



The state of the sector

**Shared Lives
care in the UK
2022-23**



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Our **lives** get better
when they’re **shared**



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. Supported by 145 Shared Lives schemes, there are approximately 10,000 carers who are supporting nearly 10,000 people across the UK.

All carers are approved following rigorous recruitment and training by one of the UK's 145 local regulated schemes. The Care Quality Commission in England and the Care Inspectorate consistently rates Shared Lives in England (which has the most Shared Lives arrangements) and Scotland as the safest and best quality social care service¹. It can also save between £8,000 to £30,000 per person, per year for people with learning disabilities compared to supported living and residential care, and £8,000 lower per year for people with mental ill health.

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. To find out more visit **www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk**

¹ Shared Lives schemes do not currently receive ratings from Care Inspectorate Wales or the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) in Northern Ireland.

The state of the sector journey

This state of the sector report is the first of its kind to integrate data from all four nations. Until now, we have recorded data from the four nations separately; in Wales and Scotland, we have been collecting headline state of the nation data for development purposes for around a decade. In England, we first gathered state of the sector data in 2016.

In 2021, we first applied a new set of data integrity rules to information collected from schemes in England. This year, we applied our data improvement processes to Wales and Scotland, as well as England, which has allowed us to compare data from all three nations for the first time. This report also integrates similar data which had already been collected from schemes in Northern Ireland.

The improvements to our data collection and integration means that it is not always possible to make direct comparisons with previous state of the sector reports. Where possible we have used revised data in comparisons, where this is not possible, we have noted this in the report.



Introduction



“Shared Lives is a wonderful help to people like me... Emma helps me, we go shopping, out for coffee and bake together.”

Margaret

Margaret has a learning disability and lives in her own flat. Each week Margaret goes to visit her Shared Lives carer Emma at her home. Emma and Margaret first met for coffee a year ago, where they “clicked” over a shared sense of humour. Emma was a great support to Margaret when she moved into a new flat and started to get to know her local community in Elgin. Emma has found that Margaret’s confidence has really grown in their year together, “Margaret has really opened up and there is no stopping her now!”

As Margaret and Emma show, Shared Lives is a simple concept; it is a person-centred model which matches people who need support with those who can give it, enabling them to live as well as they can within the community. This report demonstrates that Shared Lives remains a resilient sector that lives its values of person-centred care. It also shows that there is considerable room for growth, which requires both investment and support.

The current state of the UK sector

Social care is under pressures like never before for well documented reasons. Having endured years of funding challenges and increased demand for support, the care sector is under significant pressure. Following the pandemic, and with the current cost-of-living crisis running on, capacity is reducing within the sector. Yet we still hear of many people in unsuitable residential services when they could be living a different life.

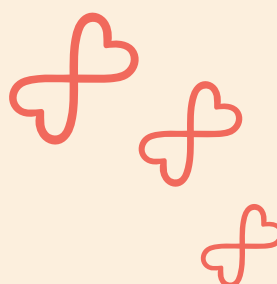
A recent report from Newton Europe estimated 27,000 working age adults with learning disabilities are living in residential homes. Up to 43% (over 11,000) of those people could be living in a more independent setting, such as supported living or with a Shared Lives carer. The resulting savings could be over £74million – and the difference to people's lives would be immeasurable.

Although the Shared Lives approach to supporting people is still relatively small, it has remained stable demonstrating its resilience against these continued challenges. Shared Lives can be an incredible way of life for both carers and those receiving support.

In every area of the UK we know that Shared Lives carers are making a difference to people's lives, and we will continue to champion for more investment and recognition into the sector. We hope this is coming; with the Department of Health and Social Care continuing to highlight Shared Lives as a model they want to see scaled up and developed into a mainstream offer, which will have huge benefits beyond the growth of the sector.

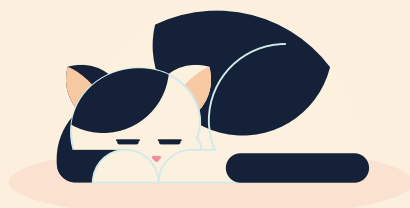
Our thanks

We would not have been able to write this report without the co-operation of the 145 Shared Lives schemes across the UK. The data shared by these schemes, the work of our Membership team, and the work of our colleagues in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland means this report offers the highest quality and most detailed statistics on the state of the Shared Lives sector to date.



