

Meeting of:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 05 February 2026</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Shared Lives
Purpose of Report:	To gain Cabinet approval to implement a change to the current payment system from one standard payment for Shared Lives Carers (SLC) to a banding system of payments
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member, Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Head of Adult Services / Vale Alliance Operational Manager, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health and Responsible Individual for Shared Lives Operational Manager, Accountancy
Policy Framework:	This is matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Shared Lives Partnership Board is preparing to implement a banding system for determining payments to Shared Lives Carers (SLCs). This change aims to standardise terms and conditions across the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend partnership areas, ensuring consistency and fairness in remuneration based on the complexity and intensity of care and support provided.</li> </ul>

## **Recommendations**

1. Cabinet endorses a 12 week consultation period with Shared Lives Carers regarding the proposed changes, to commence in February 2026.
2. Cabinet endorses the Director of Social Services and Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health to implement the new banding system, having given due regard to feedback received from the consultation process.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To allow the proposed changes to the payments for Shared Lives Carers to be consulted upon.
2. To allow for timely implementation of the new banding system, alongside regional partners, assuming that the feedback is predominantly supportive of the new arrangements.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Vale of Glamorgan Shared Lives Service (formerly known as Adult Placement Service) matches adults with care, support and accommodation needs with approved, self-employed, Shared Lives Carers (SLC), enabling people to be supported in a safe, family environment. The aim is to help each person live a fulfilled life, staying connected with their local community, building confidence and developing new skills.
- 1.2 Currently there are 29 Vale of Glamorgan citizens in long-term Shared Lives Placements in the Vale of Glamorgan with a further 20 people accessing respite placements to allow their family members a break from the caring role.
- 1.3 In 2019 Shared Lives became a regulated service under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 with the requirements and standards of the service set out in The Adult Placement (Service providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019.
- 1.4 In 2019 the Vale of Glamorgan Council was approached by Bridgend County Borough Council to manage shared lives on their behalf. This was initially on a one-year pilot basis, converted to a formal five-year partnership agreement until 31st March 2025. In line with Section 3 3.4 of the Partnership Agreement, this has been extended through unanimous agreement for a further five years from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2030.
- 1.5 As part of the partnership agreement a Partnership Board comprising of the managers from Bridgend County Borough Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council, meet on a monthly basis to oversee strategic direction of the service and to monitor progress against the Shared Lives Development Plan.
- 1.6 Since the commencement of the partnership in 2019 it has been an aspiration to bring the two areas into alignment in respect of Terms and Conditions and

payment to SLC's. This proposal endeavours to do while not adversely affecting SLC's and citizens and is within the current budget.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1** Project management methodology will continue to be utilised to support the process through to implementation. This will assist in coordination across the partnership.
- 2.2** Following discussion with the Social Services Senior Management Team a 'no detriment' approach has been adopted in devising the new arrangement. Bridgend County Borough Council propose utilising an option-based approach to facilitate this. In the Vale of Glamorgan an option-based approach is not required as the transfer from option-based payment system to a banding system, results in net gain for all carers. It is for this reason that Shared Lives Carers are predicted to respond positively to the proposed changes.
- 2.3** The banding system, already used in 11 Local Authorities in Wales, will be introduced by Vale of Glamorgan Shared Lives, applicable to both Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend placements. Banding decisions will be made in consultation with the individual's Case Manager/Care Coordinator and Project Worker and will consider:
  - Time commitment
  - Level of support
  - Complexity and skill required beyond standard expectations
- 2.4** There will be four 'Band Descriptors':
  - **Band 1:** The individual requires a low level of support and is able to go out independently.
  - **Band 2:** The individual requires a moderate level of support and may need to be accompanied when outside of the home. The individual will require some support with personal care. The individual may have occasional emotional or behaviour support needs.
  - **Band 3:** The individual requires a moderate level of support and regularly needs to be accompanied when outside of the home. The individual will require full support with personal care. The individual may have regular emotional or behaviour support needs.
  - **Band 4:** Health funded care requiring clinical governance due to complexity.
- 2.5** Once assigned, a band will travel with the individual across placements; long and short-term. Bandings will be subject to review in accordance with individual needs and legislative framework set out in the Social Service Well-being (Wales) Act 2016.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1 Long-term:** The proposals outlined provides a fairer more sustainable option across the partnership, which will support future growth of the Shared Lives Service.
- 3.2 Prevention:** The aim of the proposal is to provide consistency across the partnership and support growth of the service. This will enable more opportunity for community-based family placements as an alternative to supported accommodation or residential care. The proposal supports the Corporate Plan Objective of 'Supporting and Protecting Those Who Need Us' through the delivery of a high-quality Shared Lives Service.
- 3.3 Integration:** This proposal will be integrated across the shared lives service ensuring equality of approach for all involved across the partnership.
- 3.4 Collaboration:** Partnership working has taken place with our shared lives partners in Bridgend County Borough Council to create this proposal, and feedback from Shared Lives Carers during the consultation phase will inform on-going service development.
- 3.5 Involvement:** In the formation of this report, relevant officers from the directorate have been involved along with partners from Bridgend County Borough Council. Through the consultation, individuals and carers involved with the scheme will have the opportunity to feed into the formulation of the future structure as set out by the proposal.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** There are no climate change and nature implications as a result of this report or the proposals within it.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1** At present, all Shared Lives Carers (SLCs) receive a standard weekly payment of £503.11 for long-term placements. Where an individual requires personal care, an additional £105.39 per week is added.
- 5.2** This payment comprises of an individual's rent, domestic contributions towards meals and utilities and social services funding.
- 5.3** Current payments to Shared Lives Carers do not differentiate between levels of support or complexity of care provided which the proposed system seeks to address. The below tables set out what the existing payment is and what the new banding system of payment will be for long-term placements and for short breaks/respite placements:

