



# The state of the nation: Shared Lives care in England 2021-22



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Mollie is supported by her Shared Lives carer Mae in an arrangement that is facilitated by a Shared Lives scheme, Shared Lives South West. For Mollie, the value of Shared Lives is that it enables people like her to choose “what they do with their lives and how they choose to live it.”<sup>1</sup> As Mollie demonstrates, the concept of Shared Lives is simple; 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. The data in this report paints a picture of a small, resourceful and, above all, resilient Shared Lives sector rooted in bespoke, person-centred care. It shows that Shared Lives remains resilient, even in the face of recent challenges, and that it still has significant scope for growth with investment and support.

The care regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), continues to rate Shared Lives as the highest form of care in England. The number of outstanding schemes has increased to 11% of all schemes, and those that require improvement has decreased to just 3%. These statistics are a testament to the ongoing hard work of Shared Lives

## Introduction

**“Since moving in with Mae, my Shared Lives carer, I’ve been abroad, I’ve made my own bike and got a job, and I’m learning to drive. We’ve gone to London and been to the Natural History Museum. I’ve had so many more opportunities that have allowed me to grow and become more independent. And I think that it’s really important to me that other people get the same opportunities that I did.”**

**Mollie, 2022**

schemes, who strive to support Shared Lives carers to provide exceptional care to people with a wide range of needs.

Those who deliver Shared Lives care have faced the same challenges as the wider care sector in the last few years, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. The adult social care sector is also under significant pressure as overall capacity has reduced, and unmet needs have increased.”<sup>2</sup> Despite these challenges and pressures, the Shared Lives sector has remained relatively stable in the last year, with:

- The number of people being supported decreasing very slightly (-2%).
- The number of Shared Lives carers has increased by +3.5%, which stands in contrast to the wider social care sector, where care work vacancies have increased by 52%, the highest rate on record.
- Similarly, the 12% staff turnover within Shared Lives schemes is significantly lower than the 29% turnover across the social care sector at large.

The data also shows that the number of Shared Lives day support and short breaks arrangements have stabilised following a contraction of these services at the height of Covid-19. While it is encouraging that the sector is no longer losing these arrangements at the same pace as the previous year, **it is concerning that there has not been a greater upturn in the number of new or re-instated day support and short break arrangements.**

Day support and short breaks enable people being supported to have their assessed care needs met and are key to protecting against the breakdown of long-term arrangements by providing vital respite for both supported people and their Shared Lives carers.

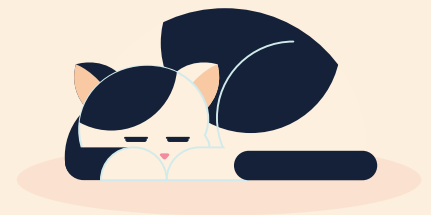
Despite the relative buoyancy and high quality of Shared Lives care in England, it remains far too small. People supported by Shared Lives represent less than 1% of all those drawing on adult social care in England, with Shared Lives carers making up less than 0.5% of the overall workforce.

Shared Lives was recognised in the government's 2021 social care white paper as an example of innovation which could be scaled up, and Shared Lives Plus is committed to supporting the safe expansion of Shared Lives across the whole of the United Kingdom.

We recently published a new resource to support Shared Lives to grow which can be found on our website; our Strategic Advice team can work with individual local authorities to grow Shared Lives in their areas, and we are working with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) to find ways to remove the barriers which limit Shared Lives ability to scale-up in England.<sup>3</sup>

We would not have been able to write this report without the co-operation of the 123 Shared Lives schemes in England. The data shared by these schemes, and the work of our Membership team, means this report offers the highest quality and most detailed statistics on the state of the Shared Lives sector to date.

We at Shared Lives Plus would like to offer our sincere thanks to every person who is either supported by, or works within, the Shared Lives network. **Your dedication to sharing homes, families, and communities embodies the very best of the social care sector.** It is our privilege to support and represent you, as we work together to give more people the opportunity to live shared and better lives.



