

Lancashire County Council

Shared Lives Service

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Outstanding 
Is the service safe?	Outstanding 
Is the service effective?	Outstanding 
Is the service caring?	Outstanding 
Is the service responsive?	Outstanding 
Is the service well-led?	Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service: Shared Lives Service is a shared lives service that recruits, trains and supports self-employed shared lives carers (carers) who offer accommodation and support arrangements for vulnerable adults within their own family homes in the community. The service is registered to support people with a variety of needs including people with learning disabilities.

CQC only inspects the service being received by people provided with 'personal care'. This includes help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do we also take into account any wider social care provided. At this inspection there were 369 people using the service and in receipt of a regulated activity.

People's experience of using this service: We saw excellent examples of how people were supported to remain safe at times when they were at significant risk. Through robust safeguarding training, staff and carers were able to keep people safe at times when their lives were in crisis. Staff and carers were proactive and supported people to take positive risks, ensuring they had maximum choice and control of their lives.

The provider's robust recruitment processes for staff and carers, along with the matching process, had exceptionally positive outcomes for people. Medicines were managed safely and people were supported to be as independent as possible with their medicines. There was an open and transparent culture in relation to accidents and incidents and they were used as opportunities to learn and lessen risks.

People's needs were met through robust assessments and support planning. We saw outstanding examples of when the service had worked with other healthcare professionals to achieve positive outcomes for people and to improve their quality of life. Staff and carers had excellent knowledge and skills and the training made available to them ensured people's needs were extremely well met.

We saw outstanding examples of when people had been supported to maintain a healthy and balanced diet and how this had significantly improved their lives. People with complex health needs received care and support that was positive and consistent and which improved their quality of life. The provider's policies and systems ensured people were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and were supported in the least restrictive way possible.

People unanimously told us carers and staff were exceptionally compassionate and kind. Staff and carers expressed commitment to ensuring people received high-quality care. We saw excellent examples of how carers ensured people felt part of their family. Carers and staff knew people exceptionally well and supported them to maintain relationships with people that mattered to them. For those people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act, we saw excellent examples of how the service, staff and carers were proactive in how they supported them. People were encouraged to learn new skills to enhance their independence and were treated with the utmost dignity and respect.

People received care and support that was evidently person-centred. We received overwhelming feedback of the positive impact this had on people and how they had changed people's lives. We saw excellent examples of how the care and support people received enriched their lives through meaningful activities. The service was proactive in its response to concerns or complaints and people knew how to feedback their experiences.

The registered manager planned and promoted holistic, person-centred, high-quality care resulting in excellent outcomes for people. The values and culture embedded in the service ensured people were at the heart of the care and support they received. Carers and staff told us they received excellent support from management and staff told us they were extremely proud to work for the service. There was a very open and transparent culture and people were empowered to voice their opinions. Without exception, people told us the service was well-managed.

Rating at last inspection: Outstanding (07 September 2016)

Why we inspected: We carried out this inspection based on the previous rating of the service.

Follow up: We will continue to review information we receive about the service until we return to visit as part of our re-inspection programme. If any concerning information is received we may inspect sooner.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

The service improved to outstanding

Details are in our safe findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

The service remained outstanding

Details are in our effective findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

The service remained outstanding

Details are in our caring findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

The service improved to outstanding

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

The service improved to outstanding

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Outstanding 

Shared Lives Service

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection:

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team:

The inspection team consisted of three adult social care inspectors, an assistant inspector and an Expert by Experience. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service. They had experience of caring for people with learning disabilities and older people.

Service and service type:

The service is a shared lives service which provides long term placements, short breaks, respite care, day care and emergency care for adults with a range of needs, within carers' own homes.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection:

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection visit because it is extremely large and we needed to make arrangements to speak to people in their own homes and in the office.

What we did:

Before our inspection, we reviewed all the information we held about the service and completed our planning tool. We also checked for feedback we received from members of the public, local authorities, Healthwatch, safeguarding and clinical commissioning groups. We also checked records held by Companies House.

