# Homeshare network meeting minutes 27 May 2020

* We began with an informal catchup to find out how everyone was doing across the network.
* The main agenda item was to discuss Ben’s role in greater detail and develop on some of the plans for his work in the coming months. Ben and Debs recapped on his role description, which was released in February, but Ben noted that that now feels like a lifetime ago!
* A significant part of Ben’s role is developing Homeshare in Norfolk, working with voluntary and other sectors and will initially look to develop evidence of the need for Homeshare in the area. Ben will also be working more widely to support the network as a whole.
* Amanda asked about Ben’s background with local authorities (LA), whether he had any good insights about how they work and how they could be influenced to support Homeshare. She noted that LAs have been extremely difficult to engage over the years, and that London schemes have tried hard to do so.
* Ben’s worked in LA’s for seven years and has got a pretty good understanding of how they work. There are differences between LAs, but many work in similar ways with regards to decision-making. Ben wants to work together with the network to identify the main issues that need to be tackled and where LAs could help – like benefits or finances. He says he will arrange times to speak to the network in more detail on this.
* Amanda posited that working as a group to engage Las could be more powerful, and it is important to use the right language to do so. She ponders whether this could include expanding on the work done by Debs and Alice in the quality assurance framework (QAF). She noted that we don’t want to be CQC checked - but at times it seems like regulation and frameworks are the only language LAs understand
* Debs noted that one of the tasks Ben must get to grips with is the QAF. Alice has just finished work on the good practice guide, Ben is going to analyse this too and we hope to produce some further practical documents from this.
* On the subject of LAs, Debs reflects that one of the key reasons the survey went out was to establish which Boroughs matches are concentrated in, so that we know if we’ve got 30 in one borough, that’s’ a good place to start to engage LAs. Survey is key to Ben’s work.
* Alongside local gov engagement, Amanda also suggested sending more info out to local MPs and noted that when the above resources are finished that will be a good time to engage them.
* Debs reminded us of the last sector report in which we provided template press releases to MPs, Amanda said she used them but had had no success or response from MPs
* We then discussed ways to engage MPS, Las, etc. to lobby for Homeshare. Michael discussed the work done lobbying for Shared Lives and suggested virtual tour of matches homes. Ben stated there needs to be a clear ask when lobbying.
* Marian said she has had success getting MPs excited and interested in Homeshare. She notes that one of the best things they can help us do is help to reach more older people. If they could put something about Homeshare in their newsletter, that would technically reach a large number of their constituents.
* Back to Ben’s wider role, Debs mentioned that the funding for it stipulates concentrating on London and East Anglia, which is where he will focus on for now. However, Debs infers that the funders wouldn’t be too rigid or concerned about deviating from the original remit because of the extraordinary circumstances of Covid-19
* Amanda asked Ben if his work in Norfolk is specifically geared towards to helping the LA set up a scheme, or is it more focussed on outcomes?
* Ben stated that the role is about trying to replicate the good work across the network. He notes that there will be lots of stakeholders to connect, and will not necessarily stick with any one.
* Debs states that we don’t know who would deliver a Homeshare org in Norfolk, or if they will at all!
* Debs says it is about exploring all the options. A potential provider could be an entrepreneur, CIC, LA, or charity. Our funders would like to see HS at some scale across East Anglia.
* Amanda says she doesn’t currently have any clients in EA but did in the past. One issue is with sharers – many people not having cars.
* Ben demurs but says the large student population means potential for the model in the area.
* Debs then asked for people’s opinions for developing tech solutions for some practices and processes, for Covid-19 and beyond. She notes that Homeshare orgs in other countries and other related models do it. Are there things we can take online?
* Marian asked whether Sam was able to get NESTA funding to develop tech solutions for Homeshare, Debs confirms his bid was unsuccessful
* Amanda thought it was a good idea to explore this. Could the network also offer safeguarding, basic safeguarding course online? If it was uniform it would also show the value of Homeshare UK. We were running out of time because of Zoom limitations at this point, so Debs quickly asked for any other business:
* Carl Wain from York said that they will have a vacancy for coordinator, they’ve widened the role to intergenerational co-ordinator in response to difficulties they’ve had in finding Householders. This recruitment is frozen for the moment, but we will push it out across the network when it becomes live.
* Lucie has had lots of hassle with a sharer, but has been getting some positive reviews as well, on Google. She will continue to update us on the situation as it develops.