



Care leavers and young people transitioning to Shared Lives

Business case



2025/2026

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Foreword



Shared Lives is what the future of good social care looks like, based on a foundation of relationships and belonging, the outcomes for young people are striking. This report provides a compelling case for investment, to amplify and grow this innovative model both locally and nationally for young people over 16, whether in or leaving care.

Shared Lives is a force for good, delivering life-changing outcomes through a model of relationship-based accommodation and support. Not only is it the **highest quality of any type of care** provisions (96% of schemes are rated good or outstanding with CQC), but it is also **hugely cost effective**.

Whilst this report evidences the strategic and financial benefits, they are absolutely underpinned by every young person whose life has been changed by Shared Lives. Gracie shares,

“There was a time in my life when I felt completely alone. At 18, I became homeless. I was scared, quiet, and so unsure of my place in the world. I didn’t know how to function in a world that wasn't designed for me, and then Shared Lives came into my life.

“At first, I declined the offer. I was afraid to trust again, to rely on a complete stranger to care for me, when even my own parents failed to do so. However, now it has been 4 years that I've lived in my home, and I have always felt so welcomed, always supported. They have given me the space and time to grow. Because of the relationships, I no longer dwell on my past, but I look forward to the future because they are a part of it. I know who I am now, and I know that I am no longer a burden.”

Over 80% of children in residential care have a special educational need or disability, and over 50% of the children in care population. Their outcomes are not good enough, with 33% experiencing homelessness in the first 2 years after leaving care, and 39% of 19–21-year-olds not in education, employment or training. **Investing in Shared Lives can change this.** A stable home, and a trusting, supportive relationship makes all the difference, and that is why the outcomes for care leavers in Shared Lives arrangements are bucking the trend.

We encourage you to read this report alongside hearing from young people in this [short video](#) and then look at how you can invest, grow and create a Shared Lives revolution.

Gracie, young person in Shared Lives, & Rachel, Strategic Advisor for young people and transitions.



Introduction

What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is a CQC regulated form of social care, which involves a person, who needs support, living with or regularly visiting an approved Shared Lives carer, who is linked to a local Shared Lives Scheme. Shared Lives is a relational model of support, where the supported person has choice, control and support to live their best lives, in a loving family environment.

It was historically set up 50 years ago to support adults with a learning disability, however since the Department for Education (DfE) Innovation Funded project in 2017 it has innovated to support young people leaving care. This model has accelerated over the last 18 months following the birth of the care leavers programme, working with 37 Shared Lives schemes and local authorities nationally to raise awareness and grow Shared Lives to support young people from the age of 16, particularly those with a learning disability, mental ill health, autism and neurodiverse conditions.

This report provides the evidence base behind **why** and **how Shared Lives** can grow to deliver high quality support and housing in a cost efficient and person-centred way for **young people leaving care**.

Abbreviations

CQC	Care Quality Commission
SLC	Shared Lives carer
EET	Education, Employment, Training
SALT	Short- and Long-Term Dataset
SEN	Special Educational Needs
CLA	Children looked after
CINO	Children in need (exc. children on a child protection plan and children looked after)
PANSI	Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information



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“The thing that has helped me the most is knowing that I have people I can rely on and people that I can trust. That’s the most important thing that has changed my life with **Shared Lives.**”