We asked the service to complete a Provider Information Return. This is information we require providers to

send us at least once annually to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We reviewed this information and used it to inform our planning tool.

During inspection we spoke with 26 people who used the service, 19 carers and two relatives to ask about their experience of the care provided. We also spoke with the registered manager, two support officers and three support staff.

We reviewed a range of records. This included, four people's care records and two staff files around recruitment. We also looked at various records in relation to medication, training and supervision of staff, records relating to the management of the service and a variety of policies and procedures developed and implemented by the provider.

Shortly after our inspection, we contacted external professionals to ask them for feedback on their experiences of the service. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm

People were involved in developing a comprehensive and innovative approach to safeguarding, including positive risk-taking to maximise their control over their lives

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People were exceptionally safe. The service ensured vulnerable people were protected.
- One person described their life before being supported by the service. They told us, "I was a dead man walking, it was that bad. I was frightened." Through discussions with the person and their carer, it was evident they had flourished beyond recognition within their home. They told us, "My life has changed fabulously."
- The service had provided significant and urgent support for a person who was being exploited and worked alongside the police to keep the person safe. The person was protected and they were re-united with their own family. We saw excellent feedback about how well the service handled this situation.
- Shared Lives Service provided safety with outstanding success. We saw excellent instances whereby the service had received emergency referrals. These referrals were at times when people were in crisis situations within the community and required a place of safety.
- We saw examples of when safeguarding issues had occurred and the service had used this a learning opportunity. The provider had made improvements to systems and processes to reduce the risk of further instances.
- Staff were well trained in safeguarding and had exceptional skills in ensuring people remained safe. There was a safeguarding champion within the staff team. This person had enhanced knowledge to support the staff team and carers.
- The service had also delivered specific training in relation to keeping people safe whilst using social media for staff and carers. User friendly safeguarding information was also made available to people.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Positive risk-taking strategies ensured people had maximum choice and control over their lives, including those with protected equality characteristics.
- We saw examples of outstanding practice in relation to positive risk taking which supported people to have meaningful lives, and undertake a range of activities, which had not been possible before. This was due to the dedication of the service and carers.
- One person was supported to do a sky dive for charity. The person, the service and the sky dive company worked creatively and in successful collaboration to ensure a comprehensive risk assessment was developed. This enabled the person to fulfil their wishes.
- Staff broke down barriers and supported people to take positive risks, which supported them to achieve. For example one person had successfully passed their test to ride a moped.
- The provider used comprehensive risk assessments and management plans to ensure people with complex health needs were supported consistently and safely. Staff reviewed the plans regularly to ensure

they remained up to date.

Staffing and recruitment

- Robust staffing and recruitment processes ensured staff were recruited safely. People were at the heart of their placements.
- The provider used a robust matching process which enabled the person to make the decision where they were placed. This had exceptionally positive outcomes for people.
- For those people who wished to, they were involved in the interviewing of prospective carers. This gave people the opportunity to ask questions that were important and meaningful to them.
- The matching process and opportunities for individuals to interview prospective carers ensured successful placements from the start. We saw examples where people's lives had dramatically improved as a result of selecting the right carers. For example, one person described how they had nowhere to turn before being in Shared Lives and had considered their life to be at an end. Shared Lives Service had successfully placed this person who told us they now had a family.

Using medicines safely

- Medicines were managed safely by suitably trained staff and carers.
- The service had consulted best practice guidance in relation to medicines management and had developed their policies and procedures around this. These were made available to all staff and carers.
- We saw excellent, creative examples of how people were supported to be as independent as possible with their medicines, irrespective of their capacity. For example, one person had learned to administer their own insulin injections through their own dedication and that of their carer. This had given the person more control over this aspect of their life.
- Medicines were audited by staff members when they carried out monitoring visits.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff and carers had received training in infection control and knew their responsibilities when supporting people.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The service positively promoted an open and transparent culture in relation to accidents, incidents and near misses.
- We saw lessons learned were discussed in numerous forums such as countywide team meetings, staff and carer meetings, supervisions and one to ones.
- The registered manager also went to a leading network for guidance and advice as they commented, "We never stop learning on a day to day basis."