Key messages

- Shared Lives continues to enable the best outcomes for people who need support. In October 2023, CQC rated Shared Lives schemes in England (where 83% of all people supported are based) as 97% good or outstanding. This rating has remained stable since October 2022. The most recent Care Inspectorate Scotland reports show that 40% of schemes received a grade of Excellent, and 33% very Good.
- Shared Lives continues to remain resilient and steady in the face of ongoing challenges, including the cost-of-living crisis.
- The total number of people being supported across the UK has decreased slightly by 332 (-3%). There are no direct comparisons in UK-wide data from the previous two years. However, for England the shrinkage is -2%, which is the same as in 2021-2022, but significantly less than the large -7% seen in 2020-2021².
- The total number of Shared Lives carers across the UK has increased by 614 (7%). There is a measurable improvement in England, where there has been an 8% increase in carers. This is higher than in 2021-2022 when there was a 3.5% increase, and a significant achievement in comparison to 2020-2021 when the English sector lost -7% of its carers.
- The percentages of those supported, defined by age, remains the same as in 2021-2022. Working adults aged 25-64 continues to be the single largest demographic at 64% of all supported people.
- A comparison of Shared Lives schemes in England who provided information about types of arrangement also shows no change to percentages between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.
- The size of Shared Lives remains far too small for such a high-quality model. Shared Lives carers make up just 1% of the social care workforce in England, 0.5% in Scotland, and 1% in Wales.



² Specific examples from England have been quoted where three years of comparative data has been available.

Becky's story

"It took me 3 days, and then I felt as though I fitted in and had been here a lot longer."

Becky

My name is Becky, and I live in South Wales. I have ADHD, DAMP, learning disabilities which includes a cognitive difficulty, and anxiety. My dream job is to work with disabled children. I have been in the care system since I was 11 years old. At first it was temporary, and I stayed with my Dad during the week. Then when I was 13, I moved in with my foster carers full time. It was really difficult for me to be away from my Dad. When I was 18, my foster carers applied to be Shared Lives carers, and I lived with them until I was 22 years old. Over a period of 11 years, I had more than twenty social workers and personal assistants.

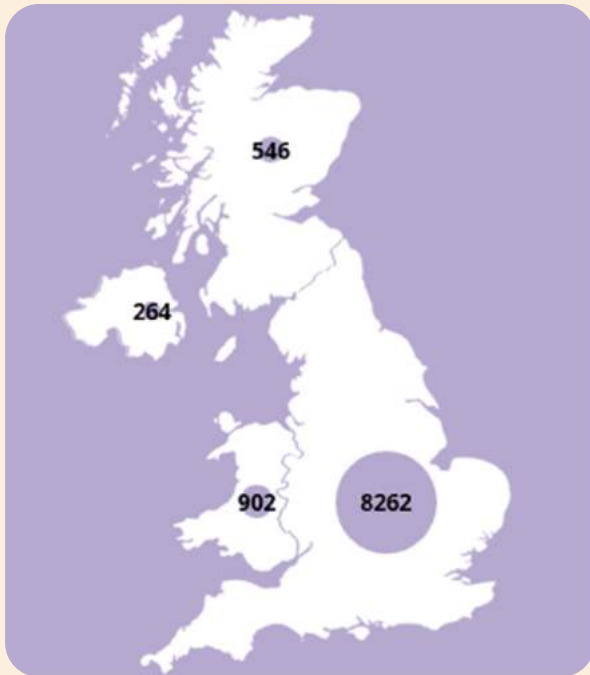
At 18, I wanted to be treated as an adult, however I had no key to the house and had to live under very strict rules. I was still being treated as a child. I found the rules difficult and restrictive as I couldn't catch up with my friends. It was very limiting and isolating. I wanted something different. I was given two options the second time I was introduced to Shared Lives. I met one Shared Lives household, but I didn't think it would have worked. Then I met Barbara. As soon as I walked in through the door, I knew within

minutes that this was somewhere I could settle. We only had two meetings before I decided that this was where I wanted to live and this was who I wanted to support me.

The first meeting we did was a short introduction. Barbara met me off the bus and we went for a walk with the dog. The second meeting, I knew this was the place for me. It is all about the people and how you get on together; I brought my own possessions with me including my TV. I wanted my own things around me. I felt content very quickly and I felt there was a really good atmosphere. Just three days later I felt as though I fitted in and had been here a lot longer!

Since I first moved in with Barbara (and now Boris the dog) I feel like a part of Barbara's family, and I class them all as my family. There is a closeness to it. I enjoy having Boris around. I'm now back in my hometown and have more regular contact with my biological family than I did before.

