

How Homeshare is Making a Difference

Homeshare brings together people 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, in exchange for rent-free accommodation provides around 10hrs of practical support per week. Both parties pay a small monthly fee to the Homeshare Service that matches and monitors the relationship. The Homeshare relationship is based on trust and friendship, allowing people to 'live well' within their chosen communities.

Doreen and Anouck - Heywood

Doreen lives on her own in a council-owned property in Heywood, Greater Manchester. Doreen had a fall in her property, injured her shoulder and consequently had to move into a nursing home until she recovered. After 7 months, all Doreen wanted was to go home, but she didn't feel confident enough to live on her own.

Anouck is a 22-year-old French Homesharer. After completing her Law degree in Paris, she wanted to continue her studies and specialise in European Employment Law, but felt she needed to improve her English first by taking a gap year in the UK. Homeshare is a very common accommodation option for students in France and she liked the idea of Manchester – after contacting her local scheme, she was carefully matched with Doreen.



Anouck and Doreen are getting out and about in Heywood, they have attended a singing group at Heywood library, a Remembrance concert at Rochdale Town Hall (Doreen had never been to the Town Hall before), the Heywood annual Christmas parade and light switch-on and a ladies' night, to name just a few.

Meanwhile, Anouck is finding the comfort of Doreen's home and presence reassuring. It can be hard to be in a foreign country, leaving your loved ones behind and trying to find a job. But she often feels that coming back to Doreen's home is like coming back to the 'nest'. As an added bonus, her English has improved so she is near fluent!

Living with Anouck has helped Doreen get her confidence back; she now goes out on her own with her walker and pops back to the nursing home to catch up with the friends she made there. Doreen is also confident in staying on her own when Anouck is away (an agreed one weekend per month).

Doreen's life would have come to a standstill without Homeshare. The scheme has enabled her to return to her home. Doreen would have never been able to afford the support that she is getting from Homeshare through other means.

Charlotte & Esme, Oxford

Charlotte is in her 90's and has lived, worked and raised a family in Oxford. She is still very active and doesn't need much help, but her children now live further away and she has a large house and garden to herself.

When I first found out about Homeshare I was very interested in the idea of a younger person who might be able to take on some of the household things that I was beginning to struggle with.

Having worked in the local hospitals myself for many years, I was very aware of young workers, really struggling to afford accommodation and often commuting a long way. I know that I am very close to the hospitals and central Oxford and thought I could help.

Now I have a Homesharer, my middle-aged children feel reassured because there is someone else in the house with me.

Esme is a great help with the telephone, as I am quite deaf and can really struggle just to work out who it is. In the evenings Esme can help with this by answering the calls. She also helps with my computer and together we have experimented with online food shopping.

I am also very comfortable with the relationship I have with the staff at Homeshare Oxford. I feel able to approach them with any question or problem I may have, and I know that they will respect my confidentiality and patiently guide me through.

Esme is a young woman in her 20's who was able to take up her first full time job after completing her degree at a university in the North of England.

I saw the advert for Homeshare Oxford when I was browsing online for affordable accommodation. I started the application in Summer 2016 and had moved-in by the Autumn. By Homesharing, I have been able to move into comfortable and affordable accommodation in Oxfordshire. This has meant that I don't need to worry about budgeting as much and have extra income to either save or to spend on travel to see family and friends.

I have learnt a huge amount about what it means to grow old and can more fully understand how bewildering things like the internet might be to someone who grew up without it. I am learning so much and think that it has affected how I view older people in the UK. It has been really rewarding for me to help Charlotte feel more confident using her computer; from finding television programmes she might have missed on catch-up services, to ordering a new dress for Christmas parties.

Being new to Oxfordshire, it is fascinating to live with someone who was born and brought up here. Hearing Charlotte's stories really brings the local area and its history to life for me, as I imagine how it would have been when Charlotte was growing up.

I was initially worried about the level of privacy I might have moving in to another person's home, however I have found it very similar to when I lived in house shares as a student. We are both considerate of each other's personal space and ensure that we give each other the privacy we need.

Living with an older person rather than with your peers is a big change but definitely worth trying.

Ralph & Janet, London

In August 2016, Novus Homeshare received an enquiry about homesharing from Ralph – a gentleman in his 90s living in a very affluent part of London. He had contacted Novus Homeshare after reading about Homesharing in the Guardian.

Ralph is able, active and alert for his age. He leads a busy life and enjoys spending time with his family, friends and on his own. He tries to be as independent as possible within his power.

The Homeshare coordinator followed up the enquiry with Ralph's daughter and subsequently identified 3 potentially compatible Homesharers. Novus Homeshare introduced Ralph and his daughters to all 3 Homesharers. Ralph found it tough to choose and would've liked to have all of them as he thought each and every one would make a suitable Homesharer!

In the end, Ralph chose Janet due to their shared interest in travel and world affairs. Janet takes pleasure in cooking new cuisine and Ralph enjoys being her taste tester!

Homeshare has made a significant difference to Ralph's everyday life. He feels less isolated and more confident now he has someone in the house – especially overnight. Janet and Ralph are full of praise for Novus Homeshare for making this a possibility. Ralph says they are a "a perfect match!".

Andy & George. Manchester



Andy, 68, had lived alone for more than 14 years before his Homesharer, George, moved in. Andy had travelled the world for work in The Army and as an Overhead Lines Transmission and Distribution Engineer and after living the life he loved, he realised that he was more socially isolated than ever and found himself feeling lonely and, in his words, "sat in front of the box all day".

He was recommended to PossAbilities Homeshare by a mutual contact and they worked to find George, who was based in Romania and looking for accommodation in Heywood. After he was cleared by PossAbilities Homeshare through DBS and application forms, he and Andy had a Skype chat and agreed to give it a go.

Under the Homeshare agreement, George spends 10 hours a week with Andy and sleeps at home at least 5 nights a week to give Andy peace of mind.

George pays Andy just £9 a week for bills plus £150 a month to PossAbilities Homeshare, making it a much cheaper option than private rental.

"My colleagues at Argos are jealous at how little I pay", he says. Not only that but George and Andy have provided companionship for each other, with George being in a new country. They enjoy watching MASH together, going bowling and having 'banter' together. There is one thing they don't enjoy - each other's cooking! They don't mind though, as they still spend time sitting down and eating together while Andy teaches George more English- or at least Lancastrian!

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

Family of Householder – 2017

Homeshare is a common-sense approach that tackles two problems at once in a creative way. Loneliness is a hidden problem in our communities, as is providing good quality accommodation

CLlr Paul Ellis. Wandsworth Council 2018



For more information visit www.homeshareuk.org

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Reg Charity number(England and Wales) 1095562 - Company number 4511426, Reg Charity No (Scotland) SC)42743