

Derbyshire Shared Lives Scheme

Carer Panel Member Guidance

About Shared Lives Derbyshire

Derbyshire County Council's Adult Care Shared Lives scheme is a countywide care and support service for people who want to live independently in their local area, with the support of a family and community network. It is an alternative to supported living or residential care. It offers a more personal model of care that builds meaningful, long-term relationships and encourages independence and community involvement.

In Shared Lives, an adult or young person with support needs is matched with a Shared Lives carer. The supported person may move in with the Shared Lives carer as part of a long-term arrangement, visit for a short break or receive day support.

Carers work towards encouraging independence and confidence building. A key part of the role is about enabling people to make decisions about their care and support, while helping them build relationships within the wider community and the family home.

Carers are paid to provide support and are often people who have previously fostered a person moving through preparation for adulthood. Together, the person needing support and the Shared Lives carer share the carer's family, interests and community life.

Shared Lives is not just about paid care and support; it is fundamentally about providing opportunity, choice and a sense of belonging. Shared Lives is designed to fit into daily life and is flexible enough to allow people who work but also want to provide care, the opportunity to do so.

Shared Lives carers come from diverse backgrounds and provide care and support in their own homes. They may live alone, with a partner or with other family members. Carers open their homes and provide support with day-to-day tasks, as well as emotional and physical support. They also give people the opportunity to be part of the community and to have somewhere they can call home.

The team assesses potential carers and matches and monitors Shared Lives arrangements. Anyone referred for a Shared Lives arrangement will have a Care Act assessment to establish whether they meet the eligibility criteria. They will also have an area worker who is independent of the scheme to ensure that their needs are represented.

Shared Lives is regulated and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and achieved an overall rating of 'good' at its last inspection in 2018. All carers must meet specific requirements, complete mandatory training and undergo a DBS check. Carers are approved following an evidence-based assessment, which is presented to the carer panel.

The scheme is supported daily by one Shared Lives Deputy Manager, two Shared Lives Social Workers and two Shared Lives Social Care Practitioners. A Service Manager has overarching responsibility for the scheme and is the CQC registered manager.

Carer Panel Terms of Reference

The Shared Lives Approval Panel is made up of members from associated organisations and partner agencies. It is responsible for reviewing assessments of potential Shared Lives carers. Panel members jointly make recommendations on the suitability of applicants, based on the evidence provided. The panel acts as a 'critical friend', ensuring that the evidence is robustly reviewed in relation to each applicant's capability, safety and values.

Core Purpose and Responsibilities

- **Approval Recommendations:** To review assessments of new carers and recommend suitability, approval, deferral or rejection.
- **Approval Terms:** To determine the scope of approval, including the number of supported people (up to a maximum of three), the type of support (long-term, short breaks or day support) and specific needs (for example, mental health needs, learning disabilities or autism).
- **Review and De-approval:** To make recommendations on changes to a carer's approval status following a review, allegation or complaint.
- **Quality Assurance:** To ensure that the assessment process is robust, meets national standards and confirms that carers have completed all essential required checks, including DBS, references, medical and health and safety checks.

Panel Composition and Process

- **Independence:** As well as key panel members who lead and work within the scheme, the panel should include a number of independent representatives.
- **Documentation:** Reports will be sent to members at least two weeks before the panel meeting. Panel members are expected to read the relevant evidence and attend prepared.
- **Applicant Participation:** Prospective Shared Lives carers are encouraged to contribute to and comment on reports written about them. They will have access to the final report presented to panel members.
- **Records and Decision - Making:** A record is kept of all recommendations, and applicants are sent letters confirming the decisions made.

Carer panel structure

- Panel Chair
- Representatives from Public Health Resilience, Advocacy, the Community Safety Team and the Disabled Children's/Preparing for Adulthood service.