Gracie, Shared Lives Ambassador





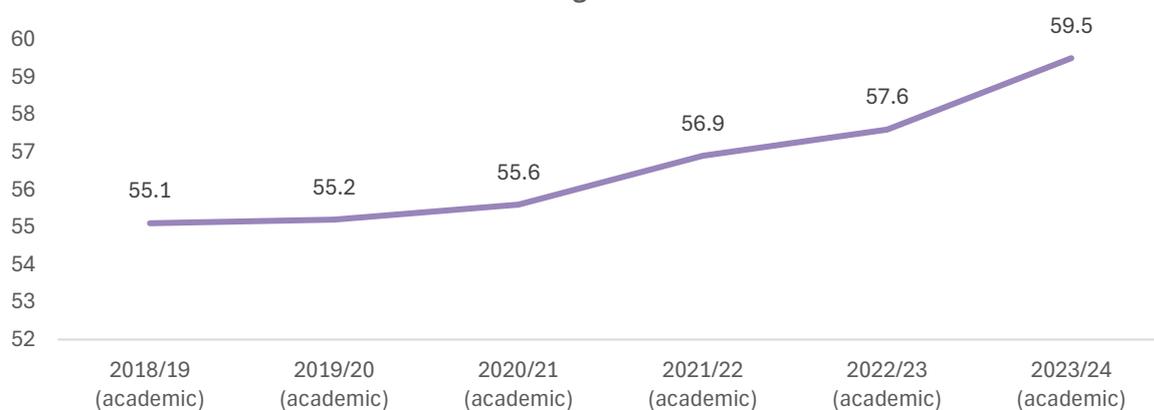
Strategic context

Supporting young people leaving care is currently a **growing group nationally** across Shared Lives, with many schemes across the UK either **developing** pathways from Children's Services or **extending** their existing support in place through overall growth and redevelopment of their service. **Shared Lives can provide various opportunities** for young people as they leave care, whether as a transition from foster care, with or without their foster carer, or from a children's home, supported accommodation or a residential school. It can also be both a long-term option, as an alternative to residential care or supported living, or a stepping stone to living more independently.

There is a growing demand for social care provision, which has been impacted by factors such as a **general increase in children in care and care leavers**, as well as a growing need for there to be a range **alternative provision options** other than children's homes. This can be due to individual support needs, or to develop more options to ensure appropriate housing is provided (for example, for young people who may not be ready or suitable for independent living). Data highlights a **steady increase of looked after children with special educational needs** in England between 2018 and 2024¹ (see graph below). As well as this, the number of young people in England who aged out of the care system when turning 18 **increased by 4%** between 2020 and 2023². Demand has continued to increase, and alongside this includes **rising costs for provision**.

Percentage of looked after children with special educational needs in England

Figure 1.



¹ [Percentage of looked after children with Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) \(from 2018/19 \(academic\) to 2023/24 \(academic\)\) for England](#)

² [Home for good: National statistics for fostering and adoption](#)



Helping meet local demand for provision can help to meet the needs of care leavers. **Shared Lives** can help to provide safe and comfortable accommodation, alongside ongoing support in a trusting relationship. This support is based on being **person-centred** (individualised), as well as **strengths-based** and **professional**. Combined, this can help to **build independent living skills** and provide opportunity to either access or remain in **education, employment or training**. These attributes have been highlighted throughout this report and can often provide financial benefit either directly or at a preventative level, to the young person and local government.

