

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Share in the success of Shared Lives

Leading social care charity Cornerstone, have recently established their new Shared Lives service in the Scottish Borders and are looking for families, couples or individuals who feel they can make a real difference to someone's life by becoming shared lives carers.

Shared Lives is similar to fostering, helping people aged 16 and over with a wide range of disabilities, conditions and other support needs to live in their local community, by matching them with an approved carer. Carers share their home, family and community life with the person they are supporting, whilst providing them with the care they require in an inclusive and homely environment. Every placement is unique, with the support provided being tailored to meet the individual needs of each person. This includes people with learning disabilities or mental health issues, older adults and also young people being supported through transitional services. Placements can be offered on a full-time, short break or interim basis.

Andrew Will, Project Leader for Shared Lives Borders explains: "Shared Lives is set to make a huge difference to the lives of adults with disability and support needs in the Scottish Borders. We have recently approved our first six amazing families, all of whom will be a real asset to the Shared Lives service, and we are now looking to recruit more. Becoming a Shared Lives carer can be such an enriching experience and we are actively looking for a range of people from diverse backgrounds and with a wide variety of life experiences".

Andrew adds "For many people the last year has been challenging, disruptive and unsettling, with many re-evaluating their life priorities and considering a possible change of direction. I would encourage anyone looking for a truly rewarding life-change to seriously consider Shared Lives".

By choosing to become a Shared Lives carer, Cornerstone offers you the following;

- Full training to develop and build on existing life skills & knowledge and enhance professional development.
- A generous allowance and additional help with household costs
- Regular support from your assessor and 24hour on call service provided

- Continuous information updates regarding laws and legislation policies & procedures changes
- Opportunities to help evolve and shape Health & Social care provision for the future
- Information and guidance to access membership with Shared Lives plus and support groups within the local and wider community
- Ongoing support to ensure that you and the supported person have a successful transition and placement in your home
- Links to many different professionals including social workers, therapists, health care professionals, and community groups to ensure that all aspects of the supported person's life and needs are met, as well as those of the carers

One of the first couples to join the Shared Lives Borders service are Betty and Ian Falconer, from Newtown St Boswells. Betty explains: "The whole experience of joining the Shared Lives service has been very rewarding and we were delighted to be approved as carers, providing a young man with a supportive and loving family home. The support and training offered by Cornerstone has been great and has given us a really good insight into our caring role. We covered lots of different aspects including the legal process, health and safety and adult support and protection, and also explored some of the challenges we might come across. There has always been someone there to help us. I would encourage anyone who can consider offering a vulnerable adult the opportunity to become part of your extended family in a caring, supportive and stable home, to get in touch!"

Doreen Murray, another recent addition to the Shared Lives Borders team from Earlston adds: "As a family, it would be true to say we were apprehensive about becoming Shared Lives carers, having never considered this as an option before. However, the process was easier than we had anticipated and everyone involved has been kind, helpful and supportive. We are really looking forward to working together as a team, to provide a secure and happy setting for our young man".

Becoming a Shared Lives carer is guided by an initial process where the emphasis is on exploring if Shared Lives caring is right for a particular family. The process takes into consideration life experiences, motivations and mandatory checks and will help prospective families understand the rewards and challenges that becoming a Shared Lives carer could offer. The Shared Lives assessment and training process takes about four to six months and once complete is presented to an independent panel of professionals for approval. Once approved, a matching process begins where people are carefully matched with carers who are best suited to meet their needs. Planned visits take place supported by a nominated assessor and any areas where further support, training, or professional input may be required are identified.

Rob McCulloch-Graham, Chief Officer Health & Social Care, said: “The Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership is excited to welcome our first carers to the newly commissioned Shared Lives Scheme to be run by Cornerstone.

“Shared Lives is an additional form of support that we can now provide adults with a learning disability to enable them to live within the community as equal and valued members of society, with these first carers being part of a group of 25 delivering such support over the next two to three years.

“We look forward to continued excellent partnership working with Cornerstone and seeing the undoubted opportunities our new and subsequent carers will provide adults with a learning disability in the Borders.”

Cornerstone has successfully run a similar Shared Lives service throughout the west of Scotland for the last 19 years. Christine Spiers is a Shared Lives carer in Ayrshire who explains: “Just over seven years ago we moved house, due to my husband Archie’s work. This led me to reassess what I wanted to do. I was sharing with a friend one day some of the ideas Archie and I had been looking into and she suggested we look at the Shared Lives service. Straight away we felt it was for us. All our children had flown the nest, so we had plenty of time and space to offer someone a loving, caring home. We contacted Cornerstone and have never looked back - being part of Shared Lives allows me to continue working with people and be at home to support Archie at the same time. Iram is a very much-loved member of our family and really enjoys living with us”.

Iram adds: “I have lived with my new mum and dad Archie and Christine and my niece and nephew Ellie and Riley for five and a half years. Shared Lives makes it possible to be part of a family again. It’s great living with the kids as I love children - we spend lots of time together having fun. I like being part of a family I have tried living on my own and really didn’t like it. Having a family is much better”.

Cornerstone’s Shared Lives service is registered with the Care Inspectorate as a Shared Lives Scheme and the service is an active member of [Shared Lives Plus](#). You can find out more about becoming a Shared Lives carer by emailing: [sharedlivesborders@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:sharedlivesborders@cornerstone.org.uk) or calling 01896 808750.

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**INTERVIEWS AND ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

**Photographs:** BettyandIanFalconer.jpg, ChristineandIramwithfamily.jpg, ChristineSpiers.jpg



For further press information contact: Katie Ronald, Cornerstone Marketing and Communications Lead on 07908 61 64 62 or email [katie.ronald@cornerstone.org.uk](mailto:katie.ronald@cornerstone.org.uk)

### Editor's Notes

- Cornerstone is a leading social care charity that delivers vital services to people with a variety of physical and learning disabilities in Scotland. Since being first established in 1980, Cornerstone has grown to become one of the largest care providers across the country.
- During 2019 – 2020, Cornerstone delivered high quality care and support to adults, children and young people across Scotland with a variety of needs including learning disabilities, physical disabilities, autism, Asperger's and elderly care. The charity supported a total of 2,822 people, including 307 children and young adults. 327 people supported received 24 hour support, and 675 were based in the community. 386 people lived within sheltered housing and a further 73 people lived in our registered care homes. We were able to provide respite care to 72 people and 193 people were able to attend our day services.
- As a leading social care provider, Cornerstone is transforming social care through a culture of trust, empowerment and teamwork. With a focus on increasing social inclusion and reducing loneliness as well as improving health, independence and wellbeing, Cornerstone teams work closely with the people they support to set goals and ensure the high quality care and support they need to live a meaningful and valued life is available to them - where they need it, when they need it.