

Video transcript: Shared Lives Plus

Mae: My bank balance has gone down dramatically since Mollie has been here because she insists that we go shopping, buy clothes, go on all these holidays and go out 'C'mon, shall we go out for lunch?'

She's laughing but two years ago she would have not done none of those things.

Mollie: That's true

Jayne: This is what we all want. A family and support from a family environment. So, a person will go and live with somebody in their own home and will have that support, and personalised support, to do what they want to achieve in their lives.

We support 10,000 carers throughout the UK to open their homes to people who need that extra support as an alternative to social care traditional models.

And the Government has mentioned Shared Lives is a model of social care they want to grow. They would like to invest and support Shared Lives.

Mollie: I moved in with Mae and family in August under Shared Lives and since then I've been really welcomed into the family. We all get along together, not just me and Mae, but everyone in the house.

I've just started working at a company that does ocean monitoring to do with marine wildlife, something that had more of a career path than what I was previously in.

I do enjoy it, it's a bit of everything, there's engineering involved, workshops, computer work, lab work, opportunities to go out to sea.

When I first started under Shared Lives I was not in employment so that's been a big step. It's helped with independence a lot and I'm able to be financially reliant on myself which is important for me, and I'm able to drive myself to and from work.

Mae: So she has learned to drive while she's been living here, passed her driving test and bought a car with her own money. I think that's really, really, important because relying on other people to drive you about and then becoming independent of that is huge.

Mollie: When I passed my driving test I couldn't believe it to be honest with you. I was really chuffed with myself, feeling that I was actually an adult and was able to go and do these things whereas before, you know, I believed that I couldn't.

Mae: I feel that I've given Molly the platform for her to choose what she wants to do and rather than see it that she gets to service if she's unwell, that she actually gets a service if she's well and achieving. [Looks at Mollie] That took some time to get your head around. Because all through childhood it had been all around services, you get services if you're not, you know, thriving.

Mollie: It's been the only service that I've come across where when you get better, achieve, progress, [they say] 'that's great, what can we do to help you do that more?'

I've been under a lot of services and it's being very much about when you get better, or you begin to improve, the service is then removed.

Jayne: I am in awe of the people who become Shared Lives carers, they do such a fantastic job. They essentially bring somebody into their family life and work with them, and keep them in their family, and support them like they would any other family member.

Mollie: We all muck in round the house, so we have our set jobs. You know, I do my washing and clothes and cleaning the annex for myself. On top of that we all help round the house, I do the loading of the dishwasher, Rio does the unloading – sometimes!

Jayne: 67% of the people supported by Shared Lives have got a learning disability or additional needs. They're a range of ages, predominantly working age.

We've got schemes in 95% of the local authorities in the UK. Shared Lives Plus works alongside to see what investment is needed, the system changes that sometimes are needed, the profile of Shared Lives, so that we create that demand.

It's quite a complex situation but quite a simple basic model, where somebody just goes and receives the support they need in a family environment rather than a residential facility.

Mae: There's probably a lot of people similar to Molly that are stuck in a system where they are at home and totally dependent.

Shared Lives was suggested to us via social services. Mollie had a social worker and I then went through a pretty robust Shared Lives application talking about all sorts of different things and making sure that it would be a good fit. From then Molly was with us and we've not looked back, have we really?

Jayne: Shared Lives cares are paid. They're paid a fee set by the local authority which includes a contribution to bed and loggings from variety of funding. They do range, the fees range considerably depending on the support needs of that individual or as well, the local authority.

A big part of Shared Lives is about choice: the choice of the individual to be supported by Shared Lives, but also that matching process, and that choice about who they live with. And that includes the type of neighbourhood they want to live in, the type of family they want to live with.

Mae: You're not just 'homing' someone. The whole point is to help them, to know and understand things that need to work in life in order for them to then be able to do those things and then become independent. So we just found what works well for us.

Jayne: Recruiting Shared Lives carers is as complex and as difficult as recruiting foster carers, because we know that it is such a big responsibility. That's where Shared Lives Plus comes in, in sharing that best practice and perhaps innovating with some of the social media support, and raising the profile.

I'm lucky enough to go and see some of that in action or meet people - online at the minute - and you see the difference it makes. Some of our arrangements have lasted 30 years. People are just not just part of that immediate family but the extended family.

Now people know that asset-based approaches, working to the strengths of communities, and personalised care is something that we all want. We want it for ourselves.

With the demands on the social care sector as well, I think that commitment to try new things and perhaps more innovative models of care is there from a local authority and a government level.

If there are local authorities out there who want to look at Shared Lives again, now couldn't be more opportune time.

You can get in touch with Shared Lives Plus, we can help you look at that investment needed but also the cost savings of the Shared Lives model. We can help you look at the guidance, the infrastructure, and the team that you need to launch Shared Lives as well as that recruitment of carers and the sharing of best practice from our other providers.