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<sup>1</sup> "Meet Mae and Mollie, building Shared Lives with each other in the South West" Shared Lives Plus, 2022:

<https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/2022/03/07/meet-mae-and-mollie-building-shared-lives-with-each-other-in-the-south-west/>

<sup>2</sup> "The state of health care and adult social care in England 2021/22", Care Quality Commission, 21 October 2022:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/publication/state-care-202122>

<sup>3</sup> "Consultancy support" Shared Lives Plus, 2022: <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/consultancy-support/>

## Key messages

- Shared Lives continues to enable the best outcomes for people who need support. In October 2022, CQC rated Shared Lives schemes as 97% good or outstanding. This is an improvement of +3% in our outstanding schemes in the last year.
- Shared Lives remains a highly cost-effective form of adult social care. An independent review found that in England and Wales, Shared Lives resulted in an average saving of between £8k and £30k per annum, depending on the person's support needs and local alternative services.
- Shared Lives has proven stable and resilient in the face of consecutive and overlapping crises. The number of people being supported has shrunk slightly by -160 (-2%), while the number of Shared Lives carers has increased by 262 (+3.5%). This represents a notable improvement on 2020-2021, when the sector lost -6% of Shared Lives carers and -7% of people being supported.
- The number of people with learning disabilities increased by 4% (+190), to 71% of all people supported. The number of people with support needs associated with old age and dementia decreased from 7% to 5% (-173).
- There was a marked increase of +5% (+307) working age adults aged 25-64, and a smaller, but notable increase +2% (+118) in the number of young adults aged 18-24 in transition to Shared Lives from foster care.
- The total number of the Shared Lives workforce remains stable, with a 12% turnover amongst scheme workers. While this presents a challenge to schemes, it is significantly lower than the 29% staff turnover across the wider social care sector.
- The size of Shared Lives remains far too small for such a high-quality model. Shared Lives accounts for just under 1% of total long-term social care in the UK by people supported, and just over 0.5% by workforce.<sup>4</sup> Please contact Shared Lives Plus if you want support to help you grow Shared Lives.



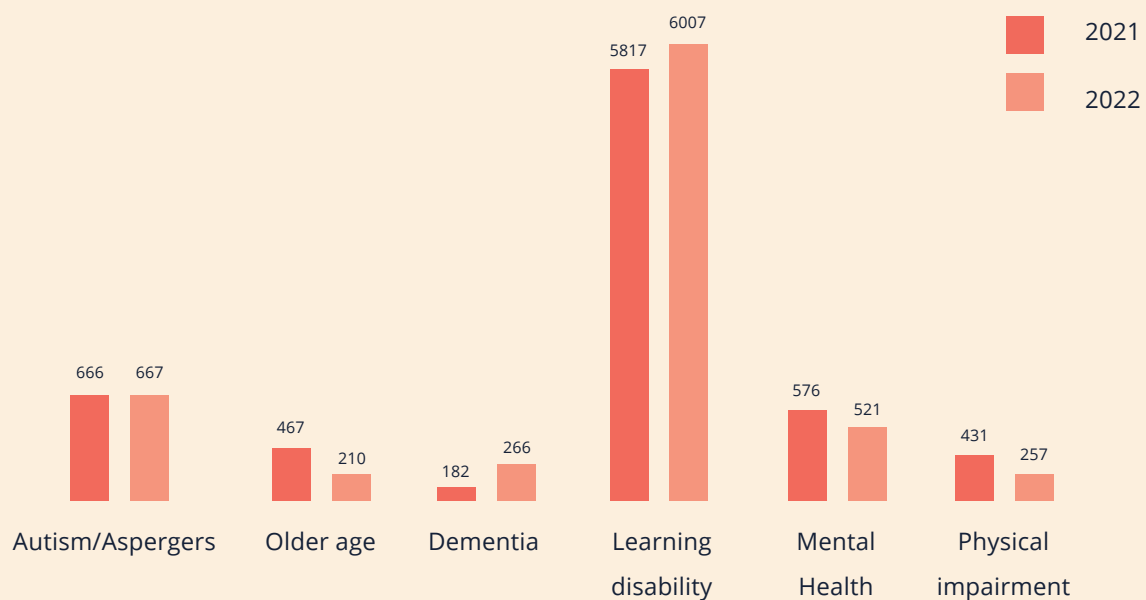
<sup>4</sup> Total number of people in long-term Shared Lives arrangements/Total number of people in long-term social care arrangements, "Social care 360: access", King's Fund, May 2022 <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/social-care-360/access#delivery>

