

Harrow Shared Lives Scheme Policy & Procedure No. 4

Introductions

The decision about whether a Shared Lives arrangement is right for you is a very important one. We understand that it takes time and proper information to make this sort of decision and that the opportunity for you and your family or representative to visit and 'test drive' an arrangement will be a helpful part of that process.

How would this happen?

An essential part of making a decision is having all the information you need beforehand.

You will be given information about the Harrow Shared Lives Scheme. Visiting the SL Carer adds to this by giving them and you and/or your representative an opportunity to experience the arrangement directly.

You will usually be able to:

- meet the SL Carer and other members of their family or household and find out what they are really like
- see the house, your bedroom (if you will be staying there) and the neighbourhood
- have a meal there
- have an overnight stay
- see what kinds of records are kept by the SL Carer
- speak in private with other people who are already making use of a Shared Lives arrangement
- get answers to any questions you may have.

You and/or your representative can visit a few times until you feel comfortable about going ahead with a longer-term arrangement. However either you or the SL Carer can call a halt to the introductions at any point if you do not feel the arrangement will be suitable for you after all.

Even if you do decide to go ahead with a longer-term arrangement, you will still have a trial period when you can change your mind. Harrow Shared Lives Scheme trial period is 4- 6 weeks placement. The length of the trial period will be agreed at the start of the arrangement.

Deciding that one Shared Lives arrangement is not right for you does not mean that you cannot try another one. Your SL Worker will discuss this with you and will arrange introductory visits to another SL Carer if appropriate.

Introductory visits play a big part in making sure an arrangement is right for everyone involved. We therefore try to avoid making Shared Lives arrangements in emergencies when this kind of opportunity may not be possible. However, we have a separate procedure, which we follow if an emergency situation arises and there really is no time for you to get to know your SL Carer before you go there. Your SL Worker will explain more about this if it affects you.

See these other policies and procedures and documents for further information on:

- Referrals
- Matching
- SL Agreement
- Emergency Shared Lives arrangements
- Making choices and decisions
- Communication