

Better outcomes for less

The Shared Lives model



Shared Lives is a unique form of social care based on the simple but transformative power of human relationships.

An adult who needs support is matched with a Shared Lives carer by their local Shared Lives scheme, based on their compatibility as people. Together, they share home, family and community.

Over half of the people using Shared Lives move in with their chosen carer to live as part of their household, the rest visit for day support or overnight breaks.



People get safe, personal care and support, in a place which feels like home. They make friends, become more active, and lead richer, fuller lives.



In October 2023, CQC rated 97% of Shared Lives schemes in England as good or outstanding, in comparison to just 83% for the wider social care sector.

In comparison to supported living and residential care, Shared Lives can save between **£12,000 to £26,000** per person, per year for people with a learning disability.

This briefing illustrates the Shared Lives model's value for money, specifically for people with a learning disability. It builds on previous cost-benefit analyses with current data, comparing Shared Lives services with other types of provision.

A history of value

Shared Lives Plus has assisted local authorities in developing their Shared Lives services across the UK. In doing so, we have consistently found that the cost of supporting someone in Shared Lives is less than that of other models. We have learned this from both anecdotal reports and through formal analysis.

In 2013, a Social Finance report titled "Investing in Shared Lives", gave quantitative evidence of the savings. [1] It found Shared Lives would achieve a potential saving of -

- Between £25,000 and £27,000 per person per year for people with learning disabilities.
- and £7,000 to £9,000 per person per year for clients with mental health needs.

ADASS report, 2023

More recently, a 2023 report by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) found that -

"Nine in ten (90%) of Directors indicated that increased provision [of Shared Lives] would have some or a significant impact on outcomes for people, whilst a marginally smaller proportion (87%) are of the opinion that greater availability of Shared Lives would reduce or significantly reduce adult social care expenditure." [2]

Our methodology

For two years Shared Lives Plus has gathered data from six local authorities. The cost-benefit analysis below is informed by the findings and data across these six areas.

1 Establishing a weekly “unit cost” of Shared Lives, per person supported.

Itemising care and support fees paid to Shared Lives carers for each existing live-in Shared Lives arrangement, across various fee bandings according to level of support need.

Adding further care and support fees of any additional provision through Shared Lives (for day support or short breaks)

Breaking down the numbers of people supported by types of support need, including learning disability and mental health

Adding the scheme’s overheads/running costs, including office, IT, training and staff salaries (known hereafter as “management fees”)

Dividing this total by the number of people supported in Shared Lives to arrive at the unit cost.

2 Establishing the unit costs of an alternative provision

Itemising the cost per person, per week, of alternative models such as residential care or supported living.

Using either the costs of these services provided directly by the local authority at client level,

Where the local data is unavailable, using national average unit costs similar services from the Adult Social Care Finance Return (ASFR.) [3]

Breaking down the numbers of people supported by types of support need, , e.g., learning disability and mental health

Savings based on the latest research

Residential care	Bandings	Shared Lives (per week)	Residential costs	Difference (per week)
Learning Disability	Low	£378	£656	£378
	Medium	£527	£782	£378
	High	£672	£920	£248
	Average	£594	£830	£236
Supported living				
Learning Disability	Low	£378	£656	£500
	Medium	£527	£1,059	£532
	High	£672	£1,400	£728
	Average	£594	£1,112	£518

The analysis findings indicate a saving of **£12,000 per person, per year** for people with a learning disability in Shared Lives compared to residential care, and **£26,000** compared to supported living.

Estimated cost savings

Shared Lives remains far too small for a model of such potential and quality. Despite its proven cost-effectiveness and ability to improve people's lives, it accounts for just 1% of long-term social care in the UK, by numbers of people supported.[4]

The case for investment

Ambitious
10%
£2.6bn

For an ambitious target where schemes are delivering 10% of social care support to 130,000 people with a learning disability, we estimate savings of around £2.6bn.



For a realistic goal of bringing all Shared Lives schemes to support 5% of their learning disability population, we estimate it would save £1.3bn each year after year 3. It would enable over 60,000 people with a learning disability to enjoy highly personalised social care.

Realistic
5%
£1.3bn

[1] Investing in Shared Lives, Social Finance, 2013
<https://www.socialfinance.org.uk/insights/investing-in-shared-lives>

[2] ADASS, Social Care, Housing, Health and Winter, Autumn Survey Report, 2023, p9

[3] Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report, England, 2022-23, NHS Digital
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report-england-2022-23-data-release-only>

[4] The State of the Sector, Shared Lives and Homeshare in the UK 2021-22, Shared Lives Plus <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/2023/05/05/shared-lives-and-homeshare-21-22-state-of-sector-report/>