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence

People's outcomes were consistently better than expected compared to similar services. People's feedback described it as exceptional and distinctive.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- People's needs and choices were consistently met through exceptionally robust assessments and the matching processes.
- One external healthcare professional told us of a positive example when the service had gone through the assessment process and successfully placed a person who was in urgent need. They told us, "In this case, we found the individual saw a great increase in quality of life, breadth of life experiences and positive progress in their health and wellbeing. The shared lives family relationship that developed filled a gap in the persons emotional wellbeing that had been there through a significant part of their life."
- The service worked exceptionally well with other healthcare professionals to ensure robust and thorough assessments. These resulted in positive outcomes for people which improved their quality of life.
- Assessments were specific to the individual and contained specific guidance and information around each person's needs and wishes. The service had an exceptional, holistic and detailed approach to assessing, planning and delivering care and support.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- People were supported by staff and carers who had excellent knowledge and skills to meet their needs. One staff member told us, "I would say I have had all the training necessary, but I am aware if I feel I have a gap in knowledge I can ask for advice or extra training."
- Staff and carers completed training which enabled them to deliver high-quality care and support to people with complex and sometimes challenging needs.
- Since the last inspection, the service had also sourced and secured, tailor-made positive behaviour support (PBS) training for both staff and carers, which had recently been accredited. PBS is a person-centred approach to supporting people who display or are at risk of displaying behaviours which challenge and demonstrates positive outcomes for people.
- The registered manager was proactive in relation to training and told us, "We are particularly proud of our training." They also informed us training for people who used the service was being developed around keeping themselves safe.
- The registered manager used an excellent system of supervision for staff, to support them in their roles. Supervision is a formal way of monitoring and supporting staff members in their role. Supervisions also recognised any developmental needs and competence to ensure the workforce were highly skilled individuals; this in turn ensured high-quality care was being delivered. One staff member told us, "Every six weeks we have a formal supervision but I speak to my manager every day and I meet up with my manager once a week."
- There were 'champions' in the service who actively supported staff and carers to make sure people

experienced a high-quality service leading to a better quality of life. Champions had lead responsibility for many areas including; safeguarding, PBS, media and public relations, quality and welfare rights.

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- People were exceptionally well supported to maintain a healthy and balanced diet. We saw many outstanding examples where people had improved their diet, which had significantly improved their lives.
- For example, one person used to be in constant pain and had health problems related to being significantly overweight. The carer encouraged and supported them with their diet and exercise and three years later they had lost seven and a half stones. This person had not taken a tablet for pain in over 12 months, they no longer required the use of a leg brace, they worked as a volunteer and undertook many activities within the community. This had a significant, positive impact on the person whose confidence had grown immensely.
- People were actively encouraged and supported to cook meals to enhance their skills and promote independence. Meal times were an opportunity to socialise as a family.
- There were strong links with speech and language therapists and any advice was well documented in care plans.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- People were exceptionally well supported to live healthier lives. Outcomes for people were positive, consistent and often exceeded expectations, with people's quality of life having greatly improved.
- People spoke extremely positively about the impact the carers and service had on their lives. One person told us, "I have lost a lot of weight through healthy eating." And another person told us, "I do my exercises daily to keep fit."
- One person had a rare illness which required a significant high level of care and support. We saw, through working with healthcare professionals and the dedication of the carers and service, this person was leading a fulfilled life.
- We saw one person had been supported to give up smoking. This had resulted in the person being able to fulfil their love of playing football.
- We saw outstanding practices when people were admitted to hospital. Carers stayed with people if they were to stay in hospital for any period of time. This provided significant reassurance and continuity for the person and ensured all the person's needs continued to be met.

