



## Shared Lives MK

### Service User Information - The Matching Process



A Shared Lives arrangement can only be successful if the Shared Lives carer is able to meet the person's needs and if the person and the Shared Lives carer(s) and other people in their household all get on well together. Shared Lives MK scheme therefore gathers together all the important information about the person and about our Shared Lives carers and we use this to work out which Shared Lives carers will suit the person. This is known as matching.

### How matching will happen?

All our Shared Lives carers have been properly recruited, assessed and trained by us before they are able to start working with the person or anybody else who requires support. During this time we build up our knowledge of them and their families and of the skills and experience they have to enable them to support someone.

Once we receive a referral for the person who will be using or living in a Shared Lives arrangement, we start to build up our knowledge of the person and their needs, wishes and aspirations.

These are the sorts of things we take into account when working out which of our Shared Lives carers might be suitable for the person:

- the person's assessed needs and wishes
- any identified risks/ risk management
- the skills, knowledge and experience of the Shared Lives carer(s)
- the personal interests that the person and the Shared Lives carer(s) have
- the location of the Shared Lives carer(s) home
- the facilities and accommodation the Shared Lives carer(s) can offer the person
- the cultures and/or faiths that are important to the person and the Shared Lives carer(s)

If we find any Shared Lives carers whose skills can be matched with the person's needs, we will give the person and/or the person's representative information about all of them. The information will be in a format that the person can understand easily. We will also give information about the person to those Shared Lives carers that we think will make a good match with the person.

If the person and/or the person's representative would then like to meet up with one or all of the Shared Lives carers we will make arrangements for this. This enables the person and the Shared Lives carer(s) to find out more about each other and to see for themselves whether the person has things in common after all. This kind of visit is called an introduction and is part of the matching process. An introduction can include an overnight stay if the person is thinking about having short breaks with the Shared Lives carer(s) or of living with them for a while.

We will make sure that the person and/or the person's representative understands the matching process and also that all our Shared Lives carers understand it too. As it is so important that the person and the Shared Lives carer(s) get on well together, they both have a say in whether the arrangement could be a suitable one. It will not cause a problem if either the person or the Shared Lives carer(s) does not wish to go ahead with more introductory visits or with making a longer-term arrangement.

The decision about whether a Shared Lives arrangement is right for the person is a very important one. We understand that it takes time and proper information to make this sort of decision and that the opportunity for the person and the person's family or representative to visit and 'test drive' an arrangement will be a helpful part of that process.

## **How introductions will take place?**

An essential part of making a decision is having all the information the person needs beforehand.

The person will be given information about the Shared Lives MK scheme and about any Shared Lives carers who may be suitable for the person as part of our referral and matching procedures. Visiting the Shared Lives carer(s) adds to this by giving them and the person and/or the person's representative an opportunity to experience the arrangement directly. The Shared Lives carer(s) can also visit the person if the person wishes.

The person will usually be able to:

- meet the Shared Lives carer(s) and other members of their family or household and find out what they are really like
- see the house, the bedroom (if the person will be staying there) and the neighbourhood
- have a meal there
- have an overnight stay (if the person will be having short breaks or living there)
- see what kinds of records are kept by the Shared Lives carer(s)
- speak in private with other people who are already making use of a Shared Lives arrangement
- ask any questions they may have.

The person and/or the person's representative can visit until the person feels comfortable about going ahead with a longer-term arrangement. However either the person or the Shared Lives carer(s) can call a halt to the introductions at any point if they do not feel the arrangement will be suitable after all.

Even if the person does decide to go ahead with a longer-term arrangement, there will still be a trial period when the person can change their mind. The length of the trial period will be agreed at the start of the arrangement and written in the Arrangement Agreement.

Deciding that one Shared Lives arrangement is not right for the person does not mean that the person cannot try another one. The Shared Lives worker will discuss this and will arrange introductory visits to another Shared Lives carer(s) if appropriate.