

HB 3

National Assembly for Wales

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Housing (Wales) Bill: Stage 1

Response from: Shared Lives Plus

Introduction to Shared Lives Plus

Shared Lives Plus is the UK network of very small, family and community based care and support solutions for older and disabled people: it is all about ordinary people and families contributing to the care and support of local older and disabled people, sometimes in fairly extraordinary ways. Our membership includes Shared Lives (formerly called Adult Placement), Homeshare and micro-enterprise.

Our members use different approaches to achieve the same goals for people:

- To be in control of their services and their lives.
- To pursue ordinary lives within their chosen families and relationships.
- To be valued by their communities and able to pursue their goals.

Shared Lives Plus' members deliver services which:

- are built around individuals, their strengths and potential;
- promote equality and value diversity;
- are safe and support people to take risks in pursuit of their goals;
- focus on personal development or on stability, as the individual chooses;
- are cost-effective, with consistently better outcomes than alternatives.

In Shared Lives a person with support or care needs becomes a regular visitor, or even moves in with, a registered Shared Lives carer and they share family and community life. In many cases that person becomes a settled part of a supportive family, although Shared Lives is also used as day support, as breaks for unpaid family carers, as home from hospital care and as a stepping stone for someone to get their own place.

There are over 500 Shared Lives carer households in Wales, of which over 300 are Shared Lives Plus members (www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk). Shared Lives carers are recruited, trained and approved by a Shared Lives scheme, which is regulated by the CSSIW. There are 11 schemes which cover 21 unitary authorities in Wales. Shared Lives is unique in regulated adult support, in that Shared Lives carers and those they care for are matched for compatibility and then develop real relationships, with the carer acting as 'extended family', so that someone can live at the heart of their community but in a supportive family setting.

Research carried out by Social Finance and Community Catalysts shows that Shared Lives schemes, an alternative to home care and care homes, are considerably cheaper than other forms of long-term care – the average net savings from a long-term Shared Lives arrangement per-

person per year are £26,000 for people with learning disabilities and £8,000 for people with mental health needs <http://bit.ly/19NhnGB>

Homeshare is where someone who needs some help to live independently in their own home is matched with someone who has a housing need and can provide a little support. “Householders” are often older people who own or are tenants in their own home but have developed some support needs or have become isolated or anxious about living alone. “Homesharers” are often younger people, students, or key public service workers who cannot afford housing where they work.

The Homesharer agrees to provide an agreed level of help and support to the Householder whilst living in their home for an agreed period of time. Homeshare is not a regulated service and cannot include the provision of personal care. Homesharers are not charged rent, but usually agree to contribute to household bills and it may be agreed that other costs such as food will be shared.

We also support ordinary people to set up micro-enterprises which meet the needs of a local individual or small group. Some of these enterprises are set up by front line workers previously based in large organisations, others are set up by disabled or older people themselves. They often draw on the resources of the local community. Some are funded through personal budgets or paid for with people’s own money (self-funding). Some are carried out on a voluntary or part-voluntary basis, with any payments simply covering the cost of providing the service. Some micro-enterprises are co-operatives which may be owned jointly by people who deliver and people who use and pay for the service.

Many micro-enterprises operate “below the radar” of local government and NHS. Micro providers face growing regulatory, legislative and other barriers and as a result many fail. In most areas their numbers are falling, but some areas draw on the support of our social enterprise, Community Catalysts, to create the conditions in which they can survive and thrive.

Shared Lives and Homeshare as a housing solution

Shared Lives and Homeshare can provide integrated solutions to housing and social care issues. For example, Shared Lives addresses some of the challenges in seeking suitable accommodation for homeless people and young people outside of conventional shared accommodation provision, such as hostels, foyers and bed and breakfast. Unlike these large and sometimes faceless institutions, Shared Lives delivers highly personalised support tailored to the individual’s needs.

Homeshare on the other hand enables older people to remain in their own homes for longer, preventing their deterioration and reliance on other expensive forms of care, whilst it also allows home seekers to access affordable accommodation. This is particularly important when considering the lack of affordable housing for younger people and the housing needs of individuals within the context of the increase of the Shared Accommodation Rate age threshold to 35, which will leave many younger people unable to live independently.

Models such as Shared Lives and Homeshare are not just about delivering care or just about providing housing. They are about enabling individuals to build new relationships and become part of the wider community whilst having their housing and care needs met. The cornerstone of Shared Lives is the careful matching of individuals according to their needs, likes and dislikes.