Adapting service, design, decoration to meet people's needs

- People's environment reflected their individual preferences. We saw carers had gone above and beyond to enable people to design their bedrooms to their own choice and preference.
- One person was supported to locate bespoke wallpaper they had wanted. Another person wanted a themed bedroom; this was facilitated by the carers.
- We saw the service had supported carers to secure a grant to make the homes accessible. This supported the delivery of high-quality care and independence for people.

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care

- The service worked exceptionally well with health and social care professionals, especially where people had complex or continuing health needs, to achieve positive outcomes for people.
- The provider used a thorough and robust system when people were transitioning between services. One healthcare professional commented, "You have gone above and beyond with your efforts to help them, both when they were in hospital and on their discharge."

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment with appropriate legal authority.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA, whether any restrictions on people's liberty had been authorised and whether any conditions on such authorisations were being met.

- People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible. The service and carers were compliant with any order made through the Court of Protection.
- Where people were deprived of their liberty, the service worked with the local authority and court appointed deputies to ensure decisions made on behalf of people were lawful and in their best interest.
- Carers who supported people with an order from the court of protection had additional support from staff.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect

People were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- People were exceptionally well supported and cared for.
- People unanimously told us carers and staff were exceptionally compassionate and kind. One person said, "It [shared lives] has changed my life." Another told us, "It's 200/200" and they told us the carer was their extended family. Another person said, "It's the best place that I've ever lived in. It's like living in Paradise."
- Staff and carers unanimously demonstrated their commitment to ensuring people received high-quality care and support which included people as part of the family. For example, one carer told us, "One of my daughters was pregnant, [name of person] listened to the heartbeat and was involved in the birth. My second daughter had a home birth and [name of person] was invited to be part of it, she had the real experience. When we had the baby overnight she asked to be fully involved, so she helped with night checks and bottles. She is involved in everything."
- One carer told us how the person they were supporting had 'saved them'; that being a shared lives carer and supporting someone had positively impacted on them as a person and on their life.
- Staff and carers knew people exceptionally well. We observed very positive interactions between people and their carers; people were distinctly comfortable in each other's presence.
- People were exceptionally well supported to maintain contact with people who were important to them. One parent told us, "Shared lives is extraordinary. [Name of person] is well loved by the carers. They have rescued us both. It has been a dream seeing [Name of person] safe, happy and loved."
- We saw exceptional examples of how people were supported to have relationships that were meaningful and important to them. One person had a girlfriend and told their carer they wanted to get a flat together. Through the support of the carer and the service they moved into their own flat and started a family. The support continued through 'kinship'; a process whereby the carer attended the flat daily to offer support.
- The service and carers went above and beyond to support people to communicate. We saw examples of outstanding practice whereby interpreters were sought, carers learned sign language and technology was used to ensure positive communication could occur. One parent told us, "They've taken the time to get to know her. They use language and pictures that she understands."
- People with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act, were exceptionally well supported. We saw excellent examples of staff and carers supporting people with their sexual orientation, to ensure they had meaningful and fulfilled lives.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Privacy, dignity and respect was at the heart of the values of the service and carers were encouraged to develop people's self-esteem; to enable them to live the life they desired. People were exceptionally well supported to be independent.

- We saw many outstanding and proactive ways carers had supported people to be as independent as they possibly could be. Some people had successfully gained employment, people were actively encouraged to learn new skills around the home and in the community and we saw instances where people had flourished.
- Carers and staff were dedicated to offering people opportunities that would increase their independence and have freedom and control over their lives. People told us they could choose what they want to do.
- We saw two people were supported and encouraged to embrace independence. They were encouraged to be actively involved in the community by volunteering at a local radio station being DJ's; taking it in turns presenting the show.
- People told us they felt listened to and were able to express their views. One person said, "[Name of carer] is like my mum. I have been here for 20 years. She listens to what I have to say and has always been very supportive of me."
- Staff ensured records relating to people were kept confidential.

