

Meeting of:	SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 JULY 2026
Report Title:	SHARED LIVES SERVICE CONSULTATION
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CLLR JANE GEBBIE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING CLAIRE MARCHANT, CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JOE BOYLE COMMISSIONING AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	It is proposed that the Shared Lives Service in Bridgend update its payments and funding model, in line with the best practice models elsewhere in Wales. This requires a ‘Banded’ payment system for paying self-employed carers, based on levels of support delivered. It also requires individuals within the service to be paying realistic contributions towards the cost of daily living. The proposed changes will align the payment and funding approach with our Shared Lives partners, Vale of Glamorgan Council, who run the service on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC). As the changes affect those within the Service, a public consultation has been undertaken to ensure the views of those individuals affected are fully considered. This report outlines the key areas being considered for change and highlights the main themes coming through from the consultation feedback.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with feedback received relating to the recent public consultation in respect of proposed changes and updates to the Shared Lives Service and to invite the Committee to provide feedback relating to the proposed changes moving forward.
- 1.2 This report provides an opportunity for the Committee to provide feedback in relation to the proposals prior to the final submission to Cabinet for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 In March 2025, Cabinet approved the continuation of the Partnership Agreement for a further 5 year period with the Vale of Glamorgan (VOG) Shared Lives (Adult Placement) Scheme, where there are currently 16 individuals in long-term placements, and 13 Shared Lives households (either single or couple carers) living in Bridgend. This approval to continue the partnership included the intention of moving toward banded payments.
- 2.2 All individuals using the scheme have been assessed by Adult Services and are then referred to Shared Lives as part of their Care and Support Plan to meet eligible unmet needs and their contributions are determined by a financial assessment. A video case study can be found on the homepage of the Shared Lives Partnership website [here](#).
- 2.3 On 3 February 2026 Cabinet approved the commencement of a public consultation regarding proposed changes to the Shared Lives Partnership which aims to create a consistent service between BCBC and VOG. The consultation ran for a 12-week period from 30 March 2026 to 21 June 2026.

Current allowance rates to Shared Lives carers

- 2.4 Currently, Bridgend carers receive a fixed standard rate of £616.77 per week irrespective of the level of needs or complexity of the individual(s) they support. This can be viewed as inequitable as it does not recognise the differing levels of complexity of those cared for, and does not recognise the different levels of care provided by carers. As self-employed carers, this payment is made as an allowance where the carers themselves are responsible for managing their tax position. Some carers with lower caring responsibilities may have other paid work, whereas some carers rely solely on the Shared Lives Scheme for their income.
- 2.5 The intention of the proposed banding system is to create a more equitable approach across the partnership between BCBC and the VOG through all individuals being placed in one of three bandings:

Band 3 – high levels of care/support	Paid £670.82 per week
Band 2 – mid-level care/support	Paid £640.08 per week
Band 1 – lower levels of care/support	Paid £505.91 per week

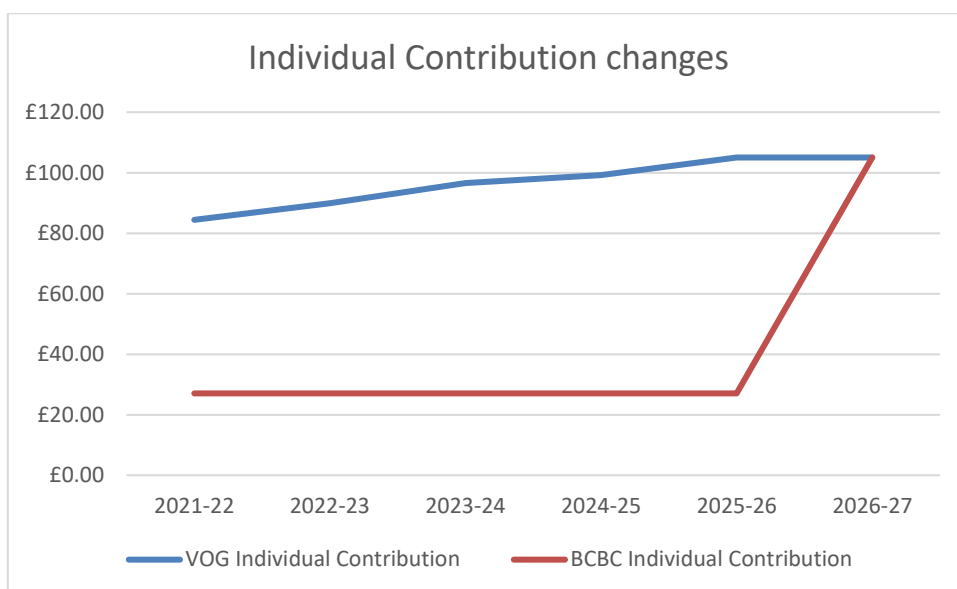
These rates are for the 2026-27 financial year and have been confirmed not to be subject to an uplift in 2027/28 following the intended implementation of these changes in January 2027.