People supported in Shared Lives



**Number of supported people
in each nation 2022-2023**

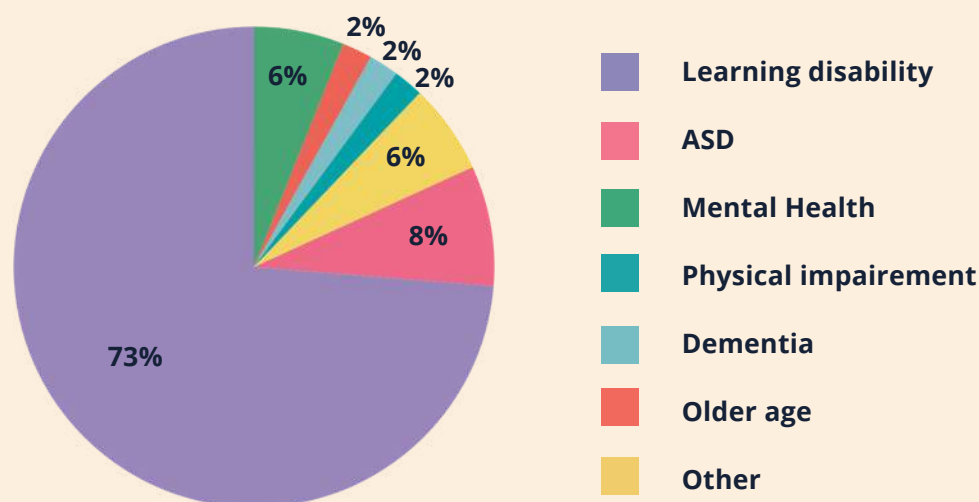
A total of 9,974 people were supported by Shared Lives across the UK in 2022-2023. England has the greatest number of supported people at 8,262, followed by 902 in Wales, 546 in Scotland, and 264 in Northern Ireland. This is a -3% decrease in the number of supported people in the UK compared to 2021-2022.

Shared Lives schemes identified three main reasons why supported people were leaving or not successfully referred into their service this year. The primary explanation was that schemes were unable to match supported people's needs to available Shared Lives carers. Other factors included a reduction in the overall number of Shared Lives carers, and a lack of appropriate referrals.

More positively, a number of individual Shared Lives schemes have increased the number of people they support this year. Those schemes overwhelmingly identified stronger relationships with referral teams as the principal reason for this increase.



Care and support needs



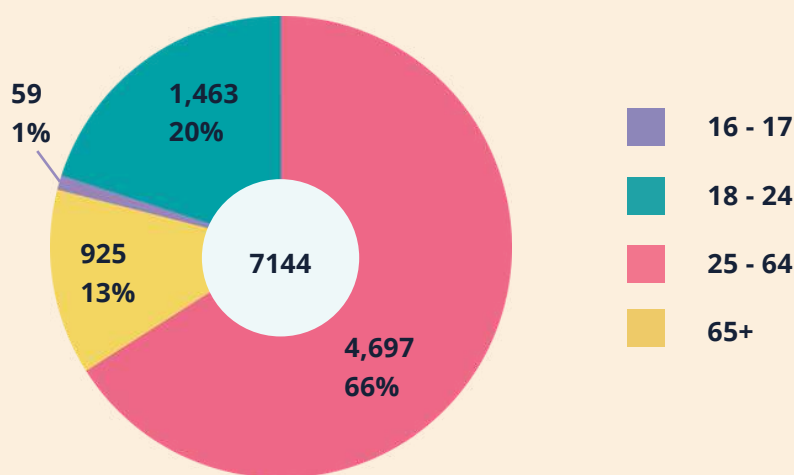
Shared Lives supports people with a wide range of assessed care needs, including learning disabilities, autism, and mental ill health. Shared Lives schemes provided information about support needs for **77%** of people supported by Shared Lives. In 2022-2023, the most well-represented support needs in Shared Lives (for whom data was provided) were:

- **5,613 people with a learning disability** as their primary need, or 73% of people supported.
- **630 people with autism**, or 8% of people supported.
- **471 people with a mental health need**, or 6% of people supported.
- **175 people with some form of physical impairment**, or 2% of people supported.
- **169 people with a support need associated with older age**, or 2% of people supported.
- **118 people who have a diagnosis of dementia**, or 2% of people supported.