Panel support team

- The Panel Adviser and approver is the Service Manager, who is the CQC Registered Manager responsible for the Shared Lives scheme. They are present to support the panel process but will not contribute to discussions or influence recommendations.
- Shared Lives Allocated Worker
- Note taker, Shared Lives Business Services
- The prospective carer will always be invited to attend the panel to answer any questions, should they wish to do so. However, their Shared Lives worker will usually represent their views.
- Co-production is fundamental to how Derbyshire County Council arranges and manages its services. People who use the Shared Lives scheme are involved in decision-making in other areas of the scheme. However, involving people who need support from the scheme in the panel approval process could create a conflict of interest.
- Panel Chair - Group Manager
- Panel Approver & Registered Service Manager - Service Manager
- Shared Lives Scheme Manager - Deputy Manager
- Nominated recommendation resolution officer – Assistant Director

Key Principles

- **Safeguarding:** The panel must be sure that there is robust evidence to satisfy that arrangements will be safe, appropriate, personalised and dignified, with the person's wellbeing at their centre. This is particularly important where Shared Lives carers provide personal care.
- **Matching:** To focus on the suitability and compatibility of the match between the carer and the person who needs support.
- **Equality and Diversity:** To treat applicants fairly, support inclusion and maintain zero tolerance of discrimination on any grounds, including age, sex, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

Pre Panel preparation

Members will be provided with a carer evidence information pack two weeks prior to Panel. It is a requirement that panel members familiarise themselves with the cases from the documentation pack in anticipation of making their recommendations based on the evidence provided.

For new applicants, the information pack will include:

- ✓ Shared Lives Carer Assessment
- ✓ Applicant's Day in the Life (completed by applicant)
- ✓ Applicant's Personal Profile (completed by applicant)
- ✓ Applicant's Community Network Map (completed by applicant)

- ✓ Blank Shared Lives Panel Record Form

For existing approved Shared Lives carers, the information pack will include:

- ✓ Assessment Report detailing reasons for Panel Review

Panel Frequency

The carer panel is usually held twice a year, with the recommendation that between four and six carers are presented for approval at each meeting. There may be occasions when this number differs, for example if a scheduled panel meeting has been missed.

At times, there may be a higher number of applicants. If this happens, it may be necessary to hold an extraordinary sitting of the panel to support momentum and encourage caring opportunities.

On occasion, an urgent panel recommendation may be required, for example where new evidence has emerged that could affect a previous recommendation. In these circumstances, not all members may be able to attend at short notice. However, a minimum of two panel members must be present, together with the panel support team.

Panel Recommendation options

Panel members must provide recommendations which align to the CQC assessment framework for Social Care and Health providers in England.

A **well-led** Shared Lives service is responsible for engaging effectively with carers and people who use the service, providing panel members with sufficient evidence to determine whether a prospective carer can deliver support that is:

- ✓ **Safe**
- ✓ **Effective**
- ✓ **Caring**
- ✓ **Responsive to people's needs**

The options available to the panel are:

- **Recommended for approval** - Members are confident that the evidence provided in advance and during the panel process fully demonstrates that the applicant has the skills, values, knowledge and experience to be approved as a Shared Lives carer, and that all safety checks are of a satisfactory level.
- **Recommended for approval with conditions** - The panel is satisfied with the evidence provided before and during the meeting but recommends that approval is subject to specified conditions, for example:
 - limited number of people the prospective Shared Lives carer can support
 - gender of people they can support
 - type of service the prospective Shared Lives carer can provide e.g., full-time support/day time support only
 - approval to support a named person or people (Foster carers transitioning to Shared Lives - no matching required).

- **Approval not recommended** - Panel members are not satisfied that evidence indicates an applicant is suitable, or that checks and references have revealed something which constitutes an unacceptable level of risk for example.
- **Recommendation for deferral** - The panel considers that further information is required to support robust, evidence-based and defensible decision-making.
- **Recommendation to overturn approval** – New information has emerged, or an incident has occurred involving a previously approved carer. Having considered the evidence, the panel recommends that the person is no longer suitable to be a Shared Lives carer. The carer and their chosen representative have the right to attend the meeting at which overturning approval is considered.

Decision Making

The Registered Manager of the Shared Lives Scheme is the final decision maker on whether to approve, reject or defer an applicant having carefully considered the Panel Recommendations.

Decision making will be escalated to the Assistant Director responsible for the Shared Lives Service under the following circumstances:

- Where the Registered Manager is not in agreement with the recommendation of the Panel.
- Where the Panel is made up of an even number of members and the recommendations are split equally in favour and against a particular decision.
- A decision to overturn the previous carer approval is required.