Staying Close

Supporting young people into independence

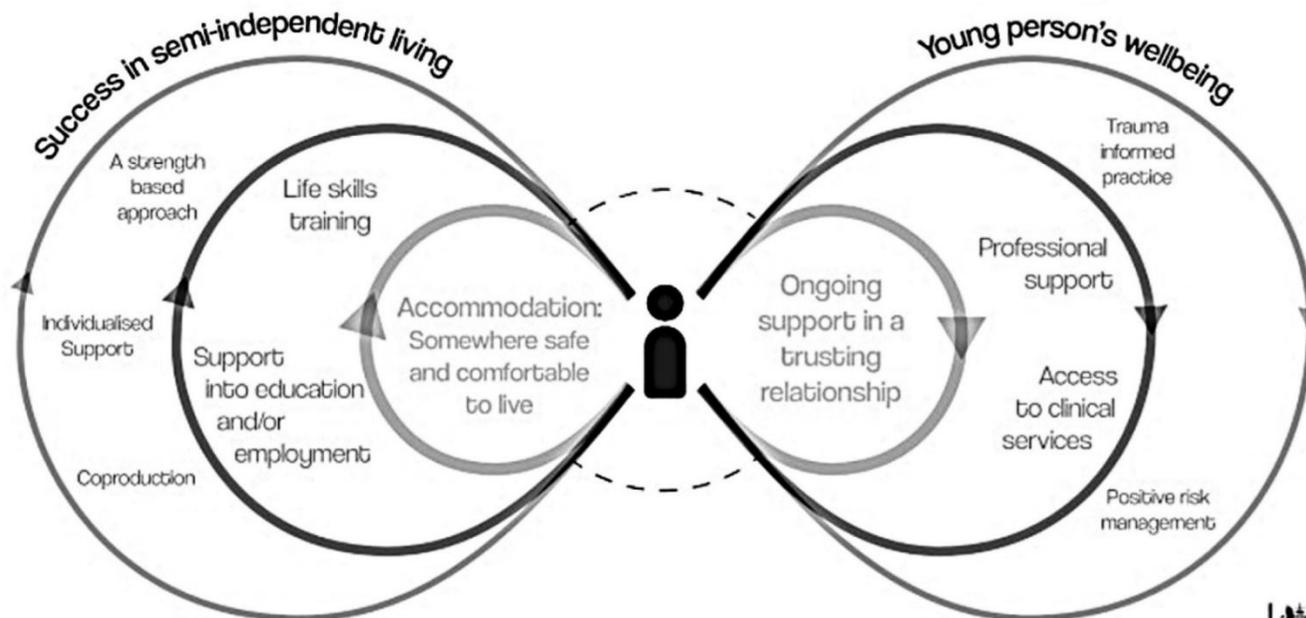


Figure 2: Staying Close model - DfE



Case for change

Provision suitability



The case for Shared Lives growing in this area nationally can be recognised through shared experiences of care leavers, as well as datasets which acknowledge where/how services are not providing either suitable support, or enough support to meet demand. For example, the 'Demand and Capacity of Homes for Children in Care' report previously highlighted how "studies with authorities shows that in **up to 63% of situations where semi-independent living is being used** to house young people, **it is not the best home for their needs**".³ Whilst Shared Lives similarly will not always be suitable for a young person (dependent on their individual needs), creating more provision options will **help to reduce the opportunity for unsuitable support**.

The Government review on supported accommodation highlighted how "**care-leavers' experiences of leaving care are often compared to a cliff-edge**"⁴, and this could be further impacted by either moving on too early from their foster carers (who could potentially transition to Shared Lives) or moving into independent accommodation. This can also impact the young person's mental health needs. The review also highlights **the issue of social isolation which can be common in supported accommodation**⁵, which similarly can be impacted by these same issues of moving on too early, or being moved into a new area away from loved one(s) or their community. Shared Lives can also be designed to support as a 'steppingstone' in a family-based environment – offering an opportunity to build independent living skills prior to moving into other more independent living options.

Staying within the area

Another factor to consider is how further increase of service provision options will provide more opportunity for a young person to stay within the area they are currently based, **reducing the need to move people out of Borough** and away from the area they have been living in. The 'Ready or Not' Government report highlighted how **many care leavers were worried about the area or people where they lived**.



³ [Demand and Capacity of Homes for Children in Care](#)

⁴ [A rapid review of evidence on supported accommodation](#)

⁵ [A rapid review of evidence on supported accommodation](#)



Sometimes the area was completely unfamiliar to them or was seen as a crime and exploitation hot spot. **Many care leavers also felt unsafe living on their own**⁶."

According to DfE data from 2024, **49% of children in children's homes had been placed more than 20 miles away** from their original family home⁷. The increase in demand for residential care is impacting opportunity to stay within the area. Shared Lives, like foster care, could support in creating more access to homes geographically within the local authority boundaries where the person lives, as well as create more provision for living with others, in a safe, family environment. Being moved out of the area can also impact access to education, and therefore attendance, if this is prior to finishing any courses⁸ and can also **impact their access to any services** they are being provided.

Learning skills and support with emotional wellbeing

Not having essential skills to support with feeling ready for leaving care was another factor highlighted by some young people when sharing their own experiences as a care leaver⁹. This included skills such as managing finances, cooking, shopping, and generally managing their household. As well as this, "issues relating to money¹⁰" was the **most common reason for young people not**



feeling safe; this could contribute to outcomes such as ending up in debt from lack of understanding around bills/payments. Some young people may have previously received support in learning skills through foster carers or support workers, however having further provision such as Shared Lives, which can directly help to build more independent living skills, can help to reduce cases such as this, with more options available for those who may not feel ready to live independently after leaving care.

