

CASE STUDY/ARTICLE : Matt, Chris and Dennis – West Sussex

What is your name and how long have you lived in Shared Lives?

My name is Matthew Sheppard I have lived in Shared Lives for about 5 years now.

Who do you currently live with and why do you like living with them?

I live with Chris & Denis my carers and 2 more guys. I like living here because they respect my own space as it very important to me and I am able to live as independently as possible and experience life to the fullest, days out, events, meeting and making friends.

How long have those who support you been involved in Shared Lives? – We heard Chris's parents AND grand-parents were Shared Lives carers too!

Chris my carer grew up in a shared lives setting as his grand parents & parents are shared lives carers too Chris & Denis have been shared lives drivers for 5 years now.

What do you like about living in Shared Lives?

I used to find new things, new people, or places difficult as change was hard for me to understand but since living with Chris & Denis I have watched and experienced every day life and seen life is not as scary as I thought. I now love meeting and doing new things.

How has your lifestyle/health changed since living in a Shared Lives arrangement?

I'm very healthy Chris & Denis help me plan my weeks ahead for appointments such as Dr, Dentist, days out and visitors. I have a calendar so I can keep track of what's going on so I am able understand better, and I get to experience lots of new things.

Tell us about your screwball rally races!

I love going on the screwball rally as I love cars. When we all go it's great fun as everyone is in fancy dress and the cars are too and I get to see friends with I made the year before and get to check out their new car or see what they have done to the old car and then we all meet up for drinks and food & and a party at the end of the day. We also meet up with my mum & her partner as they go ahead and meet us at new destination and I get to see lots of new places along the way on the last rally our car was in the french news paper it was very exciting as all the people were waving at me as we drove through the villages.

What have you used to decorate the cars?

well one year we painted our hands and put hand prints all over the car and the last car we did was my favourite because I love teddy bears. We stuck 200 teddy bears all over the car we made it the teddy bears picnic and had picnics all over Europe the best one was in the pyrenees mountains

I have lots of new hobbies too I like computers, taking photos and fishing trips I use the net to pick the fish up my next aim is to try the fishing rod and this year I did the London to Brighton Land rover run which was good fun and I did the Brighton colour run great fun I got covered in lots of colour.

Finally, please enclose a few photos to include in the article so that all the readers can see you and your car!

I also love to travel this took me to turkey with ~~B~~ I loved especially going to all the different temples, sites, smells, and sounds and different people that spoke funny and made me laugh and very different food I especially loved it when we went to miletus as an old lady made me a special breakfast and we sat on the floor to eat and share and after breakfast and lots of tea and laughter she gave me a gift a turkish eye which was for good luck she said it was a long time since she had, had so much fun and laughter and was happy that I took the time to stop and have breakfast with her.