

Harrow Shared Lives Scheme Policy & Procedure No.9

Making Choices and Decisions

You have the right to make informed choices and decisions while recognising the rights of other people to do the same. The Harrow Shared Lives Scheme therefore aims to encourage and enable you to make choices and decisions in all areas of your life, while at the same time making sure that you are not pressurised or inappropriately influenced in those choices.

How would this happen?

The Harrow Shared Lives Scheme will support you to have the kind of life or experiences that you want, doing the things that are important to you and enabling you to take responsible risks. Shared Lives (SL) Workers and SL Carers will work together and with others to make sure you have all the information, help and time you need for making choices and decisions.

The starting point for making informed choices and decisions is effective communication. We will ask about your preferred methods of communication when you are first referred to Shared Lives and will use these wherever possible in our work with you. If we need help to communicate with you, we will make use of interpreters / special equipment / visual aids / etc as necessary and/or seek guidance from your family or other people who know you well.

It is important to have proper information when you make a decision. We will do our best to provide information for you in a format or language that you can easily understand and keep. When you have a range of choices you will be given information about all the options. If necessary you will also be given help to fully understand the options and choose the one that is right for you.

If you need support to speak up for yourself, this will be discussed as part of your Service User Plan. Support can be provided by your SL Carer and/or SL Worker, if appropriate, or by your family or friends or other representatives or by an independent advocate.

Your SL Carer or SL Worker will help you to make contact with people or organisations that can provide independent advocacy, if you wish. In your Service User Plan you will find the name of a person or organisation that is independent of Shared Lives who can also help you with this. We will work closely with your advocate or anyone else who helps you to speak up for yourself, in order to ensure that your best interests and needs are met at all times.

SL Carers will support you in the daily life and activities and goals you choose as part of your Service User Plan. If any risks have been identified these will be discussed with you and actions agreed with you to remove or reduce the risks if necessary. If there are likely to be any restrictions on your choices and freedoms these will also be discussed and agreed with you as part of your Service User Plan.

Every effort will be made to enable you to be in control of your life. However if it appears that you do not have the capacity to make an informed choice or decision, we will discuss this with your family or representative and relevant professionals and agree a way forward that is in your best interests. In these situations we will follow guidance in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice.

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

- Communication
- Referrals
- Matching
- Introductions
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Handling medicines
- Management of people's money, valuables and financial affairs
- Safeguarding against abuse and neglect
- Restrictive physical intervention
- Restriction of liberty
- Complaints and concerns
- Service User Plan
- Individual planning, monitoring and review
- Daily life and inclusion in the community
- Contact with family and friends
- Safe friendships and relationships