# Homeshare network meeting minutes 31 March 2020

* Alex opened the meeting going through some of the key issues Homeshare is facing and how Shared Lives Plus is here to support members through this time.
* We are using our links with government and other agencies to get issues heard and clarity around new grey areas. So **please get in touch if there is anything we might be able to help with.**
* Shared Lives Plus will continue to be here to support all members – our funding position is strong enough and member support is top priority right now.
* There is a three stage plan to deal with firstly the current emergency situation, how things will look in 6 months and then planning for the next 5 years and how we support people post coronavirus.
* Sibel asked about Council tax and while we are not persuing this at this time due to different pressures on councils, Debs said that if people are struggling to pay council tax bills during this time due to loss of income then Councils are likely to be able to waive it on an individual basis so worth contacting local councils direct for Homeshare households.

**Medication and Personal Care**

* Debs has been talking with the networks in France and Belgium who are experiencing similar  issues particularly around Sharers having to take on extra responsibility around personal care and medication.
* While we as organisations cannot be saying yes it’s ok to do it, we can advise to take a common sense approach, involve householders, sharers, next of kin and care agencies/local authority.GP as appropriate to make and agree plans to support Householders. Having decisions in writing and keeping records are key and staying in touch and reviewing the situations regularly.
* Jennifer said that in the case of personal care, the local authority teams should be contacted. We know that these teams are under a lot of pressure and capacity varies from area to area but it is important to inform the social services access teams if there is someone that needs care or care needs are not being met.
* Sharers shouldn’t be asked to do things they are uncomfortable with and not trained to do.
* Use the pharmacy services to prepare blister packs where possible and provide any advice.
* See updated email on google group with response from CQC regarding medication.

**Loss of Income/Sharers not being able to pay fees**

* Many organisations are having Sharers and Householders that are no longer able to pay their monthly fees.
* Most organisations are dealing with this on case by case basis.
* Share and Care are appealing to their matches stating their position and asking that if they can afford to continue paying then it will ensure the service can continue. They have had a good response to this.
* Audrey updated that since the 80% salary benefits was announced one of her matches is able to continue paying the fee.
* Sarah asked if there were any additional benefits available above Universal Credit – It was felt that as the Sharer isn’t a tenant then there isn’t anything currently available but we will continue to monitor the available support.
* In terms of self-employment support, Those organisations still supporting matches are not able to furlough so must continue to work. There are government loan schemes available for loss of income.
* We will circulate more information around this and will unpick it further as more information comes available. You will be contacted directly by the government if you are eligible for some support.
* Lucy said that in the ROI if you income drops by over 25% then you can access a 350 Euro grant a week for 12 weeks.

**Good News Stories**

* We are always keen to hear good news stories and the [Times](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/podcasts/stories-of-our-times) podcast featuring Norman and Jorge from Two Generations was a lovely positive piece that we will continue to promote.
* We are also keen to see how the Homeshare communities are supporting each other. Eg Oxford sharers have a WhatsApp groups and have started weekly video calls. Our comms team are putting together some tips and examples of good platforms to use if you want to encourage your householders and sharers to support each other during this time.
* Lucy mentioned that the final two episode of OAP BNB are due to air in Ireland in April so hopefully that goes ahead.

**AOB**

* Alex floated the idea of using the skills of the network to house frontline workers. It was felt that at this time most people were too nervous to open their homes to new people. Amanda mentioned that AIRBNB are doing this and paying for the accommodation themselves.
* Sam noted that he was still getting enquiries for new matches and wanted to discuss with the network how they all felt about making new matches. It was agreed to open this up for discussion at a future meeting when we have new information around leaving the house etc.
* Lucy checked in that we were all OK in ourselves. Amanda added that it is always worth remembering that we are all in this together and being kind and recognising that was the most important way to reach decisions and get through it together.