

KENT SHARED LIVES

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(6) Approval Panel Selection of Members & Operational Criteria

It is the policy of Kent Shared Lives to establish and maintain a panel of people who operate independently of Shared Lives. This panel of people is known as the Shared Lives approval panel and is responsible for the approval of prospective Shared Lives Carers and the approval status of Carers who are already part of Shared Lives.

Composition

The approval panel has a panel chair, who is independent of Shared Lives and has expertise by experience. The panel is completely independent of Shared Lives, and is composed of Social Care colleagues, and experts through experience, all of whom have necessary skills and experience.

People who are employed by Shared Lives or Kent County Council (KCC) can be panel members providing they are not involved with the assessment process and are not responsible for the management of the assessing officer. People employed by Shared Lives will aim to be in a minority during any panel meeting where decisions are to be made.

Shared Lives registered or assistant manager and assessing officer should be available at the panel meeting to answer any pertinent questions from the panel members, provide clarification of any issues and offer the panel a Shared Lives perspective. The registered or assistant Manager and assessing officer will not enter any discussions or decisions about Carer approval.

The minimum number of panel members present for the panel to consider panel business and decide upon approvals or continuation of approval is three. There will be a fourth panel member on standby, in the event of an urgent issue preventing attendance. There will be an opportunity for the absent panel member to send in their views via email for the panel to consider.

Appointment of Panel Members

All panel members will have gone through the KCC recruitment procedure which involves comprehensive checks and references including a standard Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check

Prospective Panel members will receive written information about Shared Lives, Shared Lives processes, their panel role and expected conduct. A meeting will be conducted to further explain role and expectation.

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Removal of Panel Members

Panel members can decline future involvement from the role and should give Shared Lives three months' notice in advance that they intend to do so. If concerns are expressed about a panel member, they will be discussed in the first instance with the panel chair. If the chair is unable to resolve these concerns, the chair will inform and discuss with the Shared Lives Registered manager. This may lead to their membership of the Panel no longer being required.

The people who are authorised to give notice to a panel member are the panel chair and the registered manager. If the panel member disagrees with this decision, advice will be sought from the nominated individual for CQC. The decision will be communicated to the panel member by the panel chair.

Process

The panel will be held every month to consider assessments of prospective Carers and reviews of existing Carers, when required.

Reports on existing Carers need to be presented to panel if they are seeking a change in approval or as result of a complaint or major change of the Carers circumstances.

Carers assessments will be emailed to panel members no later than one week prior to panel to allow the panel members to read the reports and prepare themselves for panel. On occasions Shared Lives business support may ask panel members for their questions prior to panel to assist Shared Lives workers to prepare.

All notes from panel will be retained by Shared Lives as a record. Minutes will also be taken of any discussion held during panel consideration or recorded if carried out virtually.

During the panel, the Shared Lives worker who carried out the assessment or review will be available to answer questions and clarify any issues the panel may have. In some instances, if the assessor is not available it may be possible for a colleague or representative to support instead. They should also have been able to seek more information or clarification from the assessing Officer, if they feel that this is required.

Included within the assessment will be feedback from an existing Carer and an adult placed within Shared Lives. They will have met with the applicant on at least one occasion.

Where a transition assessment is presented to panel, the assessing officer, will obtain feedback from the adult placed, by way of meeting them independently from the Carer and feedback from an advocate would be

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beneficial, where an advocate is involved, as well as the referring Social Care team.

The panel will not be expected to decide on approval when the assessment or review is not fully complete, or approval may be placed on hold, pending arrival of references and checks, if not available by date of panel.

If panel members already have an interest in or knowledge of a Carer, they must declare this to the panel chair. The panel member must agree with the panel chair whether their interest or knowledge will affect their objectivity and if necessary, they must agree to withdraw from the panel while that Carer is discussed.

Evidencing knowledge and skills

The primary role of the panel is to assess the evidence of the Carer's knowledge and skills and determine if this sufficient for a new Carer to become approved or an existing Carer to change their approval.

Reviews and assessments will be written by the Shared Lives worker to reflect the individual Carer concerned. The evidence of each Carer's knowledge and skills will look very different depending on the Carer, their circumstances, motivations, and experiences.