- 2.6 This follows banding systems used in other Shared Lives partnerships across Wales and the UK. Notably, the proposed bandings for the Bridgend Scheme will utilise competitive allowance rates in comparison to neighboring schemes, where the proposed banding rates (allowances paid to carers) in the VOG/BCBC Partnership are higher, for example, than those paid by the Southeast Wales partnership (which is the largest equivalent scheme in Wales).

- 2.7 As part of the consultation, Officers have undertaken direct conversations to fully understand the impact of the proposed banding system and support the identification of the options for implementation. This is particularly important given the intention for the Shared Lives Scheme to grow and diversify. The possible identification of a 'no detriment' approach will be an option assessed, which will look at ways to mitigate any potential risks and financial impact, primarily from the weekly income reduction for carers supporting Band 1 placements.

Personal contributions towards accommodation made by individuals receiving care and support within the scheme

- 2.8 While the Council funds the social care element of the service, individuals within the Scheme pay a personal contribution towards their daily living costs, and towards their care and support. This is made up of:
- Rent (via Housing Benefit / Universal Credit) – which is set by local housing allowance rates;
 - Personal contributions towards daily living costs such as meals, heating and utilities – which form part of the allowance provided to the carers;
 - Additionally, individuals pay a contribution towards their care and support (Non Residential care charges) which is assessed in line with the Part 4 & 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessment) issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – which is paid to BCBC, and capped at £100/week.
- 2.9 Personal contributions towards daily living costs are intended to supplement the rent as a payment towards the normal costs of living incurred by the Shared Lives carers. The total of rent and personal contributions paid by individuals in Bridgend has been static at £105 per week since 2015.
- 2.10 The following graph shows personal contributions (excluding rent) in Bridgend and the Vale. As can be seen, BCBC individuals currently pay £27.05 per week, which has never been increased in line with inflation. This is in contrast to the VOG where annual increases in individual contributions have taken place, in line with annual inflationary uplifts, creating inequality within the Scheme. The position in Bridgend is a legacy rate implemented prior to the creation of the Partnership in 2019. Because the Bridgend contribution has been static at this rate since at least 2015, and VOG individuals had already been subject to annual inflationary uplifts, this has created the difference between the starting rates shown in the graph below.



2.11 The move to banding is intended to bring about a unified and consistent approach to allowance payments for carers under the Shared Lives Scheme, which includes an equitable approach to individual contributions. The table below provides a breakdown of the proposed contributions:

Band	Total Carer Allowance	Individual Contribution	Total Individual Contribution (including rent)	BCBC Contribution
1	£505.91	£105.03	£197.08	£303.83
2	£640.08	£105.03	£197.08	£443
3	£670.82	£105.03	£197.08	£473.74

2.12 The proposal within the Partnership is for all individuals and self-employed carers supported by the Scheme to move into a banding system in order to make this fairer for all involved. Should the move to banding be approved by Cabinet, two key factors will change from current practice in Bridgend:

- A) Banded allowance rates paid to self-employed Shared Lives carers;
- B) Alignment of personal contributions towards their accommodation made by individuals supported within the scheme.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The public consultation ended on 21 June 2026.
- 3.2 The consultation was made up of an online public form, available for any person to access, read and provide a response to; in-person consultation sessions for individuals supported by the service; along with separate meetings for their carers.
- 3.3 There were 3 group sessions organised across the county borough for supported individuals, with 9 long term supported individuals attending a session. These sessions were supported with an Easy Read version of the planned changes, and facilitated independently by People First Bridgend.

- 3.4 Shared Lives Carers were invited to separate sessions where they were able to provide direct feedback on the proposals and the potential impacts on them as carers, and also any known impacts or concerns for the individuals they support.
- 3.5 There are currently 16 individuals who are in long term Shared Lives placements. Of these, 7 did not attend an in-person session, but with communications received for 6 of them stating that the Easy Read information had been discussed with the individual. This ensured all supported individuals had been given the opportunity to engage with this consultation at a level that was appropriate to them.
- 3.6 There are currently 13 carers, or pairs of carers, providing long term support to individuals in Bridgend. Of these, 9 attended individual meetings at Civic Offices to discuss the changes and provide feedback, with a further 1 attending with their supported individual at a group session, where their feedback was obtained. Feedback was also obtained via email from 1 of the remaining 3 sets of carers. Despite repeated attempts and requests for the remaining 2 carers, they chose not to respond or comment on the proposals. One of these carers did respond regarding the individuals they support, demonstrating that they had received all the information, thus ensuring all long term carers were provided with the opportunity to engage and provide feedback on the proposals.
- 3.7 Family members were also invited, where appropriate or possible, to contribute to the consultation via the online form, or through a separate meeting organised as required. A separate meeting, facilitated by an Independent Advocate was organised for one supported individual, with their carer and their family members attending to enable feedback and concerns to be discussed.

