



Shared Lives & Short Breaks

Sharing Home and Family Life



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Introduction

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming an approved Shared Lives & Short Breaks carer with Cornerstone. Shared Lives & Short Breaks enables people requiring support to live in their community without having to live alone. Shared Lives & Short Break carers support and include the person in their family and community life which, in many cases, leads to that individual naturally becoming a permanent part of a supportive family.

Our service provides both transitional and long term placements to people who require care and support because of their disability or support need. Our carers provide a safe, secure and stimulating family environment for the person to help them develop a sense of belonging within their community.

Every placement is unique, and the support provided is tailored to meet the individual needs of the person, whilst creating a natural and supportive family environment. Our service is registered with the Care Inspectorate as a Shared Lives Scheme, and we are active members of Shared Lives Plus.

As an organisation, we recognise that there is an increasing demand for Shared Lives & Short Breaks support for adults throughout Scotland with a range of needs. We are keen to recruit more carers to enable us to provide this much needed service.

We hope that you find this booklet informative and interesting, and that it will assist you in deciding if you would like to become a Shared Lives & Short Breaks carer with Cornerstone.

We look forward to hearing from you.

The Shared Lives Team



**Providing care
and support in
your community.**

About Shared Lives & Short Breaks

Shared Lives is not a new concept. Throughout history there have always been people who support vulnerable individuals by taking them into their own homes, or by supporting them in the way that a family may support a vulnerable family member. In the west of Scotland we have been supporting people in Shared Lives for over 17 years.

Our Shared Lives & Short Breaks Service is used by people aged 16 and over with a wide range of disabilities, conditions and other support needs. This includes people with learning disabilities or mental health issues, older adults and young people being supported through transitional services.



I really like Shared Lives as it allows me to give as much quality time as possible to someone who may not have had the chance in the past to be part of a real family. I have been doing this for over 10 years and can see myself doing it for at least the next 20 years.

~ Claire, a Shared Lives carer

Our Short Breaks service offers stability to families by lending additional support and a break from their caring responsibilities. This support is provided in our carers' homes and can vary from one or two overnights to a week or longer, with tailored support which meets the individual needs of the person and their family.

People are carefully matched with carers who are best suited to meet their needs. All of our carers go through a number of mandatory checks including a Disclosure/PVG check and a medical. They also complete an assessment and training programme to ensure they are suitable for this role. Our carers receive a generous allowance to undertake this role, additional help with household costs and have plenty of opportunities to enhance their professional development.



Be a Shared Lives Carer

Stage 1 - Home Visit

An Assessor from Cornerstone will visit you at home to discuss the Shared Lives & Short Breaks service with you in detail. The Assessor will put together an initial report based on your discussions and this report will indicate your suitability in terms of progressing to the next stage of the approved carer application process.

Stage 2 - Application Form

By completing our application form, you are supplying detailed information about yourself and your family, as well as giving your consent for us to complete the necessary checks and enquiries.

Stage 3 - References and Checks on all Applicants

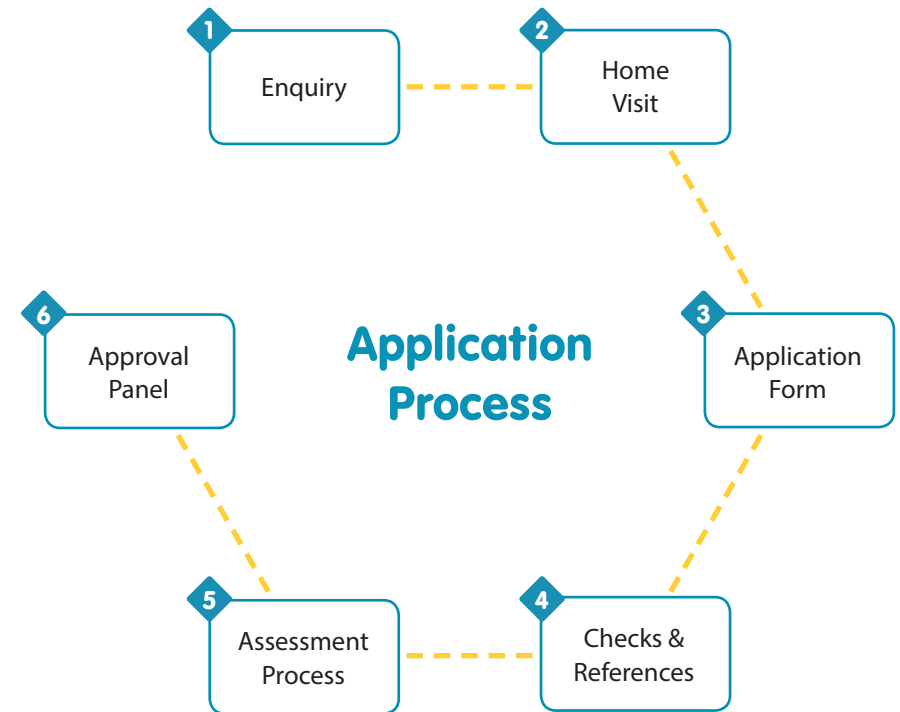
- PVG - a criminal records check on all adult members of the household, which includes information about any criminal convictions or cautions.
- A full medical examination by your own GP, with the report made available to Cornerstone.
- A health update for all other adults living in the home.
- Social work checks.
- Identification of at least two personal referees who will provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process.
- References from your current and previous employers.
- A comprehensive safety and risk management audit of your home.
- Enquiries made to other agencies as necessary.

