

May 2015

Homeshare Report

- A snapshot of the Homeshare
Market in the UK



SharedLivesPlus

THE UK NETWORK FOR SHARED LIVES AND HOMESHARE

1 Context – Setting the scene

Homeshare enables two unrelated people to share a home for mutual benefit. Typically an older Householder with a room to spare will be carefully matched with a younger person who will provide an agreed amount of support in exchange for their accommodation. The support might include help with daily living tasks or just companionship or a mix of both. The Homeshare model recognises that both the Householder and Homesharer have something to offer the relationship.

Home sharing is a simple concept with numerous and wide ranging benefits for all involved. It is a sustainable and effective response to the twin policy challenges of helping an ageing population stay in their own homes for longer and for younger people to find accommodation at a time of record housing shortages and high rents.

There are currently Homeshare models running in at least 13 countries, some of which are substantial and growing rapidly. However, in the UK, Homeshare has been slow to grow and is not widely known.

The Homeshare sector in the UK has recently attracted significant investment and this snapshot of the sector will be used as a baseline guide to measure growth and development over the next two years.

2 Overview of schemes in the UK.

Homeshare in the UK is small scale. There are currently eight Homeshare Schemes operating across the UK, supporting approximately 180 Homeshare arrangements. This report is based on conversations with Homeshare scheme staff, Householders, Homesharers and wider stakeholder groups.

Four of the schemes operate solely within the London area. A further two are London based and whilst most of their active matches are currently in and around the London area they also support matches as far reaching as Scotland, the Midlands and the east of England and are keen to expand further across the UK.

There are small well established schemes operating in Bath and Bristol and in Windsor and Maidenhead.

We estimate that currently 70% of all matches are within the M25.

We are aware of two new Homeshare schemes currently in development. The first a Scottish based scheme with plans to operate across the Forth Valley area and the second a city based scheme operating across Oxford. Both have secured start-up funding and are in the process of recruiting staff.

Half of the Homeshare schemes are trading as charities or social enterprises. The remaining four are private sector companies.

There are a small number of other Homeshare developments on our radar but we have limited evidence of activity.

We know of three Homeshare schemes closing down in the past 18 months. Two of the schemes have reported that the schemes proved not to be financially viable and therefore could not be sustained by the parent organisation. Key factors impacting on the sustainability of the schemes include:

- lack of interest in the scheme by potential Householders
- the Homeshare scheme was part of a wider offer of 'stay at home care' from the organisation and staff were unable to dedicate sufficient time to develop the offer to its full potential.
- grant funding ran out and they were unable to secure further funding
- potential Householders failed to take up the scheme because they were unable to afford the Householder fees.

3 Models being delivered in UK.

Homeshare is a way of supporting people to help each other. A Homeshare arrangement brings together people with different sets of needs, both of whom have something to offer. Householders are people who have a home that they are willing to share but they need some help and support. Homesharers are people who need affordable accommodation and are willing to give help in exchange.

Householders must have a home that they either own or rent that is suitable to accommodate another person. Both Homeshare participants must be willing to commit to an arrangement for an agreed length of time.

The Homeshare relationship is brokered by a coordinator working for the Homeshare scheme. The coordinators role is to assess the suitability of participants and provide ongoing support to the relationship.

UK Homeshare Schemes are on the whole focused around the needs of an older Householder and respond to the growing need from older people living on their own and their families. It is a low cost and effective solution to enable the Householder to carry on living in their own home for longer, feel safer and have increased levels of social interaction.

The single biggest issues for Homeshare schemes is attracting high numbers of long term Householders. A number of schemes in the UK have widened their criteria in an effort to attract new and more sustainable shared living arrangements and a wider Householder market is growing that includes:

- elderly couples
- people with disabilities
- older people in the early stages of dementia
- single mothers
- carers

The current typical Householder is aged between 70 and 90, female, owns their own home and lives on their own.

Homesharers appear to be plentiful and relatively easy to recruit and are attracted to schemes by the offer of low cost accommodation, location and good transport links, the general condition of the property and size of the room and proximity to their university or workplace.

The demographic of the Homesharer varies between organisations. From what we have learned from our membership network of Homeshare Organisations, Homesharers in the UK tend to be older than is the case in other countries. Young people in their late 20s to mid-30s make up the majority of Homesharers, although there is currently a growing number

of middle aged females, older students, post graduates and young professionals responding to Homeshare advertisements. Overseas students wanting to improve their English language skills and understanding of English culture are also prominent Homesharers.