Alternative provision demand

The Government Supported Housing review in 2023 highlighted how there is a large unmet demand for supported housing and was highest for "people with mental health problems, single



⁶ ['Ready or not': care leavers' views of preparing to leave care](#)

⁷ [Managing children's residential care](#)

⁸ [From care to where? Care leavers' access to accommodation](#)

⁹ ['Ready or not': care leavers' views of preparing to leave care](#)

¹⁰ ['Ready or not': care leavers' views of preparing to leave care](#)



homelessness, people with a learning disability and autistic people, and for **young people leaving care**¹¹. This is alongside a recognised chronic lack of suitable housing provision for care leavers." Similarly, it was highlighted that semi-independent living numbers previously increased by 21.3% between 2019 and 2022¹², demonstrating the demand for this provision type. Building new provision or developments locally can be a barrier due to cost and local infrastructure, and local authorities/providers commented in the review that they "felt a shift was needed to develop more flexible models of housing support."¹³

Where provision may not be able to meet demand, or in cases where young people may want/need more 1-1 support in a home environment, Shared Lives could grow and develop to support with this. As shown in the cost analysis section of this report, **Shared Lives has often shown to provide a cost benefit to local authorities**, so where young people may be more appropriate for Shared Lives, the service could help in creating a cost avoidance when not placed in supported living arrangements.

The use of alternative provision such as children's homes is much lower in comparison to supported accommodation, however, there remains a steady increase in places year-on-year since 2020 – there has been roughly a **10% increase in the number of children in residential care from March 2020 to March 2024**¹⁴. Areas such as London and the East of England have more recently had the largest increases¹⁵. At the end of March 2024, there was a total 12,870 places in children's homes – 22% of these were in the North West¹⁶. This increase in usage of children's residential homes has also partnered with a rise in costs over the past few years, with spending related to residential care **almost doubling** between March 2020 and March 2024 – this is despite usage increasing by just 10%.

As of 2023-24, the average annual cost of a residential children's placement was roughly £7,097 per week or £369,044 per year¹⁷. Providing Shared Lives as an alternative, where more suited to an individual, could provide a potential cost avoidance to local authorities, where both increased demand and rising costs are contributing to existing strains on budgets.

¹¹ [Supported Housing Review 2023](#)

¹² [Demand and Capacity of Homes for Children in Care](#)

¹³ [Supported Housing Review 2023](#)

¹⁴ [Managing children's residential care](#)

¹⁵ [Main findings: children's social care in England 2024](#)

¹⁶ [Main findings: children's social care in England 2024](#)

¹⁷ [Outturn weekly unit costs \(£ per child\) - Residential Care in England](#)



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“If you are an authority or a Social Worker or Personal Adviser who doesn't know about **Shared Lives, you are missing a trick.”**

Isabella Trowler, Chief Social Worker, DfE



Delivery options – Case studies

Transitioning from foster care

Data gathered from our care leavers evaluation – which included 15 Shared Lives schemes – highlighted that **most young people within these schemes transitioning from Children’s services did so from fostering**. A transition from fostering can be advantageous in supporting young people to stay in their existing living situation if their foster carer moves over to Shared Lives and can therefore support in reducing disruption in areas such as education, employment or training for the young person when they turn 18. Research also highlights that further changes in care arrangements have “been found to be especially detrimental to young people’s mental health.” Reducing this disruption can be beneficial in a young person’s wellbeing, and the continuation of care can help with removing or reducing the ‘cliff-edge’ often experienced by young people leaving care. Preventative cost benefits have been highlighted in [this section](#) of the report.

This is a relatively common pathway for schemes who are supporting young people to transition over from children’s services, and as such, there is existing best practice across Shared Lives for how schemes are further developing this area of support. **Persona**, a Shared Lives provider in Bury, have been growing this offer within their service. Since joining the Shared Lives Plus care leavers programme, Persona have supported Alex* and his foster carer Susan to transition to Shared Lives, after his social worker referred him so that **consistent support** would remain in Alex’s life.



The original referral was for Alex to continue to live with Susan, however this changed to a respite and day support basis when at 18, Alex decided to stay more often with his birth mother. Alex successfully secured a job with Bury Council, helping a small team with general maintenance and cleaning. On the nights that he has work the next day he stays with Susan, but generally he splits his time in Shared Lives and with his birth mother.



Transitioning from foster care

Now, Alex is looking to move into his own flat whilst still being supported by Susan and he's very excited about this next stage of his life.

This arrangement and transition between children's and adult's services has been beneficial to demonstrate to the local authority the advantages of Shared Lives and what it can offer for care leavers, such as community based, high quality and person-centred care.