People with support needs associated with a learning disability continue to be the largest single group supported by Shared Lives, in every nation. They account for 73% of those supported in England, 96% in Northern Ireland, 49% in Scotland and 87% in Wales. Shared Lives is flexible and can accommodate people with a wide range of needs. We have seen a rapid increase in the number of arrangements provided for people affected by a mental health crisis. This has had fantastic results in reducing re-admission in South East Wales as highlighted in World Health Organisation guidance on community mental health services.

We strongly believe that local authorities and Shared Lives schemes have the capacity to expand support to diverse cohorts of people who could benefit from the transformative and flexible support of Shared Lives care. This includes support needs associated with an acquired brain injury, sensory impairment, mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, and hospital discharge.

Age of people supported



Shared Lives can support adults of all ages, from those moving from foster care into adult Shared Lives arrangements to older adults of retirement age. People supported in Shared Lives across the UK in 2022-2023 included:

- **4,697 working age adults (aged 25-64)**, or 66% of people supported in Shared Lives.
- **1,463 young adults (those aged 18-24)**, or 20% of those supported overall.
- **935 older people (those aged 65+)**, or 13% of those supported overall.
- **59 young people (those aged 16-17)**, or 1% of those supported overall.

Whilst the overall number of people supported has decreased, the percentages as defined by age remain the same as in 2021-2022. Working adults aged 25-64 continues to be the single largest demographic, with 66% of supported people falling within this age bracket.

It is also notable that 235 (2%) of supported people from the 16-17, and 18-24 age demographics transitioned to Shared Lives from foster care between March 2022 and March 2023.

Types of support

Shared Lives is a flexible support option. People can choose to visit their Shared Lives carer for a day or an overnight stay, or to move in with them long-term. The different types of support arrangements offered by Shared Lives carers across the UK in 2022-2023 included:

- **3,151 (50%)** of supported people access live-in support.
- **495 (8%)** of supported people access day support.
- **831 (13%)** of supported people access short breaks.

A further:

- **322 (5%)** of supported people access both live-in support, and day support.
- **657 (10%)** of supported people access live-in support, and short breaks.
- **350 (6%)** of supported people access day support and short breaks.
- **541 (9%)** of supported people access all three forms of support.

As seen above, the greatest number of people supported access live-in support. However, the data captured this year shows a more nuanced picture in which supported people access multiple types of support.

In relation to last year's data, a comparison of Shared lives schemes in England who provided information about types of arrangement shows no change to percentages between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.



Rhys, Tony, and Peter

Peter lives in beautiful Windemere, and provides Shared Lives support to two gentleman, Rhys and Peter. Rhys came to live with Peter when he was 18 and studying for his Level 3 NVQ at a local college. Over three and half years, Peter provided a stable environment in which Rhys could thrive and grow in confidence. With Peter's support, Rhys worked hard and was accepted to study for a BA Hons at the University of Cumbria, which he started in September. During the week he lodges with another Shared lives carer near the university, and then returns to Peter at weekends and holidays.



Peter now also supports Tony, who has dementia. For two days a week they 'gallivant' (Tony's words) around town together. After every outing the pair have, Peter puts together a story board of their time together and shares it with Tony's family. This means that even though Tony might not remember the day's events, his

wife, children, family, and friends, can talk to him about what he's been up to.

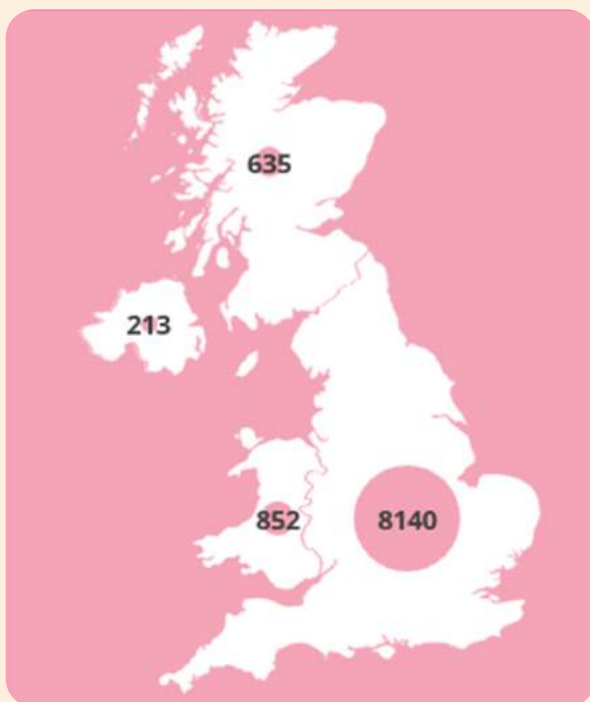
Peter's support has meant that Tony's wife can participate in her old hobbies too. She is able to spend time with family and friends, safe in the knowledge that Tony is happy and safe with Peter.