Shared Lives will ensure that panel members understand the concept of the knowledge and skills required to be an effective Carer as part of their induction to the role of a panel member. Panel are to discuss any risks and vulnerabilities identified in the assessment, any health and safety concerns, including environment, safeguarding and composition of the people in the household and those which could result in a regulatory action being taken against Shared Lives.

Panel members must ensure that they look objectively at each Carer assessment and review and consider each of the knowledge and skills statements. For each statement they will consider whether the Shared Lives worker has provided them with sufficient evidence that the Carer has the knowledge and skills required.

Whether the type and amount of evidence outlined in the report is sufficient is a relatively subjective decision to be taken by the approval panel. However, if panel decisions are seen to be fair, equitable, consistent, and sound it is likely that their view on the type and amount of evidence will be equally so.

In the case of Carers of transition referrals where there is already a young person/adult in placement, the panel is not to decide on matters relating to the to the young person/adult's presenting care and support needs as any issues/needs identified will be raised with the Social care teams.

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Decisions

The approval panel will decide on the suitability of the applicant. When considering the assessment of new applicants, the outcome will either be:

Approved - This means that the panel were satisfied with the thoroughness of the assessment. Panel have reached the decision that the Carer can now work for Shared Lives to the level of their approval.

Approved in part – this could be that panel have approved some elements of the assessment, for example the assessment seeks approval for three long term placements, but panel only approve two.

Not Approved - This means the panel members have decided that an applicant is not suitable or that DBS checks and references revealed something unsatisfactory. In this case the appeal process will be made available to applicants.

Deferred - This means that panel members were unable to reach a decision. It may be that the assessment report was incomplete, references were insubstantial or that it was felt that the applicant requires further training or experience to develop their knowledge and skills. In this case the situation will be explained fully to the Carer and a date agreed to present them to panel again in the future. When a Carer is deferred Shared Lives will work with them to meet panel requirements and recommendations.

Reviews

When considering the reviews of existing Carers, decisions will be more tailored to the specific circumstances of the Carer and the reason their review has been presented to panel. They could, however, include:

Increase of approval - changes to original approval e.g., jointly assessed.

Other changes in current approval - Any changes to original approval

De-Approval - Removal of approval due to breaches of the Carer Agreement/Noncompliance or serious concerns.

The panel has been given the mandate by Shared Lives to make all necessary decisions and offer any recommendations or further actions.

The panel will ensure any decisions they make are in line with this mandate from the scheme.

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If an assessment or report is deferred to be resubmitted to panel, consideration should be given to arranging for the same panel members to attend this meeting, so they have previous knowledge of the assessment and recommendations from panel.

Shared Lives should ensure that when the assessment is resubmitted to panel members, this includes the previous recommendations, so that panel members can confirm these have been achieved.

If the deferred assessment is being presented to a new set of panel members, Shared Lives should ensure the original assessment is provided and be clear what they are asking panel to agree. New panel members cannot question new points and only raise comment relating to the reason for resubmission.

Panel outcome

Shared Lives are responsible for advising the carer of the panel meetings decision, this may be in a call or email depending on what has been agreed. This decision will be followed up in writing.

Disagreement

If panel members do not reach a unanimous decision it is agreed that a majority decision will be accepted. If there is an equal split of decisions, the panel chair will have a casting vote.

Appeals

Shared Lives has an agreed procedure to be followed in the event of Carers wishing to appeal against a panel decision.

Initially, the Carer should email the panel chair, Kelly Field, KellyAnne.Field@kent.gov.uk, within 28 days of the date recorded on their panel decision letter. Email should include details of the reasons why they are appealing.

The panel chair will respond within 28 days, giving their decision and details of how to appeal this decision.

The Carer can appeal the panel chairs decision by writing to the Customer Complaints Team. Customercomplaints@kent.gov.uk

Final recourse would be for the Carer/s to contact the local Ombudsman. www.Ombudsman-services.org

All existing and prospective Carers will be made aware of the appeal process via an updated Carer handbook and Carer agreement.