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- People were supported and empowered to express their views through various forums. Peoples views and choices were incorporated into person-centred support plans.
- Staff and carers were proactive and skilled at identifying and sourcing support for the person based on their views, needs and wishes. This supported people to lead fulfilling lives.
- The service recognised it was peoples right to have access to an independent advocate and other support networks to protect their wellbeing.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs

Services were tailored to meet the needs of individuals and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

Planning personalised care to meet people's needs, preferences, interests and give them choice and control

- People received care and support that was exceptionally person-centred and which was embedded in the service. The core value of the service was for people, "To live the life they wanted."
- The overwhelming theme of feedback we received was that the service and carers were passionate about meeting people's needs, providing an excellent service to people and changing people's lives. A parent told us, "It is like Shared Lives have put her at the centre and started to build everything around her. She is the core. No-one has done that with her before. They ask what she wants, everything is her choice. The amount of time and patience that they have put in has blown us away to be honest. They check, re-check and then check again that the things they do are what she wants."
- Professionals we contacted were keen to tell us how they viewed the service. A professional commented, "They provide a person-centred approach to all their work with the clear aim to support service users and carers in achieving their personal goals and independence. I have first-hand witnessed how the shared lives team are compassionate and caring people who are committed to enabling and providing a positive impact on people's lives."
- Staff and carers had an excellent understanding of people's needs, preferences and wishes. Support plans holistically reflected exactly how the person wanted to be supported and what they wanted to achieve.
- The service and carers were responsive to people's changing needs. Staff and carers constantly reviewed and updated people's support plans and made appropriate referrals to relevant professionals, when required.
- Information was available in a variety of formats to meet the communication needs of people. For example, easy to read information, picture cards and smart technology was all being utilised.
- People were supported with their educational needs and wishes. We saw excellent examples of how the service and carers had successfully enabled people to attend college when previous attempts had failed.
- People had excellent support to undertake activities, hobbies and interests. Staff and carers used innovative ways to enrich people's lives and make them feel more meaningful through the use of activities that would enhance their quality of life.
- A person was supported to go on an aeroplane for a holiday despite their significant disabilities. Arrangements had been made for the person to attend an assessment centre, to trial lifts, slings, hoist and seating positions in preparation. The holiday was a resounding success, with the person also being innovatively supported to swim in the sea.
- The service embraced technology and used this as a means of achieving extremely positive outcomes for people. For example, we saw how modern technology had been used to support people who were physically disabled, to be as independent as possible around their home.
- The registered manager fully understood their responsibilities in relation to the Accessible Information Standard. Information was available in many different formats, depending on the person's needs.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The service was proactive in responding to any concerns or complaints raised.
- People knew how to provide feedback about their experiences of care. The service provided a range of ways to do this through monitoring visits, regular surveys and coffee mornings.
- People and family members were given information about how to make a complaint and were confident that any complaints they made would be listened to and acted upon in an open and transparent way.
- One person attended board meetings to represent people who used the service. This person was held in high regard during this forum which was an opportunity to feedback the views, concerns or issues people may have.
- People, carers and family members were given information about how to make a complaint and were confident any complaints they made would be listened to and acted upon in an open and transparent way.

End of life care and support

- People received continued care and support at the end of their life.
- Staff had discussed with people and recorded their end of life wishes. For example, if they wanted a burial or cremation, if the service was to be religious and any specific music they wished to be played.
- We saw some people had been supported to arrange funeral plans if they had wished, to cover the cost of their funeral.
- The provider ensured end of life training was available for staff.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture

Service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

Planning and promoting person-centred, high-quality care and support with openness; and how the provider understands and acts on their duty of candour responsibility