Panel Governance

The Derbyshire Shared Lives Scheme is a member of 'Shared Lives Plus'. The panel process including its aims, objectives and function are aligned to the guidance set out by Shared Lives Plus who are the approved umbrella organisation by the Local Government Organisation (LGA).

Derbyshire County Council Adult Social Care seeks to operate its Shared Lives panel process and approvals in line with the CQC assessment framework and its underpinning fundamental principles. These promote safety, accountability and a 'home first' approach that enables people to live independently with support from and within their local community by:

- Assuring quality
- Ensuring regulatory compliance
- Overseeing that any changes to approval are appropriate, taking accountability for safety and wellbeing as priority.
- Defensible decision-making: While the panel makes recommendations, the Registered Manager or Head of Service ultimately reviews them and determines the outcome of an application or review.

- Independence: The panel will include members who are independent of Adult Social Care to maintain objectivity and balance.
- Provision of a fair reviewing structure: The Shared Lives Allocated worker will present the assessment report and recommendations, and the carer has the right to be present at the panel meeting.
- Carer Agreement and accountability: Approved carers must sign a contract that binds them to the standards set by the panel and the scheme.
- Panel accountability for data protection, confidentiality and declarations of conflicts of interest: the Shared Lives Allocated worker who is independent of the decision-making process will record all panel discussions and decisions. Records must be distributed, stored and shared securely and in line with the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR principles. Before attending their first panel meeting, members must sign the panel terms and conditions in Appendix A, which cover conflicts of interest and confidentiality.

Appendix A

Derbyshire County Council Shared Lives Panel Terms & Conditions Agreement

All new panel members to sign below and return to the Shared Lives panel administrator prior to their first panel attendance

Section 1

Confidentiality Agreement - Access to Personal Information relating to your role on the Derbyshire Shared Lives Panel

In your role as a panel member, Derbyshire County Council will grant you access to information required to carry out your duties ('the Permitted Purpose'). I understand that, during the course of my Shared Lives panel duties, I will learn of and/or have access to personal data relating to:

- Approved Shared Lives Carers, and members of their family and household.
- Potential Shared Lives carers, and members of their family and household.
- People who use or intend to use a Shared Lives Arrangement.

I understand that some individuals will be vulnerable and personal data will include sensitive personally identifiable data. I may also have access to confidential information relating to the Council.

I therefore undertake to always act in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

In addition, I will:

- Keep information and personal data that I am granted access to, either in written form or verbally confidential at all times.
- Not disclose or allow it to be disclosed in whole or in part to any third party without the prior written consent of the Director of Adult Social Care and Health or designated Officer.
- Not use it in whole or in part for any purpose except for the Permitted Purpose of Carer panel recommendations.
- Treat any data as sensitive and confidential if I am in doubt, until its status is clarified in writing by the scheme's Registered Manager.
- Not make use of such information or data that I am party to for personal gain or benefit or to further my personal interests or interests of others.
- Protect the Council against any claim, damage, loss, cost and/or expense arising out of my acts, omissions or negligence in relation to my obligations set out in this form.
- Accept that my obligations which are subject to the authority's Audit Procedures continue after my employment with the Council or my participation in the panel process expires.

Section 2

Conflict of Interest

I do not have any conflict of interest that prevents my full and impartial participation in the panel process. I will inform the scheme's Registered Manager immediately if I become aware of a potential conflict of interest. Examples include:

- You have more than a 'business level' awareness or relationship with a prospective carer and/or person receiving support from the Shared Lives Scheme.
- You have more than a 'business level' relationship with any other panel member or member of the panel support team including the Chair and the Approver (Registered Manager of the scheme).
- If, on receiving panel documentation, you become aware that you may personally know a prospective carer or person who uses the service, you must delete that person's documentation and inform the Registered Manager through the scheme's administrator as soon as you become aware. This does not prevent you from taking part in the wider panel process but will preclude you from recommendations relating to a specific known person.

Agreement

I agree to uphold all terms and conditions for panel members as stated in **Appendix A sections 1 and 2** above.

I understand that any disregard of the terms and conditions will result in exclusion from the panel process and could lead to disciplinary action by the relevant employing organisation.

Signed:.....
(Panel Member)

Signed:.....
(Registered Manager)

Date:

Date:.....

Panel Member Name:	
Role and Title:	
Organisation:	
Address:	
Telephone number & Email Address:	