

# CARER NEWSLETTER

December 2025

## **Scheme update:**

As the year draws to a close, we would like to take this opportunity to pause and reflect on the journey we have endured over the past year. The Shared Lives team have continued to channel their passion into their roles, striving to make improvements, overcome barriers and achieve successes.

Our Home and Away day respite service is proving very popular and successful with providing additional support to unpaid family carers. This service has allowed carers to take much-needed breaks, knowing their loved ones are in safe and caring hands of our wonderful carers.

Existing placements, both long-term and short-term, have continued to be stable, supportive and fulfilling for both the individuals and the carers involved. The bonds formed are a testament to the dedication and compassion that define our Shared Lives community. We are very grateful to everyone who has continued to or recently become part of the Shared Lives family this year.

As we step into 2026, let us continue to build on our achievements and look forward to new beginnings in our Shared Lives family.

## **In this newsletter:**

- Good News of 2025
- A message from Diane Cox, Registered Manager
- Tribute to Rene
- Carer reminders
- Information Point
- Christmas Closures

## **Contact Info:**

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<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/shared-lives/>



# GOOD NEWS OF 2025

There has been many success stories this year - including new placements, achievements of personal goals, and successes behind the scenes for the Shared Lives team. These good news stories are a great opportunity to reflect on individual's journey's and see the positive impact that has been made for so many.

Please remember to share photos and stories with the team to allow us to share with others.

We have collated good news stories from 2025 and you can view it here: [\*\*Shared Lives Good News Stories - 2025\*\*](#) or Scan the QR code!





## A MESSAGE FROM DIANE COX, REGISTERED MANAGER

As we approach the festive season, I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for the incredible care, kindness and commitment you show throughout the year. Our prayers and thoughts are for those dealing with loss and illness.

Being a Shared Lives carer is more than a role – it's about opening your home and your heart, and making a real difference to the lives of others. Your patience, compassion and dedication do not go unnoticed, and we are truly grateful for everything you do, especially during what can be a busy and demanding time of year.

We hope you are able to enjoy some well-deserved rest, warmth and happiness over the Christmas period, and that the New Year brings good health, joy and continued success. Thank you for all that you do, and for being such a valued part of our Shared Lives community.

Wishing you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Diane Cox*

## A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO RENE

It is with a heavy heart and we are deeply saddened that we say goodbye to a much-loved Shared Lives carer, Rene.

Rene was one of the longest standing carers at Sandwell Shared Lives. She gave so much more than care – offering kindness, patience, stability and a true sense of belonging. Her home has always been a place of comfort, safety and she made a lasting difference to the lives of Anthony and Sidoni, who alongside Jackie she has supported for many, many years.

Rene will always be remembered for her warmth, smile and strength. Rene will be fondly missed by the Sandwell Shared Lives family. Our thoughts are with Jackie, Anthony, Sidoni and their family at this time.



# CARER REMINDERS

## DON'T FORGET

### **Please inform the scheme of:**

- Changes to medications or GP/Consultants
  - Changes to contact details
- Changes to your health and wellbeing
  - Changes in social worker
  - Slips, trips, falls and near misses
    - Medication errors
- Training completed with other organisations
  - Gas safety certificate
- SL Plus membership and insurance completion

**Remember it is important we have the most current and up-to-date information stored as a CQC regulated service.**

## TRAINING

Training modules are available to complete via Care Tutor. If you would like to access any other modules available, please let Paige know.



We will be working to complete the Care Certificate qualification with you all in the New Year. Look out for letters with appointments for us to complete this task.

## YOU SAID, WE DID

- We are in the process of compiling requests from Registered Manager audits, carer reviews, appraisals, surveys and carer meetings to complete our annual 'You Said, We Did' documents. These will be shared with you as soon as possible

We are always looking to improve the service for you all and the individuals accessing the service. We would like to thank you for your ideas, input and suggestions shared this year.

# INFORMATION POINT



## WHICH SERVICE SHOULD YOU USE?

As local NHS services change, it is useful for you to know which professionals can support you. Receiving the right help, at the right time & in the right place can make a big difference to the outcome.

Services you can utilise are pharmacists, NHS 111, your GP, NHS app, Urgent Treatment Centre and A&E.

[Download the leaflet here for more information!](#)



## DID YOU KNOW?

You can order up to 3 blue recycling bags for each household!



You can recycle paper and card in your blue bags. Order a new one online using your My Sandwell account.



## PRIORITY SERVICES

Due to individual's disability, you can request to join the priority services with the National Grid. This means that if there is a power cut, you will be eligible for additional support.

You can join by ringing 0800032 8301 or online here: [National Grid - Priority Services](#).

**nationalgrid**

## ACCESS CARD

The Access Card is a universal card that evidences and communicates the support needs of a disabled person. It is widely recognised as proof of access requirements by many different organisations such as theme parks, concert halls, visitor attractions and more.

**ONLY £15  
FOR 3  
YEARS**

You can find out more here:  
<https://www.accesscard.online/>





# CHRISTMAS CLOSURES

Date	SL Team availability	Contact
<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December</b>	Shared Lives office open as usual	0121 569 4467 NW - 07791 921081 PF - 07810 850882
<b>Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	PF available	0121 569 4467 PF - 07810 850882
<b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December (XMAS EVE)</b> <b>Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December (XMAS DAY)</b> <b>Friday 26<sup>th</sup> December (BOXING DAY)</b> <b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December</b> <b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Full Council Closure - no SL team available	Out of Hours Emergency Duty - 0121 569 2355. Please refer to emergency contingency plans.
<b>Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	NW available	0121 569 4467 NW - 07791 921081
<b>Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> January</b>	Full council closure - no SL team available	Out of Hours Emergency Duty - 0121 569 2355. Please refer to emergency contingency plans.
<b>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January</b>	NW available	0121 569 4467 NW - 07791 921081
<b>Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Service as usual	0121 569 4467 NW - 07791 921081 PF - 07810 850882

from the Shared Lives team,  
**Merry Christmas**  
& a Happy New Year!