Total number of Shared Lives carers plus Shared Lives staff/total numbers of social care workforce, "The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England," Skills for Care, October 2022: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-2022.pdf>

## People supported by Shared Lives

A total of 8491 people were supported in Shared Lives in 2021-2022. This is a small decrease of -160 people, or -2% from a total of 8651. This represents an improvement on 2020-2021, when the sector reduced by -605 people, or -7% of the overall total.

### Care and support needs



Shared Lives supports people with a wide range of assessed care needs, including learning disabilities, autism, and mental ill health. The most well-represented support needs in Shared Lives in 2021-2022 were:

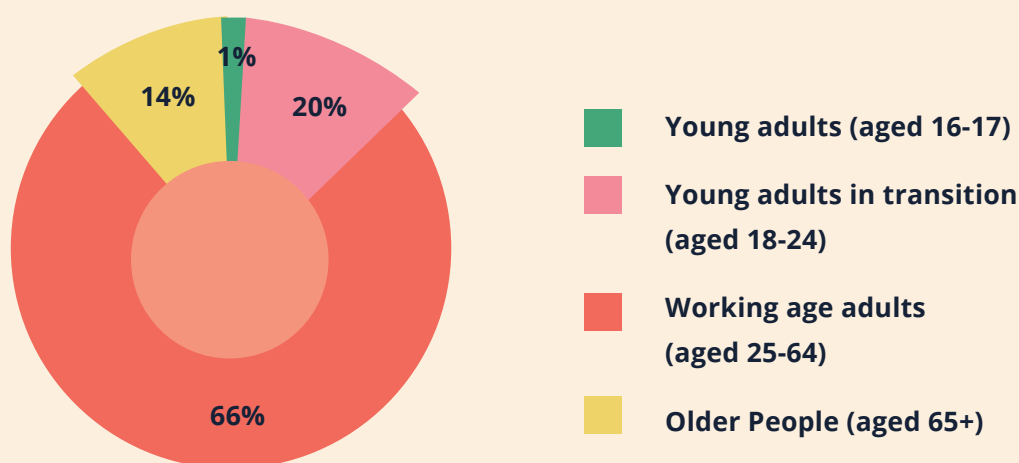
- **6007 people with a learning disability, 71%** of the total number of people supported in Shared Lives. There were +190 (+4%) more people supported compared to last year in this category.
- **266 people with dementia, 3%** of the total number of people supported in Shared Lives. There were +84 (+1%) more people supported compared to last year in this category.
- **667 people with autism, 8%** of the total number of people supported in Shared Lives. This is the same percentage as the year before in this category.
- **257 people with a physical impairment, 3%** of the total number of people supported in Shared Lives. There were -174 (-2%) fewer people supported compared to last year in this category.
- **521 people with mental ill health, 6%** of the total number of people supported in Shared Lives. There were -55 (-1%) fewer people supported compared to last year in this category.
- **210 people with a support need associated with older age, 2.5%** of the total number of people supported in Shared Lives. There were -257 (-3%) fewer people supported compared to last year.

People with support needs associated with a learning disability continue to be the largest single group supported by Shared Lives. However, Shared Lives is flexible and can accommodate people with a wide range of needs. We strongly believe that local authorities and Shared Lives schemes have the capacity to expand to support 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.

