PSS Shared Lives Guidance

**Protocols and Agreements for Sharing Shared Lives Carers between Schemes**

**Principles of Good Practice**

* Neighbouring schemes should discuss the principle of sharing Shared Lives carers.
* The Shared Lives carers should talk to their schemes before approaching another scheme.
* Where joint working is taking place then good communication between all parties concerned should be seen as critical to good practice.
* The wishes and needs of the individual (and any other people already supported by the Shared Lives carer) should be central to any Shared Lives arrangement decision.
* Accurate and current information about prospective persons to be involved in arrangements must be provided.
* There needs to be clarity between Shared Lives schemes, who share Shared Lives carers, about their respective roles. This should be subject to written agreement.
* There needs to be comprehensive and current Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plans.
* Steps should be taken to avoid unnecessary duplication of paperwork and processes.
* The role of Independent Panels should be seen as an important part of the decision making process regarding the sharing of Shared Lives carers between schemes. Any potential conflict of interest should be declared, particularly where some panel members may be drawn from a scheme with Shared Lives carers in common.

**Shared Lives Carers’ Protocol**

* If you are considering working for a second scheme then you should discuss this with your existing scheme worker and keep them advised of the progress of your application.
* You should also fully inform the scheme to which you are applying of your status with the existing scheme and include them as a referee as part of your application.
* If you are approved to work for more than one scheme and then you are approached to make an arrangement you must inform the other scheme as soon as this approach is made. This is to ensure that full consideration is given to the impact of any additional arrangements on any other person placed with you or on any plans which the other scheme may have for making a further arrangement with you.

**Protocol for Joint Working between Schemes**

* Where an existing Shared Lives carer applies to become a Shared Lives carer for another scheme, this should trigger a Shared Lives carer review by the existing scheme. This review should be considered by the scheme’s Independent Panel so that any necessary changes to the current approval can be made and reflected in an amended Shared Lives Carer Agreement.
* For existing Shared Lives carers who are already approved by more than one scheme then a Shared Lives carer review should be conducted jointly by both schemes at the earliest opportunity and this be presented to the respective independent panels. If however, the independent panels arrive at differing views, then the scheme managers will work together to reach an agreement. Any conditions made will be reflected in amended Shared Lives carer agreements.
* Identify a lead scheme. This will normally be the scheme that first approved the Shared Lives carer/s.
* There needs to be an agreement in relation to each Shared Lives carer about how their learning needs will be met. Generally this will be facilitated through the lead scheme.
* It will be the responsibility of both schemes to ensure through negotiation that no Shared Lives carers are left by default without training and other learning opportunities.
* There needs to be a clear written agreement about the Shared Lives carers respite between the two schemes stating what the arrangements will be and how they will be funded.
* With regards to complaints there should be clarity about who is to conduct any investigation. In any event both schemes should be kept fully informed of any complaints made and of the outcomes from any investigation.
* Wherever possible joint Shared Lives carer reviews should take place. Where this is not possible a copy of the review report should be sent to the other scheme.
* Consultation between schemes should be seen as essential before making the decision about new Shared Lives arrangements in a Shared Lives household.
* Matching decisions should be agreed by both schemes and joint involvement in drawing up the arrangement agreement so as to avoid any conflict in expectation and outcomes for the individuals concerned.
* There must be an agreement regarding the frequency of monitoring visits to avoid unnecessary burden on the Shared Lives carer. Regardless of who visits, any information pertinent to a service user from the other scheme should be communicated back.
* Each scheme should ensure that the person placed by them has an arrangement review. Anything resulting from this which may impact on other persons placed should be communicated back to their scheme.
* Where there is an investigation which may lead to a Shared Lives carer being placed on the Disclosure and Barring Service list, it is critical the communication with other schemes starts immediately. Whilst only one scheme will be responsible for placing the person(s) on the DBS list the consequence will clearly impact on both schemes.
* There should be a shared responsibility for DBS procedures particularly around reporting and information sharing.