Homeshare Schemes are typically operated by a Scheme Coordinator. Most schemes have dedicated staff however some schemes operating as part of a wider offer from an organisation have to share staffing resource and/or have part time staff.

The ongoing costs of running a Homeshare scheme are usually funded from fees paid by the Householder and the Homesharer. Fees vary significantly from scheme to scheme. The average monthly charge is around £140 for the Householder and £160 for the Homesharer, some schemes charge VAT and some have additional administration and matching fees. In all but one of the UK schemes the Homesharer pays no additional rent but commits up to ten hours of support to the Householder per week. The support is wide-ranging but usually includes activities such as; cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry, reading, administration, walking the dog, companionship and sitting services for carers. Some Homesharers pay a contribution towards household bills but this is usually arranged outside the bounds of the Homeshare agreement set up by the scheme operators.

Start-up costs for schemes have come from a number of sources including; commissioning from local authorities, grants from small trusts and charitable foundations, investment by the parent company and private funds. Currently 50% of current Homeshare schemes have secured grant funding. Only one scheme is running services commissioned by its local authority at the moment.

The average length of a Homeshare relationship in the UK is around 12 months, although some schemes have relationships in excess of five years. One UK scheme concentrates solely on short term Homeshare arrangements usually less than three months long and is meeting a growing demand for intern and work experience placement personnel needing accommodation in London. This scheme brings together people who have a suitable home to share with someone who needs affordable accommodation through a bespoke interactive web portal. Householders charge a nominal rent and/or contribution to household bills in addition to a maximum of 10 hours support with household tasks.

4 Good practice and innovation.

There is evidence of a wide range of good practice and innovation already operating within Homeshare schemes. The Shared Lives Plus Good Practice Guide outlines much of this and it is regularly updated as policy or practice changes arise.

Safeguarding is a key consideration in all of the UK schemes. Homesharers, the suitability of the home and the needs of the Householders are assessed before any introductions are made. This is done face to face by most schemes. All schemes have a verification process that includes DBS, reference checks and interviews for the Homesharer.

Structured support is also seen as essential during the first few weeks by all schemes in order to support the transition for both participants and help resolve any initial issues and refine and clarify, where necessary, the support being provided by the Homesharer. Most schemes operate a trial period for the Homeshare relationship with regular telephone contact, face to face meetings and end of trial review.

The circumstances of both Homesharers and Householders can change quickly. On the whole schemes have ongoing monitoring practice in place that continually reviews and reassess the needs of both participants. Schemes are able to respond quickly and effectively to issues and problems that might arise and have the flexibility to be adaptable and innovative in order to support good quality Homeshare arrangements.

Schemes acknowledge the importance of wider stakeholders including family members, close friends and other health care professionals being involved in initially choosing the Homesharer and in the on-going monitoring of the relationship. This often leads to a more appropriate and accurate match that is able to be sustained for a longer period.

One scheme is currently providing emergency Homeshare cover for relationships that end suddenly and where it is important that the Householder has ongoing support.

Schemes have varying web and social media presence and utilise in varying degrees technology to support the recruitment and matching of participants. Online initial application forms are used by most schemes.

5 Challenges

There are a number of challenges highlighted by UK schemes and wider stakeholders that may be impacting on the growth of Homeshare in the UK, these include:

- Perceived risks associated with the safety of the Householder living with a 'stranger'.
- Accurate initial assessment of the needs and expectations of the Householder to fully understand the level of support and tasks the Homesharer will need to provide.
- Getting a good mix of matches in the scheme, some of which only need 'light touch' intervention or support.
- DBS and reference checks particularly for overseas students can often take a long time to be returned impacting on the length of time taken to set up a match.
- The take up of Homeshare in black and ethnic minority communities.
- There are a lack of young males responding to Homeshare adverts.
- There is a lack of widespread commissioning of Homeshare across the UK.
- Organisations have found it difficult to develop key referral routes with health and social care professionals and other potential referral agencies.
- Homeshare in the UK is virtually unknown and has a very low profile.
- Homeshare is an unregulated social care solution and some coordinators feel that this impacts directly on its credibility as a viable alternative for older people.
- The role of coordinator is varied and requires a person who has a wide range of experience, skills and abilities.
- Effective and targeted marketing is expensive and time consuming and is often not the key priority of Homeshare delivery staff.
- Whilst there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence, there is no underpinning academic evidence base that demonstrates the positive impacts of home sharing for both the Homesharer and the Householder.
- There are few validated tools on the market that could be used to measure the impact of a Homeshare relationship. Those that do exist are focused on outcomes associated with older people.
- It can take a long time for new schemes to set up the first Homeshare relationships and up to three years for schemes to become independently sustainable.

