



## Meet Teresa

### Shared Lives South West Carer

Teresa works as a shared lives carer in her own home. She opened up her own home and family life to support three people who need care and support, to live their life to the full and achieve their independence.

Shared Lives South West supports people with a variety of needs including learning disabilities, mental health issues and illnesses relating to older age.

## What is a Shared Lives South West carer?

Teresa supports three people with learning disabilities, including Roma who's a pensioner and Matt and Kerry who are a couple.

Roma has lived with Teresa for 30 years and has really blossomed over the years. She's become more independent and active in the community by going out to the theatre, shopping and being able to do her own banking - all thanks to Teresa's support.

Teresa has supported Matt to get paid work and Kerry also works in a charity shop. She enjoys organising activities and including them in their family holidays for example to Disneyland Paris and to watch Formula 1 racing. Teresa has also booked Roma on a cruise, which will fulfil a dream of Roma's.

Her responsibilities as a shared lives carer include:

- overseeing their budgets and finances
- supporting their choices in life
- helping them in activities in the community
- helping them to attend medical appointments
- supporting with their emotional well being
- personal hygiene and independence



## How did she get here?

Teresa started working in the care sector at the age of 17, in a care home for people with learning disabilities. Later on she wanted to start her own family and decided to take a different career path where she supported three people in her own home.

At first she set this up as her own residential home, but when policies changed she decided to become part of Shared Lives South West and hasn't looked back.

Teresa is supported by a team at Shared Lives. "I wouldn't be able to do my job without their support and advice," she said.

Teresa regularly does courses, updates training and has regular support from Shared Lives which is ongoing for herself and for the three people who live with her.

Teresa is always interested in excelling and developing her skills, for example she'd like to do more training around dementia.

## What would she say to others interested in a career in care?

Teresa says it's extremely rewarding to see the three people she supports thrive. She definitely sees it more as a lifestyle than a career

"I feel by giving them support, I can make real difference to people's lives. They wouldn't get this support anywhere else but a shared lives household.

It's so different from other forms of care as you really get to know them and they become a big part of your family.

Being part of Shared Lives is really rewarding and the ongoing support from the organisations makes me feel like I'm not alone and you feel part of a team."

Being a shared lives carer is life changing, both as a carer and for those you support



Find out more about Shared Lives South West at [www.sharedlivesSW.org.uk](http://www.sharedlivesSW.org.uk).