

Record of Operational Decision

Decision title:	Decision to increase the Shared Lives carer payments paid by Shared Lives clients for board and lodgings in 2023 and annually hereafter in line with benefits increases.
Date of decision:	7 th June 2023
Decision maker:	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	In line with the decision made on 27 th December 2017 delegated authority was provided to the Director for Community Wellbeing regarding operational decision necessary for the Shared Lives Scheme. Decision - Redesign and procurement of a countywide Shared Lives Scheme - Herefordshire Council
Ward:	'Countywide'
Consultation:	<p>Following proposals put to the Community Wellbeing Leadership team and having spoken to the legal and governance teams the following consultation steps were taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Department of Works and Pensions benefits information and rates • Benchmarking nationally against board and lodgings payments made to Shared Lives hosts in other authorities and the national average recoded by Shared lives Plus • Consultation with people who live in Shared Lives arrangements and / or their family or other appointee representatives
Decision made:	<p>Decision to increase the Shared Lives carer payments paid by Shared Lives clients for board and lodgings in 2023 and annually hereafter in line with benefits increases.</p> <p>To make the following increases by July 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase Shared Lives rent £89.50 each week to £97.81. • To increase contribution for food and fuel £29 each week to £67. • If any individual circumstances are such that this increase could leave someone at risk of hardship, these amounts will be considered • These payments will then be reviewed every year in line with the benefits increases and with inflationary indexes.
Reasons for decision:	<p>Under the Shared Lives license agreement Herefordshire Council has the ability: <i>'If it is necessary to increase the charge, one month's notice will be given by Herefordshire Council'</i>.</p> <p>However, board and lodgings payments have not been reviewed since 2013 although benefits paid to and on behalf of service users have increased year on year. Herefordshire has fallen significantly behind other authorities in the rates that Shared Lives carers receive for board and lodgings.</p> <p>In addition Cost of Living increases put pressure on Shared Lives Providers and Cost of Living Grants are not paid to the Shared Lives carers but are paid to the people they support.</p> <p>The Adults and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 -2025 identifies Shared lives development as a key transformation activity:</p> <p>To progress the Key work Stream of the Community Wellbeing Transformation strategy 2023/ 2025 : Area 3 Integrated models of Care and Support Transformation activity 3.5 'extension of Shared Lives as a complementary community based offer'.</p> <p>To achieve this recruitment of more Shared Lives carers is essential. There is a danger that:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without this decision Shared Lives carers could decide they can no longer afford to continue supporting clients in their homes. • People who might be thinking about becoming Shared Lives carers might not apply if they don't believe that their costs will be covered. <p>This would lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of Shared Lives arrangements for current clients and impact the ability to grow and diversify the service. • Some people who are supported by Shared Lives would have to find alternative accommodation and support which would be likely to be in a care home or supported living setting, not an ordinary household in the community. <p>Doing this will bring Herefordshire Shared Lives Scheme more into line with the rates being charged nationally. These are the rates that have been determined by Central Government as amounts Ineligible (so not covered by housing benefit) for fuel deductions one room – working age and Amounts (ineligible so not covered by housing benefit) for meals A benchmarking exercise undertaken with Shared Lives schemes nationally identified that at present Herefordshire is below some national rates e.g. In Worcestershire Shared Lives clients now pay £76.40 per week and that the national average paid in 2022 was £68.00.</p> <p>People who live in Shared Lives and / or their representatives have been consulted over these proposals and the overwhelming theme is that they understand and accept the need for the proposed increase and have no issues with paying it.</p> <p>A summary document that of feedback received and which identifies the key themes and arising from the consultation is attached as is the consultation letter, in standard and easy read format.</p>
Equality Considerations	<p>People who live in Shared Lives arrangements have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received Easy Read versions of the consultation letter • Had the opportunity to discuss with members of Herefordshire Shared Lives team as well as their family or other representatives as appropriate <p>Individual financial circumstances are taken into consideration in the light of the decision and referral to welfare rights and benefits teams made as appropriate.</p> <p>Shared Lives Clients are the main group affected by these changes. This is owing to it having a direct impact on the amount that they pay towards their board and lodgings. The Shared Lives model of support that they receive has a positive impact on their individual lives but such support does come at a cost which they must contribute towards. Relevant increases have not been considered for some time, and owing to the potential risks if such an increase is not agreed, a reasonable approach must be taken. All Shared lives clients, irrespective of any protected characteristic, will be treated the same.</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>This decision does not have a financial impact on Herefordshire Council as the increase affects the benefits received by the individuals living in Shared lives arrangements.</p> <p>The decision being taken has been discussed with finance and legal managers and questions answered to their satisfaction</p> <p>There are no health and safety risks of taking the decision.</p> <p>The risk of not taking the decision is that there is a real concern that current providers would cease and potential applicants desist, impacting on the provision of Shared Lives in Herefordshire.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>The only option would be not to increase board and lodgings payments.</p> <p>There is a danger Shared Lives carers could decide they can no longer afford to continue supporting people in their home. There is also a real concern that people who might be thinking about becoming Shared Lives carers might not apply to do so if they don't believe that their costs will be covered. This would lead to a shortage of Shared Lives arrangements. If this happened some people who are supported by Shared Lives would have to find alternative accommodation and support which would be likely to be in a care home or</p>

	<p>supported living setting, not an ordinary household in the community. This has the potential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a negative financial impact on the Adult Social Care budget • Impact the progress of the Key work Stream of the Community Wellbeing Transformation strategy 2023/ 2025: Area 3 Integrated models of Care and Support. Transformation activity 3.5 ‘extension of Shared Lives as a complementary community based offer’.
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>If any officers or members involved or consulted in the decision-making have declared an interest you should include the declaration here.</p>

Signed..... Date: