

# Worcestershire County Council

## Shared Lives

### Inspection report

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### Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

At this inspection we found the service remained good.

The Shared Lives scheme recruits, trains and supports Shared Lives carers. Shared Lives carers provide personal care and support to people who live in their family home, which enables people to live as independently as possible. The scheme supports people aged over 18 who have a learning disability. Shared Lives workers are also employed by the scheme, their role is to assess, monitor and support Shared Lives carers and the people they support. There were 113 people who were using the service at the time of our visit.

People continued to receive safe care as they were supported by staff who knew how to protect them from harm. Staff were aware of people's individual risks and plans were in place to minimise these while maintaining the person's independence. People lived in the carers home, the registered manager told us that there was a maximum number of people the carers could support. This was based on people's individual needs, the carers capacity within their home and dependency level of people who the carer was already supporting.

The service continued to be effective. The registered manager supported staff by arranging training so staff developed the skills to provide care and support to people, which was in-line with best practice. People receive care and support that was in line with their consent. People were supported by staff who knew their individual dietary requirements and how to support them in the right way. People had access to healthcare professionals when they required them.

The service remained caring towards people. People were treated well which had a positive impact on their well-being. People we spoke with told us that all staff spoke kindly to them and they felt happy and comfortable in their homes. Staff helped people to make choices about their care and the views and decisions they had made about their care were listened and acted upon.

The service remained responsive to people's needs. People were involved in the planning and review of their care and support. People were supported to continue with their hobbies and interests which promoted their independence. Information was provided to people should they wish to raise a complaint. The provider had not received any complaints over the last 12 months.

The service remained well-led. The registered manager demonstrated clear leadership. Staff were supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively, so that people received care and support in-line with their needs and wishes. The checks the registered manager completed focused on people's experience of care. Where areas for improvement were identified, systems were in place to ensure lessons were learnt and used to improve the service delivery.

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

<b>Is the service safe?</b> The service remained safe.	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service effective?</b> The service remained effective	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service caring?</b> The service remained caring.	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service responsive?</b> The service remained responsive.	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service well-led?</b> The service remained well-led.	<b>Good</b> ●

# Shared Lives

## **Detailed findings**

### Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection checked whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

At the last inspection on 4 August 2014 the service was rated as good. This was a comprehensive inspection and took place on 20 and 26 April 2017 and was announced. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides care to people in their own homes; we needed to be sure that someone was available in the office and that time could be given for arrangements to be made so we could talk with people and their carers. This inspection was completed by one inspector.

We reviewed the provider information return (PIR) that the provider submitted to us. This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make.

As part of the inspection we reviewed information we held about the service including statutory notifications that had been submitted. Statutory notifications include information about important events which the provider is required to send us by law. We also spoke with the local authority about information they held about the provider.

We spoke with six people who used the service and six shared lives carers. We spoke with four shared lives workers, the registered manager and the provider manager. We looked at six people's care records. We also looked at complaints and compliments; audits around medication and care records and the recruitment process for two potential shared lives carers.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

All people we spoke with felt safe from harm. One person told us "[Carers name] has got my best interests at heart". They continued to tell us how their carer supported them to make decisions about who they chose to spend time with. They told us about a previous friend who could have gotten them into trouble and told us they were supported by their carer to stop that friendship to ensure they stayed safe. Shared Lives carers told us how the training around maintaining people's safety and continued support from the shared lives workers, helped them to support people in a way which kept them safe but promoted their independence. One shared lives carer told us, "Any concerns at all, I know I have that support network there, who really do help".

Staff told us that people were encouraged to be independent and this was the ethos of the shared lives scheme. One person told us, "I have my phone with me, so if I need to ring for help I know I can call, [shared lives carer and workers names]". Another person told us how they had a card with their carers contact details on. They told us that if they felt unsafe while out in the community they could go to a shop and give them the card, so the shop keeper could contact their carer. A Shared lives carer said, "[Person's name] needs to make mistakes, as that's how you learn". One shared lives worker told us, "It's about positive risk taking".

People were supported in a carers home, people we spoke with felt they had the right level of support from their carer and the workers who visited them throughout the year. The carers told us they supported people who they had been matched with and were able to support them appropriately. One carer told us that they had begun supporting another person recently and this was only done when they and the person were ready. The registered manager told us that each situation was different and individual to the person and the amount of support they needed, to the capacity of the carers home. The provider was recruiting more carers as the service was growing. We saw there were robust checks in place to ensure the carers were safe and had the right values to support people.

People we spoke with did not have any concerns about how their medication was managed. We spoke with carers who administered medication and they told us they had training and support to do this safely. Records of medication administered and the carers knowledge were checked by the shared lives workers to ensure people received their medicines as required. Where there were any areas that needed addressing, these were put into place.

## Is the service effective?

### Our findings

People told us they were supported by staff who knew how to care for them in the right way. Staff felt the training they had received was useful and related to the people they cared for. For example, one shared lives carer explained that they attended a six week advanced diabetes course, which they felt prepared them to support a new person who had diabetes. One newer shared lives worker told us the training they received was preparing them for their role. They continued to say they were supported by a good network of staff, who were, "Always approachable if I'm unsure of anything". A further shared lives worker told us how the registered manager encouraged them to develop their knowledge and said, "They give you the opportunity to progress in your career".

