Mental Health Service

"We still keep in touch. I'm very grateful for Carwyn's support. I've gained promotion in my new job and been made permanent. I'm enjoying being a proper Dad to my children. Shared Lives is life changing"



Carwyn, Shared Lives carer

"I met David's family during that week. I saw such a huge improvement from the first day to the time that David moved back to his own home. I'm proud to say I really enjoy what I do"



Homeshare in Wales

There are now two Homeshare organisations in Wales, one in Gwynedd and one in Swansea. Homeshare brings people together, householders and homesharers. Householders are normally an older person who has a spare room and could do with some companionship and help around the house. They are matched with a homesharer, typically a younger person who has a housing need and is happy to provide up to ten hours of practical support to the householder each week. To find out more about Homeshare, please visit <https://homeshareuk.org/>

We can support you

Shared Lives Plus has more than 35 years of experience supporting local authorities and schemes to grow to their potential. We can work with you to deliver:

Audience insight and needs analysis

Business case development

Implementation planning

Support with commissioning strategies and plans

Shared Lives diversification

Working in Co-production

Developing impactful recruitment strategies

Communications and marketing

Improving and increasing referral

Benefits of Shared Lives

If you would like support to grow or develop a Shared Lives scheme please contact:

Suzi Clark, Head of Strategic Advice, 07795 461 663, suzi.clark@sharedlivesplus.org.uk

Or

Kathryn Morgan, Development Manager, Cymru Wales,

07867 452158, kathryn@sharedlivesplus.org.uk

To find out more and see the schemes near you, visit

<https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/find-your-local-scheme/>



Our lives get better when they're shared

To find out what Shared Lives
can do for you, please contact us:

 www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk

 info@sharedlivesplus.org.uk



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