



THE UK NETWORK FOR HOMESHARE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2017

“ My mother has been lonely for 35 years, but no longer since she has been homesharing ”

Daughter of Householder



# 1. Key Messages

The Homeshare UK 2017 report draws on evidence from a range of sources, including a survey of Homesharers, Householders and Householders' friends and family.

## In the past 12 months there has been:

- A 9% increase in the number of people using Homeshare
- An eightfold increase in enquiries (465). (80% of these were made by family of Householders).
- A 109% increase in householders waiting to be matched (96).
- 86% of respondents would recommend Homeshare.

## Key themes emerging from the survey include:

- Peace of mind for family living at a distance (99% of respondents reported this)
- Feeling safer and having companionship, renewing old interests and hobbies
- Learning new skills
- Respite for family carers.

The infrastructure is now in place for Homeshare to reach the much greater numbers that Homeshare reaches in comparable countries. However, it is widely acknowledged that Homeshare will not suit everyone and more evidence is required to demonstrate its benefits, impact and true potential to secure trust in the model.

We are confident that over the next 12 months, as newer schemes find their feet and established schemes reach wider audiences, we will see a significant rise in the number of people using Homeshare.

**“It’s fantastic, I don’t know why someone hasn’t thought of it before. We have been very lucky with our Homesharer and it’s improved my dad’s life 100% and made my life more relaxed too!”**

Family of Householder - Novus Homeshare 2017



## 2. What is Homeshare?

**Homeshare brings together two unrelated people to share a home for mutual benefit. Both the Homesharer and Householder have something they need and something they can give to each other.**

Typically, an older Householder with a room to spare, will be carefully matched with someone who needs low cost accommodation and can provide an agreed amount of support in exchange. The type of support provided might include: help with daily tasks such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, companionship, overnight security, enabling reengagement with the local community and social activity. Homeshare provides no elements of personal care for the Householder but can, if needed, complement a more complex care package.

Homeshare has the potential to be an effective and sustainable response to several key policy challenges including:

- Tackling loneliness and isolation.
- Helping an ageing population stay independent .
- Providing affordable accommodation for young people, students and low paid workers.
- Supporting early discharge from hospital.
- Giving family members and carers peace of mind and respite.
- Making effective use of homes that are not fully occupied.

Homeshare is starting to enjoy a more prominent profile as a viable housing and social care alternative. A small number of established schemes are growing quickly, with several schemes now operating sustainably and 'at scale' which gives us confidence in both the economic model and demand.

Homeshare increasingly provides support to people with 'moderate needs' who fall below councils' criteria for social care support and makes use of housing stock not otherwise available to the community.

## 3. Who Uses Homeshare?

**There has been a 37.5% growth in the number of Homeshare schemes from 16 members last year to 22 - including new developments in the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. As many of these schemes are still in their infancy, it is not surprising that this growth has yet to be reflected in the number of active Homeshare matches.**

- 99% of Householders were 65 years or over.
- 91% of Homesharers were between 25 and 44 years old.

Common Householder groups include:

- Older single people & couples
- Older people living with dementia
- Older people with learning disability
- People ageing without children and carers.

Common Homesharer groups include:

- Young professionals
- Students
- Older single people
- Public sector workers

Other Homesharer groups include:

- International students
- Savers
- Young care leavers
- NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- People living with HIV
- Adults with learning disability

The most common Homeshare referral routes were through Homeshare's new website: [www.HomeshareUK.org](http://www.HomeshareUK.org) and Gumtree or SpareRoom.co.uk. The most common Householder referral routes were self-referral (32%) and family or friends (30%).

# 4. Challenges & Recommendations

**Homeshare supports many key policy aims, local and national outcomes. However, there are a number of key challenges to overcome before Homeshare can flourish including:**

1a. Local Authorities and health and social care professionals are still slow to support and adopt the model.

1b. There is no commissioning of Homeshare services and the use of personal budgets has never been tested.

We recommend wider and **targeted promotion of Homeshare to key organisations, funders and policy makers** as a real alternative for housing and social care.

2a. Many people who could benefit from Homeshare are unable to afford the cost. In addition, issues relating to loss of key welfare benefits are preventing increasing numbers of potential Householders engaging with Homeshare.

2b. Many schemes are not attracting participants who are representative of the communities they operate across, mainly due to restrictions imposed by legislation and policy related to benefits, social housing and council tax.

We recommend the development of a **targeted campaign to promote greater understanding of Homeshare at national and local level** to ensure Homesharing does not result in loss of welfare benefits and is increasingly accessible for a wider range of participants.

To find out more

[www.HomeshareUK.org](http://www.HomeshareUK.org)

[Contact@HomeshareUK.org](mailto:Contact@HomeshareUK.org)

Tel: 0151 227 3499

 HomeshareUKNetwork

 @Homeshare\_UK

3. Recent consultation work with older people has identified that many older people have distorted perceptions of students and younger people and a key concern for them is "feeling safe in their own home".

We recommend developing meaningful links and **alliances with a wider range of key 'older and younger people' organisations and networks**. This will help develop the Homeshare model, increase number of Householders wanting to share at a younger age and promote the benefits of intergenerational living models.

4. Many older people are reluctant to identify with the characteristics of a Homeshare Householder and report "not for me, not yet". Schemes are struggling to engage directly with groups of people for whom Homeshare would be valuable at a time when Homeshare would provide optimum benefit and delay a move into residential care.

We recommend widespread **promotion of Homeshare to older people** as an opportunity to give a young adult a great start in life, by providing a comfortable and affordable home to a student, young professional or low paid worker.

We recommend that **tools to help schemes self-evaluate and measure their impact** are developed to demonstrate the lasting benefits of Homeshare.

5. There are large areas of the UK not yet serviced easily or comprehensively by Homeshare.

We recommend the **development of schemes in current 'no coverage areas'** including; Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and in designated rural settings.

6. Homeshare is not a regulated service. This is often perceived as a lack of quality, safety and effectiveness.

We recommend that Homeshare organisations self-regulate, work within the **Homeshare UK Good Practice Guide** and work towards full compliance with the **Homeshare UK Quality Assurance Framework**.