Mo Arthur, Registered Shared Lives Manager at Persona has met with social workers working with Alex and discussed the potential for other care leavers to join Shared Lives, particularly from day support where young people can benefit from developing their skills, understanding their finances, and other community support. Mo said,

"Supporting Alex (and Susan) was a success, we are pleased to see Alex moving on to independent living with our support. Susan is also considering opening up her home to more young people leaving care as part of Shared Lives.

"We have some amazing carers with lots of knowledge and experience to support young people with the next part of their journeys and working with social workers, we're looking forward to supporting more care leavers in Shared Lives."

*name changed.

You can find out more about Persona and their Shared Lives service here:

- Telephone: 0161 253 6000
- Email: info@personasupport.org
- Website: <https://www.personasupport.org/>



Transitioning from **Children's residential care**

According to children in care data taken from the 2021 Census, the "second most common placement type for first placements were children's homes or secure children's homes¹⁸" – this made up for **19% in total**. As shown in the [financial case](#) section of this report, the mean cost of children's homes in 2023/2024 was £7,097 per week. Transitioning from, or in some cases, diverting support to Shared Lives from Children's residential care, where appropriate, could provide significant cost savings for the Council. It can also however provide an opportunity to develop independent living skills, as a transition into adulthood.

PSS Norfolk & Suffolk have supported several young people under the age of 18 to build life skills, confidence and independence through Shared Lives arrangements tailored to their needs. Andrew* was referred at age 16 after years in residential care. He had dropped out of college and relied heavily on others. Although eager to move, a complex funding process and limited understanding of Shared Lives across social services delayed his transition.



To keep momentum and build relationships, the team arranged **an extended matching process** until a live-in Shared Lives arrangement was agreed. Since moving in with his carer, Andrew* has made significant progress.

"Independent living wouldn't have suited him, and staying in residential care wouldn't have supported his growth. **Shared Lives gave Andrew* the stopgap he needed** – a nurturing home where he can build skills at his own pace," said a Development Worker at PSS Norfolk & Suffolk.

He now follows a structured daily routine, prepares meals, manages his budget with his carer, and has returned to college. His confidence and physical health have improved, and he's more engaged with the community.

"He would hardly go out before – now he's out a lot. They're slowly educating him with things like budgeting, writing everything down" - Development Worker in PSS Norfolk & Suffolk.

¹⁸ [Who are the children entering care in England?](#)



Transitioning from **Children's residential care**

This was not the first time that PSS Norfolk & Suffolk had supported someone under the age of 18, however, navigating the differences between children's and adult services, especially around funding, was a key challenge when transitioning Andrew* to Shared Lives.

"When Andrew* came over, he had no passport, no understanding of money or benefits. The transition into adulthood can be daunting" - Development Worker in PSS Norfolk & Suffolk.

The team say Andrew's* journey shows why early planning and better communication between services are essential – and how Shared Lives can provide a vital stepping stone for young people leaving care.

*name changed.

You can find out more about PSS Norfolk & Suffolk and their Shared Lives service here:

- Telephone: 01379 644423
- Email: sharedliveseast@pss.org.uk
- Website: www.psspeople.com



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“My independence has grown, and I’ve become a different person. My confidence has grown.”

Vicky, Shared Lives Ambassador



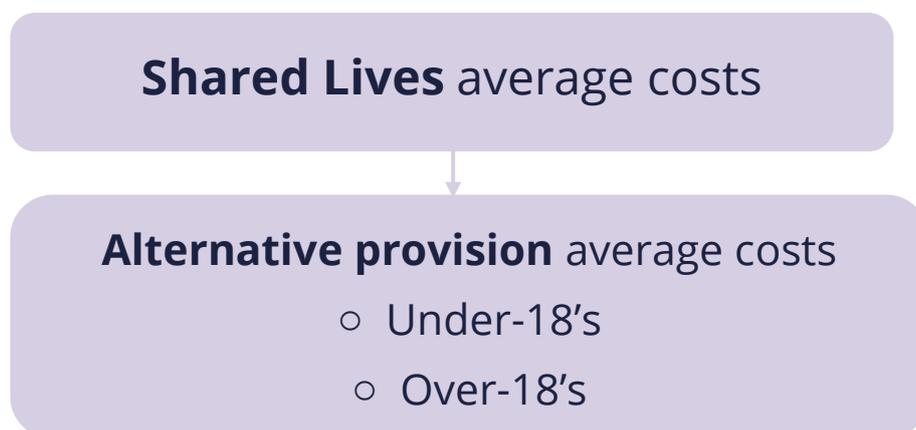
Financial case

This section of the report identifies potential cost benefits with the growth of Shared Lives. Shared Lives will not always be suitable for a person being supported by social care; however, the purpose of this analysis is to highlight a cost comparison, which can be brought into consideration in cases where Shared Lives may be beneficial.