Stage 4 - The Assessment Process

- A qualified Assessor will carry out a full assessment. They will regularly visit your home to meet with you to collect information about all members of your household and your experience and skills in relation to being a carer. The information gathered will form the basis of an assessment report which will be submitted to Cornerstone's Shared Lives & Short Breaks Approval Panel.
- We will provide a 'Learning the Ropes' training programme which covers the responsibilities of being an approved carer. All prospective carers must attend.
- During the assessment process, applicants are supported to compile a portfolio of written material giving examples of their relevant experience and skills.
- The assessment process usually takes between four and six months, although this may take longer depending on your personal circumstances.

Stage 5 - Shared Lives Approval Panel

The content of the assessment report, including all references, will be shared with you and then presented to the Approval Panel. All applicants are invited to attend the Approval Panel meeting and will be formally interviewed. You will be advised verbally on the day of your interview of the Panel's recommendation. This recommendation will then be forwarded to Cornerstone's organisational decision maker, who will make the final decision and notify you within 21 days of the panel meeting.



Training and Support

Formal carer training is an essential part of the preparation process, so the training starts before carers are approved and continues throughout their career with Cornerstone. Your life experience will determine the training you require for your caring role.

As well as undertaking core training which consists of Adult Support and Protection, Health and Safety, and Risk Assessment, carers can access further training from Cornerstone's Training Academy which is specific to the needs of the individual they are supporting. Carers will have regular contact with the Social Services care manager and the Shared Lives team and can attend regular carers' forum meetings where they can meet with other carers and exchange ideas, as well as share knowledge and experiences.

The Review Process

All carers have a monthly support meeting with an allocated worker from Cornerstone as well as an annual review where their development and practice is evaluated. This also provides an opportunity to review the carer's approval status, which could be amended to change eg, the number of people they are approved to support. Reviews can be arranged more frequently if the carer's personal circumstances change eg, moving house or a change in relationship status, to ensure they are still able to meet the needs of the person they support.

I like my Shared Lives placement because I can have my own things and space and I'm part of a loving and real family.

~ Alan, supported by Shared Lives & Short Breaks



Matching the People We Support With Their Carers

Cornerstone has a robust matching process which takes into account the skills of the carer to meet the needs of the person receiving support. Consideration is also given to the carer's personal interests to ensure that they are compatible with the person being placed with them.

This matching process is developed at a level and pace suitable for both carer and supported person, and takes into account the natural progression of getting to know the immediate family, extended family and the community as a whole.

Case Studies

We're a married couple with many years of caring experience between us. Six years ago, we applied to become Shared Lives Carers with Cornerstone as we felt we had time, experience, patience and love to share with someone who needed a home and a family.

We have a son and daughter who have grown up and left our family home, and we shared our home with Kelsey, our dog.

Cornerstone supported us through the assessment process. This took from the end of July until we were approved by the panel to become permanent Carers at the end of November.

We were matched with a young woman and have been successfully sharing our lives and home with her since.

~ Moira and Jim

I'm 40 years old and I live with Moira and Jim.

I was a single mum who was struggling to cope with my son, a difficult family situation and my own disability. I lived in a hostel for some time, but was at risk from being harmed whilst living there due to my vulnerability.

My son was placed in care as I was unable to cope with his needs. I was then placed in care for some time myself, whilst other people helped me make decisions about my future.

I was introduced to Moira and Jim and met with them regularly over a period of a few weeks. My previous experiences had left me very wary but I gradually built up a good relationship with them, and everyone agreed that I could go and live with them in their home.

I'm now much more confident and positive about my life and am able to look after my own finances with help from Moira. I love to cook, I go to concerts, I volunteer at a local café and I have attended college. Recently, I had my first holiday on my own whilst Moira and Jim went on a separate holiday themselves. I'm now planning my next getaway! Having the freedom to do what I want is important to me but I also enjoy living with a family where I can get support when I need it.

~ Lynn



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Champion