<b>Long Term Current Payment</b>	<b>New Payment</b>
£503.11	Band 1 - £505.91
£503.11 plus £105.39 personal care	Band 2 - £640.08
£503.11 plus £105.39 personal care	Band 3 - £670.82
	Band 4 - £810.88 (Health funded)

<b>Short Breaks Current Payment</b>	<b>New Payment</b>
£626.25	Band 1 - £626.25
£626.25 plus £105.39 personal care	Band 2 - £740.23
£626.25 plus £105.39 personal care	Band 3 - £775.78
	Band 4 - £992.07 (Health Funded)

**5.4** The costs outlined below (Table 1) demonstrates full year costs based on 29 people under the current funding arrangement and full year costs for 29 people under the new banding arrangement (Table 2).

**Table 1**

<b>Current Costs</b>	<b>Per Week</b>	<b>Per Annum</b>
29 Long Term Cases @ £503.11	£14,590.19	£760,732.51
14 Personal Care @ £105.39	£1,475.46	£76,930.48
Annual leave for Carers @ £626.25 (4-week allocation per year)		£72,645.00
Community Respite for 17 Individuals @ £626.25 (4-week allocation per year)		£40,080.00
Personal Care for 11 Community Respite		£4,426.38
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>£954,814.37</b>
29 Client Contribution @ £165.03	£4,785.87	£249,535.26
<b>Total</b>		<b>£705,279.11</b>

**Table 2**

<b>New Costs</b>	<b>Per Week</b>	<b>Per Annum</b>
15 Long Term Band 1 @ £505.91	£7,588.65	£395,672.21
6 Long Term Band 2 @ £640.08	£3,840.48	£200,242.63
8 Long Term Band 3 @ £670.82	£5,366.56	£279,812.44
Annual Leave for 15 Carers Band 1 @ £626.25 (4-week allocation per year)		£37,575.00
Annual Leave for 6 Carers Band 2 @ £740.23		£17,761.50
Annual Leave for 8 Carers Band 3 @ £775.78		£24,824.96
Community Respite for 6 Band 1 @ £626.25		£15,030.00
Community Respite for 11 Band 2 @ £740.23		£32,570.12
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>£1,003,488.86</b>
29 Client Contribution @ £226.03 (this includes the £121 Local housing allowance)	£6,554.87	£341,770.92
<b>Total</b>		<b>£661,717.93</b>

5.5 Universal Credit (UC) is a new benefit that replaces a range of means-tested benefits such as housing benefit and employment support allowance. All individuals within shared lives have moved over to the new benefit. The amount individuals can claim towards their rent is based on the Local Housing Rate for the area. This is greater than the previous rent amount paid under Housing Benefit.

5.6 Payments to Shared Lives Carers will increase with the implementation of the banding system however, due to the increase in rent paid as part of UC; called Local Housing Rate Allowance, there is an overall saving of £43,561.18 for Social Services.

5.7 The banding system will be implemented in summer 2026, part way through the financial year, with the figures outlined remaining as is, for financial year 2027-2028.

5.8 Through implementation of a banding system, it is hoped that carer recruitment will increase and more placements be available, enabling a cost-effective alternative to supported and residential care options.

### **Employment**

5.9 There are no employment considerations as a result of this proposal.

5.10 Shared Lives Carers are self-employed individuals and are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the Inland Revenue's requirements for Shared Lives Carers and for any tax and national insurance they may be liable to pay.

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

5.11 There are no legal implications as a result of this proposal.

## **6. Background Papers**

None.