In particular, there is potential to diversify Shared Lives to support people with needs associated with older age and dementia, which are areas of projected increased need, according to Skills for Care’s State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England published in October 2022.<sup>5</sup>

While the provision of dementia care has increased in Shared Lives (+1%), the provision for people with needs associated with older age has notably decreased in the last year (-2.5%).

### Age of people supported



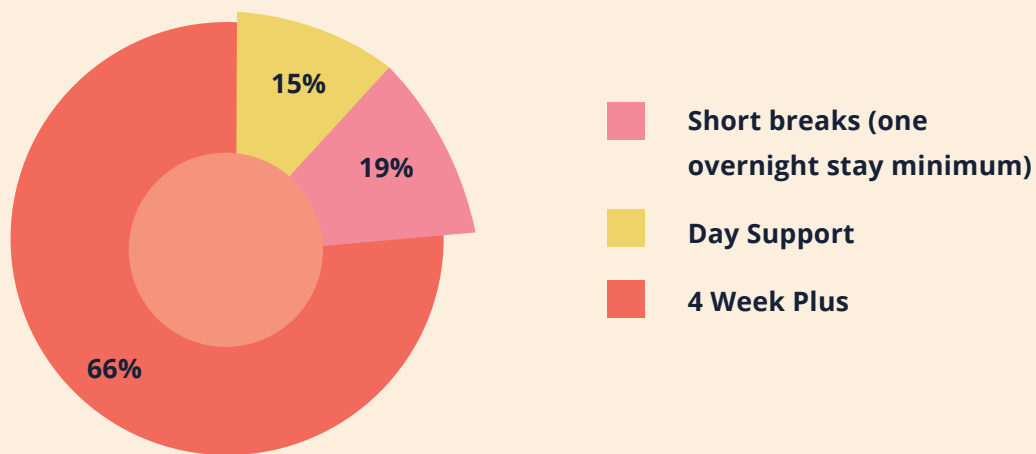
Shared Lives can support adults of all ages, from those moving from foster care into adult Shared Lives arrangements to older adults of retirement age. People supported in Shared Lives in 2021-2022 included:

- **5614 working age adults (aged 25-64), or 66%** of the 8491 people supported in Shared Lives. There were 307 (+5%) more people supported compared to last year in this category.
- **1667 young adults (those aged 18-24), or 20%** of those supported overall. There were 118 (+2%) more people supported compared to last year in this category.
- **1163 older people (those aged 65+), or 14%** of those supported overall. There were 107 (-1%) fewer people supported compared to last year in this category.
- **47 young people (those aged 16-17), or 1%** of those supported overall. There were 13 fewer people supported compared to last year in this category.

<sup>5</sup> “The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England,” Skills for Care, October 2022: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-2022.pdf>

The data shows a decrease in the number of older adults supported in Shared Lives, but an increase in the number of younger, and working age, adults. By supporting foster carers to become registered Shared Lives carers, Shared Lives can provide stability and continuity of care for young people moving from children’s services to adult social care, offering significant potential for growth in Shared Lives here.

### 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 in 2021-2022 included:

- **5583 long term, live-in arrangements, which is 66%** of the overall number of arrangements. There were -134 fewer of these arrangements than the previous year.
- **1636 short break arrangements, which is 19%** of the overall number of arrangements. There were -23 fewer of these arrangements than the previous year.
- **1272 day support arrangements, which is 15%** of the overall number of arrangements. There were -17 fewer of these arrangements than the previous year.

The data shows a small decrease in all three types of support arrangement, which aligns with the -2% contraction in the number of people supported. The percentage split between long term (66%), live-in arrangements (19%), short breaks, and day support (15%) remains the same as the previous year.