6 Current Investment and support for the sector

Shared Lives Plus is the UK network for Shared Lives and Homeshare schemes across the UK. A dedicated Homeshare Officer:

- Provides support and advice to our members, policy makers and anyone considering starting a Homeshare scheme
- Ongoing support to a growing network of Homeshare schemes to enable them to come together to share good practice and learning
- Promotes Homeshare to wider stakeholder groups
- Develops resources and information to support the delivery and development of Homeshare schemes

Shared Lives Plus is the UK network for shared living approaches to care and support for disabled or older people. Shared Lives Plus helps our members to work together to survive and thrive, influencing local and national policy makers and providing support, training, events, resources, research programmes and access to insurance. Our members include 5,000 Shared Lives carers, 150 local Shared Lives schemes and 13 Homeshare organisations, right across the UK.

To join us, visit www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk or call 0151 227 3499.

A Homeshare Partner Programme funded by Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales and BIG Lottery aims to demonstrate that Homeshare can be an effective, achievable and economical way of meeting housing and support needs and also aims to pave the way for further expansion of Homeshare across the UK in the coming years.

Both organisations have committed £1million of funding and have brought together a range of partners including Age UK, The Foyer Federation, SCIE and Shared Lives Plus to drive the programme forward. Lloyds Banking Group will provide support on business development and marketing. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) will lead on the evaluation of the programme.

The investment from Lloyds Bank Foundation and the BIG Lottery Fund will support the start-up and development of a number of Homeshare schemes.

Funding for the first two schemes has been allocated to Age UK Oxfordshire to develop a new scheme across the city of Oxford, and to Novus Homeshare to expand their current scheme in London.

The experience of the pilot projects will be tested, developed and fully evaluated to help establish a replicable “blueprint” for setting up Homeshare schemes in new areas.

7 Future Developments

The Lloyds funded partner programme will see a number of key developments to support the growth of Homeshare across the UK and eliminate some of the current challenges faced by existing and new Homeshare delivery organisations.

The programme will:

- Support the development of Homeshare quality standards as a way of self-regulating the sector and ensuring that organisations gaining the standard are delivering recognised safe and effective practice.
- Develop a replicable business model that can be adapted to meet the needs of a range of delivery partners and potential participants.
- Develop a dedicated UK Homeshare website that links potential Homesharers and Householders with Homeshare schemes best suited to their needs. It will provide information about Homeshare, an online resource library of case studies, research, evaluations and articles, along with opportunity for Homeshare organisations to share ideas, good practice and learning.
- See the development and/or expansion of Homeshare schemes across the UK.
- Provide ongoing publicity and raise the profile of Homeshare in the UK.
- Fully evaluate the pilot Homeshare schemes.
- Share all programme learning with the Homeshare and wider voluntary sector, policy makers and service commissioners.
- Develop a clear evidence base of the impact of Homeshare on individuals, the community and health and social care services.

8 Recommendations and learning

The key recommendations and learning for schemes are:

1. Be clear about target groups for both Householders and Homesharers and invest in expert, targeted marketing. Someone recruited to have the skills and experience needed to run a scheme is unlikely to be able to carry out successful initial marketing without support.
2. Most schemes aim to target young people, particularly mature and foreign students, as Homesharers, but as identified above, the demographics of a Homesharer can be wide ranging. Tapping into new markets will require targeted marketing and some adjustments to current practice.
3. Schemes are unlikely to be able to rely on statutory or charitable funding, so it is essential that each scheme has a business model based on the scheme becoming self-financing through charging participants. Not all schemes are charging fees which would make this possible, even with growth in participant numbers and expansion across larger geographical areas.
4. There are growing numbers of organisations offering or purporting to offer Homeshare or similar arrangements. In this unregulated sector, it is essential that schemes can demonstrate that they are delivering safe and effective practice with good outcomes and positive experiences for participants. The quality assurance tool being developed by Shared Lives Plus will address this need.
5. Schemes should have practice and process in place to support Homeshare relationships that are struggling to work or breakdown suddenly. This might include emergency temporary Homeshare support or referral to appropriate agencies.
6. Schemes need to have clear aims and objects that can be monitored and measured to; assess whether you have achieved what you set out to achieve, find out how people have benefitted, give more structure to your scheme and help you identify any gaps or unhelpful practices in your scheme.

