



Homeshare Sector report 2018 Executive Summary

HomeshareUK 
THE UK NETWORK FOR HOMESHARE

Homeshare brings people together for mutual benefit. Typically, this is a person who feels they would benefit from low-level support (the householder) with a person who needs affordable accommodation (the homesharer). The householder is usually a homeowner or tenant who has a comfortable room to spare. The homesharer provides around 10 hours of practical support each week in exchange for low-cost accommodation.

Introduction

Homeshare has been working for years on a small scale in the UK, but now it is time for Homeshare to be offered to many more people. This report shows that Homeshare is growing, following strategic investment from The Big Lottery Foundation and the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales. It has also begun to capture people's imagination: a short BBC film was watched 25 million times this year and 'liked' by hundreds of thousands of people.

We know what is needed to grow Homeshare: a little red-tape cutting at national level, enthusiasm from local leaders and a great deal of awareness-raising. The pieces are in place for Homeshare to become a solution to problems of housing, support and loneliness which we can make a reality now, for thousands of younger and older people.

Alex Fox, CEO Shared Lives Plus

Key statistics

+16%

increase in the average length of a Homeshare match since April 2017

14m

The average match duration is now 14 months compared to 12 months in our last survey

+42%

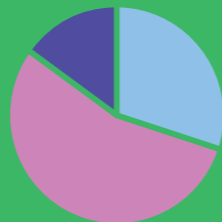
increase in the number of people Homesharing across the UK and Republic of Ireland between April 2017 to March 2018

+37%

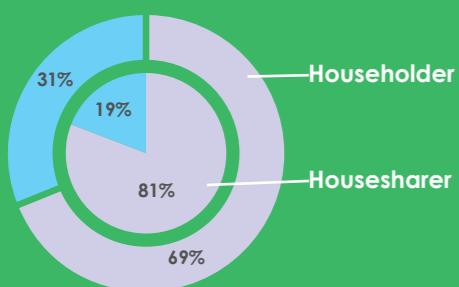
More people living with dementia are finding that Homeshare can help them be independent for longer, at the early stages – an increase of 16% to 37% of householders in 2017/18

Six schemes report being financially sustainable, 11 are currently operating with subsidies from either private or grant funded sources and only three schemes report being wholly reliant on grant funding.

Financially sustainable Grant funded Subsidised



Householders and homesharers are predominantly female (69% and 81% respectively) although the number of male householders has increased by 6%.



Most referrals for householders come equally from friends and family or as a self-referral (44%). Only a small percentage of people have been signposted by health and/or social care services (5%).

Challenges

- Homeshare still only attracts people who can 'self-fund'. Restrictions imposed by mainstream legislation and policy notably in relation to social housing, benefits and council tax continue to impact on wider take-up of the service and limit the breadth of potential outcomes achievable.
- There are still large areas of the UK and Republic of Ireland not well serviced by Homeshare particularly Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales the North East and South East.
- There is still a lack of formalised referral routes from health and social care professionals to Homeshare providers.
- The escalating needs of older householders may result in more support being needed that is outside of the remit for Homeshare.
- Safeguarding is still the key concern cited by potential referral agencies.
- Homeshare is still relatively unknown amongst key potential supporters including; health and social care professionals, local authority front line staff and older people themselves.

Calls to action

We are asking local areas to become 'Homeshare friendly'. This means identifying one or more of the locally-available Homeshare schemes as a partner, raising awareness of Homeshare with their staff and partners and providing start-up investment where needed to get Homeshare to a scale where it can sustain itself on participant fees.

We are calling for national and local action to make Homeshare affordable for people on low incomes to fund some participants, and through national government, address identified barriers in benefits regulations. We are asking government to work with us to clarify some unclear rules and to issue clearer national guidance on the use of existing local discretionary powers.

We are committed to working with Homeshare schemes and their partners to make Homeshare available to wider groups of people and communities. We are exploring partnerships with other national organisations to do this.

We would like to see Homeshare schemes developed in areas currently not well serviced particularly Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the North East and South East of England. We are seeking backing and resources to achieve our goal of a Homeshare scheme in every key UK city.

Local areas should become 'asset-based' in everything they do, adopting a range of approaches which connect and empower people, and learning to recognise and build upon people's capacity and assets, rather than only being able to see their needs and challenges. Councils, the NHS and the charity sector should consider risk from the point of view of the people they purport to serve, recognising older people's concerns about loneliness and that many older have the capacity to and desire to address their own challenges where they can do so with support.



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