The below graph outlines the model of this analysis, beginning with **identifying the average Shared Lives service costs to the Local Authority.** These have been based on the following:

- 1. Approximate for average level of care and support fees** based on our previous [Invaluable campaign](#) analysis. Inflation has been then added onto this to reflect a level appropriate for December 2025. This has been averaged between a low banded arrangement at £373 and a high banded arrangement at £569.
- 2. Average running costs of Shared Lives** which we have previously reviewed across various schemes. This has included five inhouse and three externally commissioned schemes. Overheads (including staff salaries) averaged over these schemes reflects a management fee of **£25 per day** per arrangement.
- 3. The total average net cost** of a Shared Lives arrangement based on the above totals roughly **£695 per week**. Please note, the care and support fees included are not an official Shared Lives Plus recommendation. This also solely includes care and support fees and overheads and **does not** include contributions from the individual (housing or board).

We have then identified and compared these costs with alternative services that young people may access instead of Shared Lives.





Provision cost comparison

Shared Lives compares favourably to alternative options across the three main groups of care experienced young people, including those who are:

1. **Under 18** and looked after by the Local Authority
2. **Over 18** with Care Act eligible need for housing and support
3. **Over 18** with leaving care eligibility for housing and support

Below we have identified various average costs of alternative provision from existing data sets to understand how Shared Lives fares in comparison at approximately **£695 per week** (excluding housing and board). Please note, weekly figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 whilst yearly figures have been rounded the nearest 100.



Under 18's

- The mean cost for a placement for a looked after child in 2023/24 was **£1900 per week** or **£98,880 per year**¹⁹.
- **Children's residential care:** According to data from the [Department of Education](#), the mean cost in England in 2023/24 for children's residential care was **£7,100 per week** or **£369,100 per year**.
- **Foster care:** The MHCLG calculated that the average foster placement cost **£740 per week** or **£38,200 per year** in 2023/24²⁰. Whilst it is difficult to accurately collect the average IFA (independent fostering agency) weekly cost, in Trafford in 2023/24 this was **£900 per week** or **£46,800 per year**. For young people in care over 16 it is likely however to be **considerably higher** than the average.
- **Supported accommodation:** According to the MHCLG the average placement cost nationally in 23/24 was **£1,120 per week** or **£57,900 per year**.

¹⁹ [Outturn weekly unit costs \(£ per child\) - Looked after children in England](#)

²⁰ [Managing children's residential care](#)



Over 18's without a Care Act eligible need for housing and support

- **Supported accommodation:** As above.
- **Staying Close:** According to the [Staying Close 2023-2025 application guide](#), the average costs from the pilot Staying Close programmes in 2020-21 ranged between £22,000 and £32,000 per young person. We have therefore based a cost comparison on the top end of this scale - **£620 per week** or **£32,000 per year**.
- **Supported housing:** According to the [Supported Housing Review report in 2023](#), the median cost for commissioned support services for people with a learning disability and autistic people was on average **£920 per week** or **£47,800 per year**²¹.



Over 18's with a Care Act eligible need for housing and support

- **Supported housing:** As above.
- **Supported living – Previous cost analysis example:** We have previously carried out some cost analysis exercises based on data collected from various Shared Lives schemes and Local Authorities across England. This has been based on data within the years 2024/2025. On average, supported living for learning disability support across four different Local Authority areas averaged at **£1,300 per week** or **£67,600 per year**.
- **Adult Residential care –** The mean cost of residential care for working age adults (aged 18-64) across all English Local Authorities in 2024/25 was **£1,620 per week** or **£83,900 per year**²².

²¹ [Supported Housing Review 2023: Executive summary](#)

²² [Average weekly cost of residential care for a person aged 18 to 64 in England](#)



Shared Lives provides a potential cost benefit across both age brackets with certain provision options based on the costs outlined above. These costs are based on averages, however, and therefore costs may considerably vary.