- The registered manager planned and promoted holistic, person-centred, high-quality care and excellent outcomes for people. Their values and the culture embedded in the service ensured people were at the heart of the support they received.
- When asked if they would change anything about their care and support, one person told us, "Nothing at all I think it's outstanding."
- Carers told us of the exceptional support they received from management. A carer told us, "The difference it makes, not just to [the people they were supporting] but all the others in Shared Lives is immense. We see other Shared Lives people, go out, we are like a big family and have regular coffee mornings; we are one big extended family. There has been so much support for us, from management. It has changed my life completely."
- The management team had an inspiring shared purpose and vision to motivate staff and promote a high level of satisfaction. Staff told us they were extremely proud to work for the service and carers spoke of the exceptional support they received from the management and staff. They understood the management team's vision and were keen to implement this within their roles, so people received the best care possible.
- When asked what they enjoyed about their job, a staff member told us, "I enjoy the variety of it and seeing people settle into new, exciting lives and leading the life they should. There is not a day that I dread coming to work, I enjoy the relationships I have been able to build."
- People, carers, relatives and professionals spoke highly of the management team and service. One carer told us, "I just think it's a fabulous organisation and what they can offer brings people together. It's so family orientated and making someone part of your family is such a fabulous thing."
- The registered manager understood and acted on their duty of candour responsibilities. They promoted and encouraged candour through openness and honesty from staff and carers. For example, they told us of how they had worked with carers around accident and incident reporting, reassuring them about transparency.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- There was highly effective management oversight in the service. There was a clear vision to deliver high-quality care and support.
- The service was run by the registered manager. There were also four shared lives officers who managed smaller teams in local areas with oversight from the registered manager. There was obvious clarity about individual roles with everyone striving to ensure people received extremely positive outcomes.

- Management demonstrated a high level of experience and capability to deliver excellent care and an in-depth knowledge of people who used the service and carers. Everyone we spoke with, without exception, told us the service was managed well.
- The management team recognised the importance of supporting carers just as much as people who received support. We received numerous examples of when carers had felt supported and compliments we saw included, "Thank you for all your help and support. You are doing a great job, always there for us all and nothing seems too much trouble." And, "I just wanted to let you know how amazing and supportive [Name of staff] has been with me. I can't thank her enough for what she has done. She is an asset to the company."
- The registered manager used robust quality assurance systems effectively to monitor key aspects of the service. Senior staff carried out regular monitoring visits to ensure high standards of care were met and maintained.
- The registered manager demonstrated sound knowledge of their regulatory obligations. The most recent inspection rating was displayed.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- There was a positive culture of engaging staff, people using the service, carers and relatives in order to help provide excellent care that promoted positive outcomes for people.
- There was an extremely open and transparent culture that supported equality and inclusion. People were empowered to voice their opinions through many different forums so that their voice was heard. This allowed the service to monitor, reflect and develop based on people's experiences.
- The registered manager supported an 'open door' policy so people could approach them directly and discuss their concerns openly and in confidence. People told us the registered manager was approachable and they would have no hesitation in speaking to them.

Continuous learning and improving care

- There was a strong emphasis on continuous learning and development within the service. It was clear the success of the service was celebrated and shared.
- The registered manager told us, "We are seen as the benchmark for shared lives services. Since the last inspection when we were rated as outstanding, we have facilitated 12 meetings with other shared lives service to share practice." The registered manager also recognised for the service to continue to thrive learning was a two-way process.
- Since our last inspection, we saw a range of improvements the service had made and initiatives that had been introduced. For example, a new quality framework had been developed to robustly audit the service, their website had been updated to make it more accessible to carers and the public and the management and oversight of people's finances had changed in response to a previous safeguarding incident.
- The service sought to identify external agencies and bodies where they could learn and share valuable knowledge and information that promoted continued development.
- The registered manager shared that part of the adult social care vision was the service may be able to offer intermediate care or support to older people in the future.

Working in partnership with others

- There were exceptional examples of when the service had successfully worked in collaboration with external professionals.
- The service and the registered manager were held in high regard due to their excellent track record within shared lives.
- We saw through exceptional collaborative working, people who used the service were kept safe and experienced positive outcomes. We saw many examples of the enormously positive impact the service had

on people's lives. This was also reflected in the positive feedback we received from professionals, such as, "I have been greatly impressed with the service." And, "The service is an asset to the local authority."