Shared Lives schemes in Wales report on the longevity of these arrangements, many of which last for decades.

Shared Lives and Homeshare arrangements reduce reliance on sparse and limited social housing because accommodation is provided in the private home of community members. This is not the same as having a lodger or acting as a private landlord; Shared Lives carers and Homeshare householders share their home, their lives, their interests and their social networks with the person who lives with them. In addition, Shared Lives and Homeshare arrangements are safe and transparent, as they are provided in the heart of the community and are monitored by registered schemes.

Finally, Shared Lives can deliver significant direct cashable savings as demonstrated in the Social Finance report. It can also deliver indirect savings by providing stability to vulnerable adults which in turn leads to a reduction in what is often labelled as 'challenging behaviour'. It reduces reliance on out of area placements and prevents the need for other expensive residential solutions such as residential care homes, nursing homes, housing services for offenders and/ or homeless people, hospitals etc.

Shared Lives case studies

Nothing demonstrates better the value of Shared Lives and Homeshare than real life stories of people who use these models of support.

- Helen

Helen was an 84 year old woman living on her own in a small rural community. She had suffered from dementia for some years and was receiving some informal support from Rhiannon, who would visit twice a day to make sure that she had taken her medication, had some food, lit her fire etc. Over the past winter, Rhiannon was becoming increasingly concerned as Helen was letting her fire go out, not eating regularly, becoming more disorientated and struggling with her personal care. Rhiannon alerted social services which resulted in Rhiannon being trained and approved as a Shared Lives carer with the Powys Shared Lives Scheme. Helen had been a visitor to Rhiannon's house for over 50 years and had known Rhiannon's husband all his life and Rhiannon for over 13 years. She moved in with Rhiannon and the familiarity meant that she felt at home straight away. As she did not have to move away to receive support, Helen has been able to keep all of her friendships and connections. Her Care Manager and family have said that she has been doing really well.

- Darren

Daren, who has a learning disability, moved in with Shared Lives carers June and Rob six years ago when he was 18. He had been in a specialist foster care placement for offenders, having committed serious sexual offences within his own family. Because of the level of risk, only one secure £5,000 per week service was willing to support Darren. June says, "We felt this lad wasn't been given any chance. I had worked as a mental health nurse working with people who had been sexually abused, so I was aware of the issues. We had a fantastic probation officer who saw him twice a week and a policeman who carried out risk assessments and talked bluntly about

repercussions to Darren. My husband and I were working in shifts to ensure that Darren never went more than 10 minutes unsupervised. We didn't take any breaks for two or three years because we couldn't find appropriate accommodation. There has been no re-offending in six years. He works in a charity shop three days a week and plays football in a local club. He is aiming to live in semi-independent accommodation. Darren is desperate for friendship and can be taken for a ride. He is also a lot of fun and has a good sense of humour. He enjoys reading and watching Arsenal. He says if he hadn't come to us, he would be in prison."

- **Barbara**

Barbara is in her 40s. She has been known to mental health services for many years. She has lived in different settings with varying support and had intermittent periods as an inpatient. For the past two years she was staying with her elderly mother who is now in a care home. Barbara has a diagnosis of schizophrenia. She suffers from extreme anxiety and cannot manage to stay on her own overnight. Barbara moved into a long term Shared Lives arrangement three months ago. She has started participating in community groups, travelling on her own by bus to the town centre. She has been away for a weekend with her Shared Lives carers and is planning a short holiday: this will be the first holiday she has ever had.

Homeshare case study: Gillian and Neil

Gillian had a house; Neil needed somewhere to live. Gillian was worried about being alone and the responsibility of keeping things working; Neil was largely retired, and could fix leaking taps.

Gillian is 88, Neil 61, and they found each other through Homeshare. Today the pair of them share Gillian's beautiful red-brick converted barn in a West Sussex village, with its beamed sitting room and fruit trees in the garden. No money changes hands, but Neil drives Gillian to doctor's appointments and the supermarket and provides practical help around the house. He is a reassuring and useful presence, both physically and psychologically.

Gillian says, "We both put our names forward for Homeshare and, after vetting, it was decided we might be a good match. We met first in a neutral place, at the house of old friends of mine, and then we had a couple of meals out. We haven't got a terrific lot of things in common, but perhaps that's why we get on. I think I get more out of it than Neil does." This case study is from [Agebomb](#).

If you would like more information about the provision of these services in Wales, please contact the Shared Lives Plus Wales Development Worker

Miriam Merkova – miriam@sharedlivesplus.org.uk – 07867 456 475