

December 2024

Sandwell

**Shared
Lives**



Scheme Update:

We have come to the end of another remarkable year for Sandwell Shared Lives. The scheme has experienced significant growth and numerous achievements. The team continue to show determination and dedication to progressing and promoting the scheme across Sandwell.

We have launched the pilot of the Home and Away day respite service, actively promoted the service for expansion and made continuous efforts to improve the service for our existing placements.

We remain committed to advocating for both individuals and carers involved in Shared Lives Placements. With a focus on creating a supportive and inclusive service, we strive to ensure everyone feels valued and heard. We have conducted annual surveys for carers and individuals, inviting feedback to guide our development. Additionally, during annual Registered Managers Audit's we collected your views and have taken steps to enhance the service. We look forward to sharing results and our actions with you soon.

We would like to thank all Shared Lives Carers for their continuous support and dedication to their role throughout 2024. From Sandwell Shared Lives, we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

*The Sandwell
Shared Lives Team*

In this newsletter:

Sandwell Shared Lives – Good
News of 2024.

Carer reminders

Welcome and Goodbyes

Council Closure

In the Know – Information Point

Keeping Safe & Well at Christmas

Brew Monday – 20 January 2025

0121 569 4467

sandwell_sharedlives@sandwell.gov.uk

Stoney Lane Centre, Summer Street, West
Bromwich, B71 4JA



Sandwell Shared Lives, Good News Stories of 2024.

We have celebrated numerous success stories, where individuals have achieved personal milestones, built new relationships and developed new skills. The good news stories shared with us highlight the positive impact the service has for both individuals and carers.

Please remember to share photos and good news stories with the Shared Lives team. We would love to hear about your festive celebrations.

We have collated good news stories from 2024 into an online magazine.

Follow this link: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/fqnuy/ixoh/>

Or scan this QR Code using the camera on your mobile phone or a QR scanner.



You can see 2022-2023 good news brochure here:
<https://online.fliphtml5.com/fqnuy/ydid/#p=2>



REMEMBER!

Training

This year, we saw an increase in carers completing their training via Care Tutor. Whilst there is still areas for improvement, we will continue to share regular training prompts with your training records.

You can access Care Tutor here: <https://learning.caretutor.org/login/>

We continue to hold 1:1 Carer support sessions, where carers attend the Shared Lives office to assist with navigating ICT equipment.

The team also completed the main elements Care Certificate qualification through cross-referencing with your carer assessments etc. The completion of training reflections will now be incorporated into carer reviews in 2025 to enable you to achieve your Care Certificate with ease.

Please continue to share certificates and training records from other organisations as this prevents from training being repeated.

There are new free learning opportunities through 'We Find Any Learner' which provides you with a course and a Level 2 qualification as a result of completion. There are a variety of different courses you can complete in relation to Health and Social Care. You can access the courses here: <https://www.wefindanylearner.com/>

Carer Handbook



We are currently updating the carer handbook to include new forms, policies and procedures.

You will receive a copy of this via email. If you require a hard copy, please contact the team

Don't Forget...

Please inform the scheme of:

- Changes to medications or GP/Consultants
- Changes to contact details
- 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

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

Welcome

We would like to say a big Sandwell Shared Lives welcome to our new Shared Lives Carers – Charlotte, Dennis and Varinder! We look forward to working with you to provide day and overnight respite placements.

We are currently undertaking two new carer assessments and look forward to welcoming them to the scheme in the New Year.

We would like thank Julie and Karen for agreeing to be the scheme's carer mentors for Long-term and Short-term respite placements.

We would also like to thank Julie for participating in Sandwell Shared Lives panels as a carer representative, this year.

Thank you

Council Closure for Christmas period:

MONDAY 23 DECEMBER

OPEN – NORMAL HOURS

TUESDAY 24 DECEMBER

OPEN – NORMAL HOURS

WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER

CLOSED

THURSDAY 26 DECEMBER

CLOSED

FRIDAY 27 DECEMBER

CLOSED

MONDAY 30 DECEMBER

CLOSED

TUESDAY 31 DECEMBER

CLOSED

WEDNESDAY 1 JANUARY

CLOSED

**SORRY! WE'RE
CLOSED**

In case of emergency during Council closures, please refer to emergency contingency plans and/or contact the Emergency Duty Team on **0121 569 2355**. Alternatively, use the main Sandwell Council website for any other emergency contact numbers.