Initial Feedback Analysis

- 3.8 As the formal public consultation only concluded on 21 June 2026, full analysis is still ongoing, and it is therefore recommended that the Committee provide further comment and feedback relating to the proposals for further analysis and consideration in the finalisation of the proposals.
- 3.9 Almost universal consensus has been found across all stakeholders that the move to a more equitable and fairer payment arrangement was understandable and appropriate. It was recognised that the banding arrangement was a fairer way to pay for the differing levels of care and support provided. It was also recognised, and agreed, that individuals should be paying a fair contribution to the real costs of living.
- 3.10 However, the major theme from individuals, family members, and the carers was in relation to the impact and financial viability of these proposed changes. In particular, around the changes to individual contributions towards their food and utility bills and the subsequent impact on the individual's daily life and ability to save.
- 3.11 As a result, financial assessment processes have begun; to support an understanding of the individual impacts of these changes and increases for each person in the service should the proposed changes be approved by Cabinet.

- 3.12 Another key theme is that under these proposed changes, carers who support an individual classed as a Band 1, would receive a reduced weekly allowance. This is due to the lower level of assessed needs that the individual they support has.
- 3.13 Of the 13 current carers (or pairs of carers), five currently support at least one Band 1 individual. Of these five, 3 carers (or pairs of carers) expressed a desire to remain on their current terms and conditions. This would mean remaining at their existing allowance rate, as well as fewer respite weeks (2 weeks currently, not 4 under the proposal). Additionally, one of these carers has also indicated that they would find it difficult to continue providing long-term care without this guarantee.
- 3.14 The mechanism for the implementation of the bandings and move to increased individual contribution is currently under consideration, including the possibility of a “no detriment” approach as referred to in paragraph 2.7 of the report, and final options for decision-making will be presented to Cabinet as part of any approval process for any relevant changes following these proposals and consultation activity.
- 3.15 As part of the family feedback, it was questioned whether the possibility of a ‘no detriment’ approach being applied to individuals regarding the increase in their contributions, alongside considering this approach for carers or the consideration of a phased increase, given the large jump in contributions needed to align with VOG arrangements.
- 3.16 In most cases, individuals supported receive a level of benefits that should allow them to continue living a good quality of life with minimal impact on their disposable income. However, the consultation process has identified some specific cases that need closer scrutiny and consideration. Examples of these situations could include where people are in receipt of benefits or in full time work and are supported through the Shared Lives service. It must be ensured, however, that this process be balanced with the intention for individuals to provide a fair, equitable and more realistic contribution towards daily living costs, and be realistic in helping people to manage their finances if able to move towards greater independence (e.g. moving to their own, unsupported accommodation).
- 3.17 All individuals, carers and family members that have responded have agreed with the rationale for the proposed changes.
- 3.18 All carers for Band 2 and 3 individuals have raised no concerns or issues in response to the proposals.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantages or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal. As noted in the Screening, although there may be a financial impact on individuals by them needing to increase their contributions towards utility bills and food, this is a positive impact by supporting and promoting their independence by paying a more realistic contribution towards these, which then further supports their potential ability to move on from the service to more independent living.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report.

Involvement	Individuals, their family members, and their carers in the Shared Lives Service have been directly engaged with as part of the consultation and provided feedback. This feedback has been used to form this report.
Long term	The aim of these proposals is to create a single unified shared lives service, with consistent terms and conditions for individuals and carers across the partnership. This will in turn promote and support the expansion and development of the service by increasing the number of shared lives placements available.
Prevention	These proposals look to prevent inequity of terms and conditions of individuals and carers within the service by having consistent individual contributions towards their daily living expenses, and consistent carer allowances, regardless of if they are classed as Bridgend or the Vale.
Integration	These proposals will be integrated across the Shared Lives partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan.
Collaboration	Officers from both BCBC and VOG have contributed and been involved collaboratively in the creation and development of the partnership and these proposals.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 The use of the Shared Lives Scheme Partnership supports the Council to fulfil its corporate safeguarding requirements by allowing for greater care to be provided to adults with additional needs. The proposal enables the Council to extend these duties through the provision of a fairer, more equitable and realistic service.
- 7.2 There are no Corporate Parenting implications from this report or its associated proposals.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 While cost saving is not the driver for the introduction of these bandings, the implementation of this system should bring about savings to the Directorate. This is mainly due to the rebalancing of individual contributions, which consequently reduces the placement costs to BCBC. However, it is intended that any subsequent

savings will be reinvested into the partnership to support its growth and development.

- 8.2 Any financial implications/savings linked to the final recommended proposal will be set out in the next report to Cabinet, following the completion of analysis and identification of the final proposal to Cabinet.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the report and its content, and provide any further comments in relation to the proposals and areas discussed in this report before the proposals are submitted to Cabinet for decision.

Background documents

None