Shared Lives workforce

Shared Lives care is delivered through local, regulated Shared Lives schemes who recruit and assess Shared Lives carers. The scheme then matches them with adults who need support based on their compatibility as people, with both parties having the final choice on the match. The adult moves in with, or visits, their Shared Lives carer and together they share home, family, and community life.

Shared Lives carers



The number of Shared Lives carers in the UK has increased by 614 (+7%) to a total of 9,840.

An overview of the statistics for England for the last three years demonstrates the positive trend in carer numbers. There is a measurable improvement in England, where there has been an 8% increase in carers.

This is higher than in 2021-2022 when there was 3.5% increase, and a significant improvement on 2020-2021 when the English sector lost -7% of its carers. It is also higher than the 2% increase in filled posts for senior care workers and care workers across England this year.

Despite the encouraging rise in the number of Shared Lives carers, they remain a small part of the wider social care workforce. Shared Lives carers make up just 1% of the social care workforce in England, 0.5% in Scotland, and 1% in Wales.



Shared Lives scheme workers

In 2022-2023 there were 953 people working for Shared Lives schemes in England, Scotland, and Wales. It's positive that the total number of **scheme workers in England increased by 6%**, from 781 in 2021-2022, to 824 in 2022-2023.

Shared Lives providers

Shared Lives is commissioned by the local authority or local council, the NHS, or in some areas are funded using personal budgets. It is delivered by a registered provider known as a Shared Lives scheme. The types of registered providers delivering Shared Lives care range from "in house" local authority services and local authority trading companies (LATCs), to independent organisations which include charities and Community Interest Companies (CICs).

The different types of registered providers offering Shared Lives care in 2022-2023

104 local
authority or
council run
schemes.
Of these,

87 were in
England

6 were in
Scotland

5 were in
Wales

41 independent
providers.
Of these,

36 were in
England

3 were in
Scotland

2 were in
Wales

Brandon and Heather's story

Transitioning from foster care to Shared Lives with Heather has put Brandon in control of his life.



When Brandon was reaching the end of his foster placement with her, Heather was worried about what would come next for Brandon. But both feel lucky to be part of Edinburgh Shared Lives and the positive impact transitioning to Shared Lives has had on both their mental health. Brandon, who has a learning disability, has lived with Heather and her husband for 24 years, since he was two years old. But as he got older Heather began to worry about Brandon's future,

"It's a scary place to be having a young person, worrying about their safety and their future and what life is going to be like for them. We wanted to know that if anything happens to us there will be someone there for Brandon. He does want to be independent and Shared Lives encourages that."

Heather found the transition from fostering to Shared Lives straightforward, speaking of the assessment process as "relaxed and informal" and the subsequent support from Edinburgh Shared Lives as "an amazing service".

"A whole weight has been lifted from our shoulders as we've got support. It helps Brandon's mental health, and it helps our mental health as well. I think the fact that Sam, our worker from Shared Lives is there on the end of the phone and we can talk things over, it makes a huge difference."

And there have been benefits for Brandon too, with Sam noticing the changes in Brandon since he joined Shared Lives: "Brandon's confidence has rocketed. He's never in nowadays! Brandon is in control of his life, learning new skills and in a better place for when it's time for supported accommodation. He's now looking forward to that."

And Brandon adds an important point for the future, "I can still come home for my dinner though!"



My Shared Life outcome tool

The difference Shared Lives makes to people drawing upon support remains very high, Shared Lives schemes ask people about their wellbeing over months and years, with questions that were developed by people in Shared Lives to best reflect quality of life. The answers are then inputted into the My Shared Life online tool which presents how people feel about their wellbeing, and how it has changed over time. Results in 2022-23 showed:

- **97%** of people in Shared Lives felt they were part of the family most or all the time.
- **85%** of people felt that their Shared Lives carer's support improved their social life.
- **79%** of people felt that their Shared Lives carer's support made it easier for them to have friends.
- **91%** of people in Shared Lives felt involved with their community.
- **83%** felt their Shared Lives carer's support helped them have more choice in their daily life.
- **81%** of people felt their physical and emotional health had improved.