In the know – Information Point

Local pharmacies open over the Christmas period:

Christmas Day –

- Hagley Road Pharmacy, Oldbury, 12–3pm
- Portway Pharmacy, Oldbury, 3–6pm
- Boots Pharmacy, Gallagher Retail Park, Wednesbury, 12–3pm
- New Street Pharmacy, Hill Top, West Bromwich, 3–6pm
- Ingrams Chemist, West Bromwich, 12–3pm.



Boxing Day –

- Albert Street Pharmacy, Oldbury Health Centre, 3–6pm
- Hills Pharmacy, Oldbury, 12–3pm
- Asda Pharmacy, Tipton, 10–4pm
- Boots, Great Bridge, 9–6pm
- Boots Pharmacy, Gallagher Retail Park, Wednesbury, 10–6pm

New Years Day –

- Hills Pharmacy, Oldbury, 12–3pm
- Portway Pharmacy, Oldbury, 3–6pm
- Asda Pharmacy, Tipton, 10–4pm
- Boots, Great Bridge, 9–6pm
- Boots Pharmacy, Gallagher Retail Park, Wednesbury, 10–6pm



Think Pharmacy First.

You can contact your local pharmacies for prescription medicines for the following conditions:

Sinusitis, Sore Throat, Earache, Infected Insect bites, Impetigo, Shingles and Uncomplicated Urinary Tract Infections.

Please remember to notify the team of any new prescribed medications so medical records can be updated.



Next of Kin in Shared Lives.

Within Shared Lives, there can often be confusion around Next of Kin and who would be considered as this role for individuals. There are different connotations in medical, legal and wills/estates situations. It also varies according to the individual's Mental Capacity surrounding these decisions.

As Shared Lives Plus members, you can contact the specialist legal helpline to discuss complex cases and gain information on specific requests. **Law Express – 0330 303 1876**



Additionally here are some useful links:

<https://wills.services/next-of-kin>

<https://thecheckup.co.uk/legal-insights/next-of-kin-rights-and-responsibilities-uk/>

Keeping 'Safe and Well' at Christmas



Cost of Living & Fire Safety:

Here are some top tips from West Midland Fire Service on how you can stay fire safe throughout the winter period with the heating, candle use, electric safety, smoke alarms and more.
<https://www.wmfs.net/safety/cost-of-living-stay-fire-safe/>



Staying Safe when going out and about:

Here are some top tips from CrimeStoppers on how you can when going out and about in the local communities.
<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/news->

Welcoming Spaces in Sandwell:

There are many Welcoming Spaces across Sandwell that you can access over the Christmas period. You can find more information here:

<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/welcomingspaces>



Supporting someone with Autism at Christmas:

Here are some top tips from the National Autistic Society for supporting individuals who have Autism to navigate through changes to routine, overwhelm and sensory overload.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/leisure/christmas/tips?>



Loneliness during the Festivities:

Here are some tips and advice from the Mental Health Foundation of how to cope with feeling lonely during the festive season. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/blogs/coping-loneliness-during-festive-season>



BREW MONDAY

BEAT THE BLUES



**MONDAY 20
JANUARY -
10:30AM**



The third Monday in January is often referred to as 'Blue Monday'. This is reported to be 'the most depressing day of the year', where people begin to feel the Christmas aftermath, bad weather and long nights.

This year, we plan to beat the blues with 'Brew Monday'. We will be holding a Microsoft Teams event, where you can grab your cuppa and have a catch up with the team and other carers. This will be on Monday 20 January at 10:30am.

If you are unable to join via Teams and would like to attend with the team in person, please contact Paige to arrange this.

In the new year, we will be sending a Teams meeting invite and reminder. We look forward to catching up with you on the day!