Although the decrease in short breaks and day support is relatively small compared to the loss of 474 short break and 170 day support arrangements in the previous 12 months, many short break and day support arrangements are yet to be re-instated. With adequate short break and day support, people supported by Shared Lives can have their assessed care needs met, without putting the sort of undue pressure on their long-term arrangements which can lead to an arrangement breaking down. **We urge local authorities to restore short break and day support arrangements in the short term and expand access to this provision in the long-term.**

## Shared Lives workforce

Shared Lives care is delivered through local, CQC-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. It enables health and social care partnerships to offer highly fruitful outcomes for the people involved.

### Shared Lives carers

**The number of Shared Lives carers has increased by 262 (+3.5%), to a total of 7568.** This represents a notable improvement on 2020-2021, when the sector lost 6% of Shared Lives carers. It is also significant in the context of wider trends in the social care workforce. Skills for Care reported in October 2022 that the number of vacant posts has increased by 52% in the last year, the highest rate since records began in 2012/13.

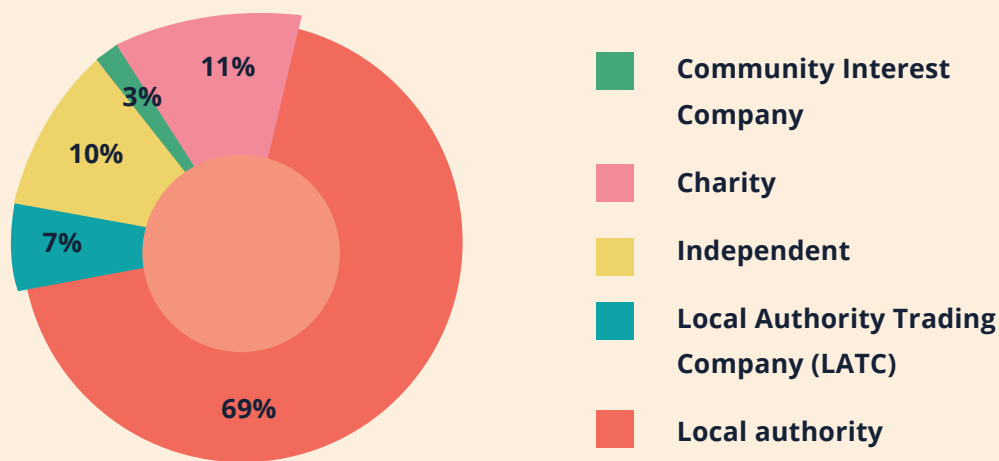
### Shared Lives scheme workers

The total number of **Shared Lives scheme workers remains stable at 697**, compared to 694 in 2020-2021. In 2021-2022, there was a 12% turnover amongst scheme workers, with 82 scheme workers leaving Shared Lives schemes and 108 joining. This figure is significantly lower than the 29% turnover in the wider sector. However, it still represents significant costs to Shared Lives schemes.





### Shared Lives care providers



Shared Lives care in England is delivered by a CQC registered provider (known as a Shared Lives scheme), that has been commissioned by a local authority. Shared Lives schemes can be “in house” local authority services or Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCs), charities, independent organisations, or Community Interest Companies (CICs).

The different types of registered providers offering Shared Lives care in 2021-2022 include:

- 85 local authority run schemes, or 69% of the total number of Shared Lives schemes.
- 14 charity run schemes, or 11% of the total number of Shared Lives schemes.
- 12 independent schemes, or 10% of the total number of Shared Lives schemes.
- 8 Local Authority Trading Companies (LATC’s), or 3% of the total number of Shared Lives schemes.

## Measuring outcomes

Shared Lives Plus measures the outcomes of Shared Lives support in two ways. Primarily, we gather information from people supported in Shared Lives through “My Shared Life” - our outcome measuring tool. Secondly, we measure outcomes based on Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings.

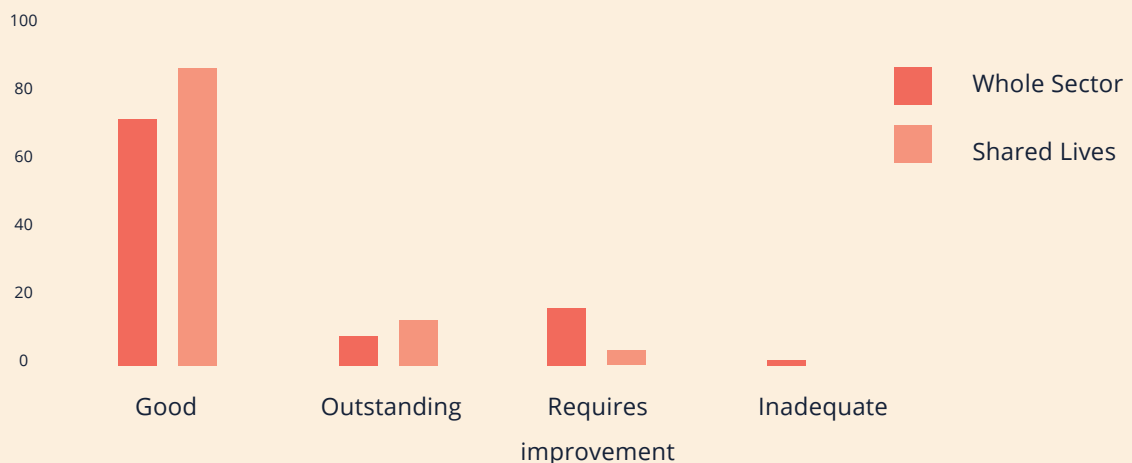
### My Shared Life

My Shared Life was co-produced by people who use care and services. It is designed to evaluate people’s experience of Shared Lives, using categories which people who live with or visit a Shared Lives carer feel are important measures of a good life. The most recent data available via the My Shared Life outcome measuring tool found that:

- 97% of people in Shared Lives felt they were part of the family most or all the time.
- 83% of people in Shared Lives felt that their Shared Lives carer’s support improved their social life.
- 76% of people in Shared Lives 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 and 77% of these felt their Shared Lives carer’s support helped them feel more involved.
- 81% of people in Shared Lives felt their Shared Lives carer’s support helped them have more choice in their daily life.
- 79% of people in Shared Lives felt their Shared Lives carer’s support improved their physical health.
- 81% of people in Shared Lives felt their Shared Lives carer’s support make their emotional health better.

### Care Quality Commission (CQC)

CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. The CQC monitors, inspects, and regulates care services, including Shared Lives schemes.



As of October 2022, the CQC found that:

- 11% of Shared Lives schemes were rated as “outstanding,” an annual increase of 3%. This is +2% higher than the care sector average of 9%.
- 86% of Shared Lives schemes were rated as “good.” This is +14% higher than the care sector average of 72%.
- 3% of Shared Lives schemes were rated as “requires improvement,” an annual decrease of 1%. This -14% fewer than the care sector average of 17%.
- 0% of Shared Lives schemes were rated as “inadequate,” -1% fewer than the care sector average of 1%.

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## Conclusion

In the face of many ongoing challenges, the Shared Lives sector has remained resilient and dedicated to providing high quality, person-centred care. 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 passion, dedication and continued hard work of those working within Shared Lives has enabled the sector to weather the successive and overlapping storms of Covid-19, the cost-of-living crisis, and the lack of social care resources. 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.

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.

Despite its cost-effectiveness, resilience, and high quality, Shared Lives is still a 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. Investment would allow Shared Lives to become a household name, unlock technical support and operational funding, and overcome legal barriers which hamper the efforts of thousands of Shared Lives carers and Shared Lives schemes.

This year, Shared Lives Plus relaunches the #Invaluable campaign. We invite elected members, Directors of Adult Social Services, and friends and colleagues who work in or draw on social care, to support the campaign, to commit to reviewing Shared Lives carers pay, and to help protect the future of Shared Lives.





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

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Reg Charity Number (England and Wales) 1095562