Regulator ratings

England: The latest figures from England show that Shared Lives remains the highest quality form of nationally available social care, with the CQC rating 97% of schemes good or outstanding. Whilst we know that many of our Shared Lives carers have been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, they have continued to provide an exceptional level of care, to thousands of people, under very challenging conditions.

Scotland: 76% of Scotland Shared Lives schemes achieved a grade of 5 or 6 (excellent/very good) for the Care and Support they delivered, and no scheme dropped below a 4 (Good) in the most recent inspections by the Care Inspectorate.

Wales and Northern Ireland: Whilst Shared Lives schemes are inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales, CIW currently conducts unpublished ratings. This means that if a service needs or is due an inspection, then CIW will provide a rating which will remain confidential. The first rating to be published will be the one resulting from the first inspection after the implementation date in 2025. RQIA reports on Shared Lives/adult placement schemes are consistently good. As with Shared Lives Wales, schemes do not receive a specific rating for care inspections in Northern Ireland.

Corey, Stuart and Joanne

In 2010, aged just eight, Corey started visiting Joanne and Stuart Stevenson for foster care short breaks. When Corey turned 18 in 2020, Joanne and Stuart continued to offer him short breaks, but now as Shared Lives carers. Corey is now a part of the family, which includes Joanne and Stuart's daughters, Vicky, and Anna. Corey is particularly close to grandad George and refers to him as his 'best friend.'



"I love staying with all the family and I don't like to leave" says Corey. "I do loads of stuff with them, which is really fun. I really like going to McDonald's, watching movies, cooking, reading, colouring in, going to rugby with Stuart and singing on drives with Stuart in the car."

Corey goes for two overnight short breaks per month. Joanne and Stuart encourage Corey to be as independent as possible when he visits, and they are constantly teaching him new skills, whilst ensuring he holds onto the skills he has learnt over the years, such as reading and writing.

"Corey has been a star, and we are so lucky to spend time with him and watch as he progresses through life. What we have found most important when supporting Corey is

having a positive attitude, a common-sense approach, and the importance of building a good relationship with Corey's family which is fundamental. After that you just need to find out how Corey enjoys spending time and then concentrate on having lots of fun," said Joanne and Stuart.

Corey's mother, Sonya Holmes is grateful for the support Joanne and Stuart offer, which means she gets a break from caring, "The entire Stevenson family mean everything to Corey and me. They treat Corey like he is a member of their family. In lockdown I found it very difficult not having the support from Joanne and Stuart. They very kindly sent parcels in the post to Corey, including items like colouring books which he loves."

Conclusion

This report shows that the Shared Lives sector has remained buoyant in the face of ongoing challenges. Shared Lives carers and Shared Lives schemes have continued in their dedication to providing high quality, person-centred care. As a result, people supported by Shared Lives continue to live fuller and better lives within their communities, and Shared Lives enables meaningful relationships which contribute to a person's overall wellbeing. This is evidenced in the statistic that 97% of people in Shared Lives felt they were part of the family most or all the time. The ability of Shared Lives to provide the best outcomes for supported people is also reflected in its continued position as the highest rated form of social care in England, where 83% of all supported people are based.

Shared Lives is also one of the most cost-effective forms of social care. Independent analysis of the cost effectiveness of Shared Lives shows, in England and Wales, an average saving between £8k and £30k per annum, depending on the person's support needs and local alternative services. We believe that Shared Lives can remain a cost-effective option, whilst also addressing the issue of Shared Lives carer fees. Shared Lives carers are tremendously dedicated to providing exceptional care, which should be reflected in the fees they receive. We relaunched our Invaluable campaign to get a clear picture of the fee's carers receive across the UK. It also provides Shared Lives schemes with some of the tools they need to address fees which do not reflect the hard work of carers.

Despite its cost-effectiveness, resilience, and high quality, Shared Lives remains a far too small and underutilised part of the wider social care sector. To capitalise on its potential for growth, Shared Lives requires political and financial investment from local and central government in each of the nations. We welcome the inclusion of Shared Lives as the first option on the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC's) accelerating reform fund, demonstrating the importance of shared living in the government's priorities for adult social care. We call on Directors of Adult Social Care to explore this opportunity to grow and develop Shared Lives in their area. If you would like to discuss how you could upscale Shared Lives, we are happy to support you.



Our lives get better when they're shared

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

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