People felt their views and wishes were respected and that staff sought their consent first. Staff we spoke with understood their roles and responsibilities in regards to gaining consent and what this meant or how it affected the way the person was to be cared for. We saw that people's capacity was considered when consent was needed or when risk assessments were carried out. We found the registered manager ensured people received care and treatment that was in-line with their consent.

People told us that staff supported them with meal planning and preparation. One person told us how they had been supported by their carer to eat a healthy balanced diet and was proud to tell us of their steady weight loss and how this had benefitted their overall fitness. Staff had a good understanding of healthy eating for people and how they were to support them. We saw people's individual eating and drinking care plans were detailed and provided clear guidance for staff to follow.

People told us they were supported to access health care professionals when they needed this. Shared lives carers told us they had the information needed to ensure the person was attending their scheduled appointments. Shared lives workers explained how they had a good network and knowledge of healthcare professionals available to support people, for example, if a person required professional advice around sexual health the shared lives worker would be able to source that support.

## Is the service caring?

### Our findings

All people we spoke with felt all their carer and shared lives worker were kind and caring towards them. One person said, "They [carer] are brilliant". Another person told us about their shared lives carer they said, "They are my carer, they are my friend". We saw how people and their carers interacted with each other and saw how people were relaxed with them, laughed with them and hugged them. We saw how people interacted with their shared lives worker and how relaxed their conversations were. It was clear from what we saw that the shared lives workers and the person's carer knew the person well. A shared lives carer said, "The support from them [workers] is fabulous. I wouldn't be able to do this without them".

People felt involved in their care and that their wishes were listened to and respected. For example, one person told us how the shared lives worker would ask them if they wanted support to give up smoking, they told us they did not want to stop and how they felt listened to by their carer and shared lives worker. The shared lives worker told us that while they had discussed this with the person, it was their choice to continue smoking and they respected this.

People we spoke with felt their carers supported them in a way which promoted their dignity and privacy. One person told us about a 'house rule', where if a person's bedroom door was closed they should not enter. They told us that this had helped them to maintain their privacy, and told us how another person living in the home had previously walked into their room uninvited. They felt that this 'house rule' stopped this from happening and that the carer had understood the importance of their privacy. All staff spoke respectfully about people when they were talking to us or having discussions with other staff members about any care needs.

## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

People told us they were supported by their carer in the right way. One person told us how their carer was supporting them to learn to read and write. They said that this had given them confidence when out in the community, they said, "I've come on leaps and bounds, I can write notes to let [carers name] know where I am when I go out." Carers told us that communication was very good and that the shared lives workers helped them and the people they supported.

People told us they had regular reviews which looked at different aspects of their care. We saw one example where it was discussed with the person that an activity they attended had become unsuitable for them as their independence had increased. We saw how different options that may be more suitable for them had been discussed and how the shared lives worker could put this in place. The person told us they were happy with this new arrangement.

Shared lives workers told us they worked well as a team and had good communication on all levels. They told us that they were allocated people to support based on their needs, which meant their workload was more balanced, so they could respond to situations in a timely way. The shared lives carers who we spoke with felt they had a good network of other carers who lived locally to them, which meant they had support and contact with other carers who were in similar situations to themselves.

All the people and staff we spoke with did not express any concerns or complaints to us. Everyone felt listened to and felt the registered manager was receptive and responsive to any concerns. The provider shared information with people about how to raise a complaint about the care they received. This information gave people who used the service details about expectations around how and when the complaint would be responded to, along with details for external agencies where they were not satisfied with the outcome. This was also available in a format suitable for people who used the service. We looked at the provider's complaints over the last 12 months and found that no complaints had been received.



## Is the service well-led?

### Our findings

People and their carers we spoke with felt involved in the service and felt able to share ideas with the registered manager. One carer said, "She [registered managers name] has started local meeting instead of one large central meeting. The local meetings are very good, as you get the opportunity to discuss things properly with the manager, as before you felt you couldn't always talk to management". All people and carers we spoke with said the staff who worked in the office would ask how they were and if everything was going well.

People and carers told us they knew who the registered manager was and found them to be approachable and responsive to their requests. Shared lives workers we spoke with told us that the registered manager was very approachable and always available. They told us that the registered manager had been in post for one year and they were ensuring they took the time to visit all the people who the service supported. One shared lives worker said, "[Registered manager] has really reached out to people and their carers". Another shared lives worker said, "She really cares, has a real passion for supporting people in the right way. She never lets anyone down". A further shared lives worker told us that the provider manager was also, "Very open". All staff we spoke with told us they felt a sense of pride and felt listened to and valued by management.

The registered manager told us that they were working on care records to make the process more inclusive for people. They told us that this meant staff would gain a better understanding of people's individual goals and how they could work flexibly to make this work better for people.

We saw that the registered manager sought people and staff views and completed their own checks on the service. They had devised an action plan and was working through this. For example, working with the learning and development team to tailor the training specific to shared lives carers.

The registered manager told us they had been working with people and staff to put in place better communication. They told us they had worked with the carers to, "Break down the barriers by listening to them". They told us that now carers meetings were held at a local level they had received good feedback that this was working well. They continued to say how they had held a Christmas party which was a good way to meet people and their carer's. All people and carers we spoke with spoke highly of this event and were looking forward to another party in the summer months.