Shared Lives will not always be the most suitable provision option, however expanding this option of support outlines that when used as an alternative to certain services it can provide, along with other benefits, a potential cost benefit.

For further information, or for queries on developing a cost analysis for your local area, please contact us directly.



Preventative cost benefits

Financial pressures on Local Authorities continue to be a concern with present and future budgets across social care. Alongside alternative provision cost avoidances highlighted, we have outlined further **preventative costs** in this report. These are based on how the expansion of Shared Lives provision to care leavers could potentially reduce other expenditure through the additional support provided, for example, to enable the person to **stay in education, employment or training (EET)**, to **reduce the risk of homelessness**, or to help with their mental health and emotional wellbeing, which as previously highlighted, can be due to multiple reasons such as removing the 'cliff-edge' of care, or due to social isolation experienced in provision which a young person may not either be ready or suitable for.

There is more research to be done to clearly outline the full preventative cost benefits of Shared Lives for young people. There are however existing costs of areas of need that Shared Lives can support or respond to. These costs have been modelled to outline how Shared Lives provision can respond to these needs, and with this, create potential preventative cost benefits.





Mental health & emotional wellbeing

In a study carried out by Barnados, it was shown that **46% of all care leavers involved had mental health needs**²³. The report highlights that this figure is consistent with other research in this area, displaying the high probability of care leavers needing access to mental health support or services. New research by Cambridge University has also highlighted that young people with social service involvement were **“around two to three times more likely” than their peers to have a CAMHS referral rejected**²⁴, which signifies, alongside the high probability of care leavers requiring mental health support, that they could face barriers in accessing CAMHS support due to their history. Reducing opportunity to access mental health services will have further short and long-term implications on a young person’s overall wellbeing and will also **impact other opportunities, such as access to employment, education or training.**

Mental health & emotional wellbeing

The ‘cliff edge’ of leaving care can also further impact a young person’s mental health due to a sudden change in their living situation or care provision, as this transition can often be at a time when a young person may still require support. Growing or developing Shared Lives for those who may be transitioning from fostering for example, **could help in reducing disruption when moving over to adult’s social care** with opportunity for their foster carer to become a Shared Lives Carer. In doing so, this can also help create opportunity for the young person to stay within the same area/community. Similarly, it can act as an alternative to settings where carers may be rotating or unable to provide more personalised care.

Additional costs to the NHS²⁵ could potentially be prevented by the growth of Shared Lives support for care leavers, for example by preventing usage of inpatient or crisis services. Similarly, the cost of improved health, for example, remaining in or accessing EET – an example of these costs can be found in the next section of this report.

+£1511

Per-unit

+£338

Child and Young Person Low Secure Mental Illness inpatient service (2023/2024)

Crisis Resolution Team/Home Treatment Service (2023/2024)

²³ [Neglected Minds: A report on mental health support for young people leaving care](#)

²⁴ [The social must be stabilised: How are the social needs of young people with social work involvement characterized in their mental health case notes?](#)

²⁵ [National Cost Collection for the NHS: 2023/2024](#)



Education, Employment, Training (EET)

**Employment,
Education,
Training**

Data collected from 124 local authorities by the charity 'Become' found that **30% of children had been either moved from or had to leave care during their A-levels**, with 13% having been moved during their GCSEs²⁶. As well as the impact of this sudden change during a pivotal time in their education, young people can also potentially be housed out of the area, which creates further continued disruption due to ending up further away from their place of education. In doing so, this can impact their exams and overall attendance.

As stated, **Shared Lives can support with reducing this disruption** through the continuation of care. It can also **help to create more housing provision in areas where young people may be accessing their education or employment**. Similarly, Shared Lives Carers can support young people who may not yet be accessing education or in employment through providing 1-1 support. Increasing support to help access these opportunities can help to drive down economic inactivity or unemployment for young people, preventing short- and long-term financial losses. Mental health can also be a key barrier to employment, education or training for young people, and for those with care experience, this has often resulted from a lack of a familial support network. Expanding Shared Lives in this area can help create more opportunities to building these support networks, whether as a continuation from fostering or as a steppingstone before moving into independent living.