The Key Learning and recommendations for local areas and commissioners are:

1. Schemes have huge potential to be a self-financing preventative intervention, but can only be successful where local agencies value and promote the scheme, build meaningful working relationships with the scheme coordinators, and ensure that key departments have the information and processes in place to refer people to it.
2. Agencies investing in the start-up costs of Homeshare schemes need to budget for expert marketing support as part of start-up. Without this during the initial phase, schemes may find it challenging to become self-sustaining through organic growth.

Gaps in learning and research:

There are some key questions to be answered by researchers and academics that could support further development and expansion of the Homeshare model.

1. What are the experiences and outcomes for Householders and Homesharers of home sharing?
2. What factors affect the success, outcomes and lengths of matches?
3. What is the potential for Homeshare as a preventative intervention?
4. Why is Homeshare so much bigger in other countries than the UK? What could enable the sector to scale up?
5. What are the total cost-benefits of a successful Homeshare scheme?

Ategi Homeshare Case Studies

Smiles



*Paula, 94,
and Alison, 47*

Paula left Germany shortly after the end of World War Two to seek a better life in England. After one meeting with homesharer Alison, a self-employed voice-over artist, writer and teacher Paula decided to share her house. Alison provides 10 hours' support a week, cooking occasionally and doing light household chores, such as cleaning, shopping and taking Paula to medical appointments. They have been Homesharing since October 2014.

Paula said "I wanted to remain living in my family home. I have many happy memories in this home and since my mobility is not too bad I don't want to have to move somewhere else." Since her husband died Paula has been living on her own. "Luckily my daughter Emely found out about Homeshare and contacted ategi to see if they could help."

Alison told ategi "I was originally living in Oxford and had previously been a Homesharer in a scheme that subsequently ended. When I saw the ategi website I immediately contacted them as I was keen to participate in a similar scheme again. They matched me with Paula and she is a delightful, quiet and intelligent woman. The match has worked well for both of us and I am very happy to be sharing Paula's home and assisting her when necessary, although she is a very independent lady and can do most things for herself!"

Paula agreed that most days she is able to do things for herself but said she felt less vulnerable, especially at night with someone else in the house. Paula also said that *"having Alison around has reassured my family and means they don't have to worry about me so much anymore."*

Both Paula & Alison believe that the success of Homeshare very much lies in bringing the right people together and matching their needs as closely as possible.

Transforming the Lives of Two Generations

Two participants in the programme, Trevor and Valery explain how the programme works for them and why other London residents should seriously consider at least investigating the programme further, if not signing up.

Trevor, who is the Householder, says one of his reasons for signing up was that after suffering a stroke a couple of years ago, he wanted to keep his independence “I really valued my independence, but it was getting harder for me to cope all on my own and I needed the security of knowing that someone else was in the house to help me out. I didn’t need a live in carer or a residential care home, what I needed was a helping hand here and there and to keep my independence. When I heard about the Homeshare scheme I knew it was perfect for me and after taking time to understand my needs they matched me with my Homesharer Valery.”

Valery’s reasons for signing up as a Homesharer were different to Trevor’s but the scheme meets both their needs perfectly, Valery explains: “I like to live my life helping people and at the same time it has been hard for me to secure a full time job. The Homeshare scheme fits my needs perfectly as I love helping people and I enjoy caring, sharing and making a positive difference to the Householders’s life. I help Trevor with cooking, light housework and just being there for company. In the times we are now living in, it is a great way to support each other and I also benefit by having a lovely home to live in at an affordable price.”

Both Trevor and Valery were pleased with the matching service offered. “Novus Homeshare has been good and check us regularly to make sure we are fine.

Homeshare ticks all the boxes – it is an ideal and affordable live-in support plan for older people and it works well for anyone needing that little bit of extra support or company in the home.

We would like to thank the following Homeshare programmes
for their contribution to this report.

Ategi Homeshare – <http://www.ategi.org.uk/homeshare.html>

Draycott Homeshare – www.draycotthomeshare.co.uk

Homeshare Scotland – www.homeshare-scotland.org

Homeshare Bristol – <http://www.homesharebristol.org.uk/>

Homeshare West – <http://www.homesharewest.org/>

Novus Homeshare - <http://www.lccc-novus.org.uk/homeshare/>

Room for Tea - <http://www.roomfortea.com/>

Share and Care – <http://www.shareandcare.co.uk/>

Support Match - <http://supportmatch.co.uk/>

A list of organisations currently delivering Homeshare in the UK can be found at
<http://www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk/about-shared-lives-plus/home-share>

Further information about Homeshare and links to all the Homeshare schemes operating across the UK
can be found at www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk