

Extending Shared Lives to Care Leavers

By [Shared Lives Plus](#), a registered charity

Shared Lives Plus, the UK membership charity for people living and working in Shared Lives care or Homeshare, **is expanding its foster-style care model to support young people leaving care.** Traditionally aimed at adults with learning disabilities, Shared Lives is now being offered to care leavers aged 16 and over across 16 council areas in England, Scotland, and Wales over the next two years.

The Shared Lives model pairs young people or adults in need of long-term support with a carefully approved carer. Together, they share the carer's home, family life, and community. This arrangement provides a stable, nurturing environment where individuals can develop independence, learn life skills, and feel part of a supportive network.

Half of those using Shared Lives live with their chosen carer as part of their household, while the other half visit for day support or short breaks. The initiative is built on the belief that a home is more than just a place to live—it is a foundation for well-being, growth, and connection.

For young people leaving care, the transition to adulthood can be particularly challenging, especially for those with learning disabilities, mental health needs, or life-limiting conditions. Shared Lives provides a consistent, supportive base during this critical period, ensuring that care leavers have the help they need to thrive.

The programme matches care-experienced young people with families or individuals who celebrate their unique gifts and identities. Beyond providing a home, carers help young people engage in local youth and leisure activities, enabling them to build confidence, skills, and a sense of belonging.

Shared Lives for care leavers is now available in areas including:

- England: Birmingham, Newcastle, Portsmouth, Oxfordshire, and the London boroughs of Hounslow, Islington, and Hackney.
- Wales: Powys.
- Scotland: Borders Council.

Shared Lives is proven to have a profound impact on individuals and communities:

- 85% of participants reported improved social lives, and 89% felt more involved in their community.
- The consistent support of Shared Lives carers fosters emotional and mental health improvements.

- Young people gain essential life skills and confidence, preparing them for a successful future.
- Shared Lives care typically costs **£30,000 less per person annually** compared to traditional care models. Expanding Shared Lives to more regions could generate public sector savings exceeding **£100 million per year** while improving outcomes for care leavers and their families.

There are 10,000 Shared Lives carers in the UK, recruited and trained through one of 146 regulated local schemes. Carers undergo rigorous recruitment and training to ensure they can provide safe, personalised care. The [Care Quality Commission \(CQC\)](#) rates the sector highly, with 96% of services classified as good or outstanding.

During the pandemic, Shared Lives Plus adapted quickly, launching an online recruitment and approval process that recruited nearly 200 new carers and facilitated over 100 matches in less than six months.

With funding from the [Rayne Foundation](#), [Segalman Trust](#), and [Headley Trust](#), Shared Lives Plus is committed to scaling the programme for care leavers across the UK. Their ambition is to make Shared Lives an integral part of every local authority's offer for care-experienced young people.

Katie Brown, Director of Adult Social Care at [North East Lincolnshire Council](#), advocates for Shared Lives to be embedded in all local offers, stating: *"I have seen first-hand the difference Shared Lives care makes... The challenge and the opportunity for this programme is for local authorities to work with young people and local partners to develop services together."*

See more: [Care leavers and young people in transition](#)



85%

OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED IMPROVED SOCIAL LIVES