The Evaluation of the Care Leavers Social Impact Bond programme in 2023 estimated that the average benefit of moving an 18–24-year-old who is NEET into EET was £15,418 per year (at the time of writing)²⁷. From this figure, £4,952 was fiscal costs to the exchequer, with the remaining being costs to the individual young person. The evaluation highlighted however that this figure may underestimate the true cost for care leavers with high needs.

**Estimated
+£5k**

**Per-person
per-year**

**Rounded cost benefit for central
government of moving an 18-24-year-old
care leaver from being NEET to EET (2023)**

²⁶ [‘Shocking’ numbers of children in care being moved during exams](#)

²⁷ [Evaluation of the Care Leavers Social Impact Bond \(SIB\) programme](#)



Housing and Homelessness

A **third of care leavers become homeless within two years** of leaving care²⁸. Similarly, care-experienced young people are **nine times more likely to become homeless** compared to other young people²⁹. This can be due to factors such as having a lack of support when moving on from care (for example, with finances), as well as the impact of being placed in unsuitable accommodation. A young person at the time of transitioning from Children's services, may not be ready for living more independently, and therefore provision such as Shared Lives could help with **providing a continuation of support** to build independent living skills, such as with finances. This can help reduce the risk of young people getting into debt.



The Centre for Economics and Business Research identified the average cost of youth homelessness as **£27,347 per person per year**³⁰. These costs include: 1) loss of contribution to economic output and 2) direct government costs, including services (mental health, substance misuse, homelessness), social security, additional universal credit claims, housing benefits, healthcare, criminal justice. This figure is reflective of 2021/2022 prices.

Shared Lives also provides more opportunity for housing provision. In 2023, "research for the Learning Disability and Autism Housing Network (LDAH) found that the median capital cost per unit for a supported housing self-contained unit was £148,360 per unit for a self-contained unit, and £166,380 per unit for non-self-contained unit (shared housing)³¹." According to PANSI data, there is a 5% projected population increase for young people aged 18-24 with a moderate or severe learning disability (and therefore in receipt of services) across England by 2030³². Whilst Shared Lives would not be a replacement for the need for supported housing, it can help to meet future housing provision demand for young people and could in some cases provide more suitable support.

+£27k

**Per-person
per-year**

**Rounded average cost of youth
homelessness which includes loss of
contribution to economic output +
direct government costs (2021/2022)**

²⁸ [Children's social care: Fourth Report of Session 2024-25](#)

²⁹ [End The Care Cliff – Support Every Step of The Way Report](#)

³⁰ [Human costs and lost potential: The real cost of youth homelessness](#)

³¹ [Supported housing in England: Estimating need and costs to 2040](#)

³² [PANSI: LD - Moderate or severe](#)

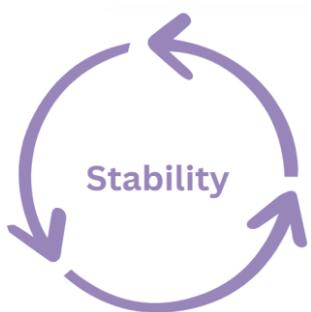


Measures of success

This section of the report highlights measures of success which can be found through the increase of care leaver provision through Shared Lives. This focuses on both personal benefits from the care the young person may receive, as well as what Shared Lives could provide for the Local Authority – both through personalised care and potential cost benefits.



As stated, Shared Lives could help young people with accessing Employment, Education, or Training. This can be either from providing more 1-1 support, or by increasing opportunity to stay within the community, and therefore reducing disruption when moving to adult's services. This can contribute to **activity for care leavers data**, which in turn could be measured through the potential avoidance of costs which could occur, both short and long-term, with the young person being NEET.



Increasing provision options to improve stability will help to remove the 'cliff-edge' when moving from Children's to Adult's. This can also be captured through various existing datasets, for example, provision suitability, remaining in EET, or staying within the area (when not requested to otherwise move out of area) when moving from Children's to Adult's.



Supporting young people through Shared Lives will both contribute to the above measures, as well as potentially reduce access to other services, such as hospital admissions. Improving young people's overall mental wellbeing will help to reduce feelings of isolation, which can be experienced when moving into independent living too early or when being moved out of the area.



As highlighted in this report, cost benefits can be identified when comparing Shared Lives to alternative provision. This could be measured at a local level by **identifying own provision costs**, and with the increase in number of young people supported, can help with making a supporting case alongside the above measures for further developing Shared Lives in the locality.

**Find out more visit our website
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