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# Homeshare Feasibility for Norfolk - Summary Report

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Shared Lives Plus has been funded by The Mercers' Company to support development of Homeshare services in Norfolk and more widely in the East of England. We have undertaken a study to assess the feasibility of having an Homeshare service in Norfolk and this is a summary of the report's key findings.

## Evidence of need

- Norfolk has an older population than many parts of the UK. Currently people aged 65 or over make up 24% of Norfolk's population, compared to the UK average of 18% and the gap is growing. By 2036, three quarters of the population increase in Norfolk will come from over people aged over 65.
- Norfolk County Council's Together for Norfolk 2019 – 2025 strategic plan outlines the authorities aims to support people to live independent lives in older age by offering "early support and innovative solutions to help people to live independent and healthier lives for longer"
- There is a distinct lack of preventative services in Norfolk that offer low-level daily living support for older people.

"The gap is around the 'just about coping' group that often miss out on support. Particularly if families are not local – low level support is what is desperately needed to help people remain independent in their own homes for longer." YMCA Norfolk

- Norwich is home to two universities and has a significant student population of approximately 20,000 people needing to find accommodation.
- There is a significant need for affordable good quality accommodation across Norfolk.

### **Older people told us:**

- The biggest benefit Homeshare would bring to their lives would be companionship and reduced isolation.
- Almost three quarters told us that they would sign up to take part in a Homeshare arrangement if a service was available in available Norfolk.
- Helping younger people make a start in life and find affordable accommodation was a key motivation when considering taking part in Homeshare.

*"If managed properly this is an excellent idea and could be the answer to so many of society's problems. Hope it works out!"*



*Margaret and Holly*

*Photo courtesy of Leeds Homeshare*

### **Family and supporters of older people told us:**

- The biggest benefits of Homeshare is the reassurance of an overnight presence and companionship to reduce isolation.

*"I think that it is a really positive development and one with benefits for both parties"*

### **Younger people told us:**

- Homeshare is an opportunity to give something positive back and support someone in need.
- The biggest benefit Homeshare would bring to their lives would be access to affordable and better-quality accommodation.

## **Opportunities for Homeshare in Norfolk**

- Supports older people to live independently for as long as they can in their own homes.
- Companionship helps to combat loneliness and isolation for both Householders and Homesharers.
- Potential for Homesharer to support Householder to engage with existing community activities.
- Reduces dependency on health and social care services and families and supporters of older people.
- A preventative approach which supports those with low level social support needs below eligibility thresholds for statutory social care.
- Providing good quality low cost homes for key low paid workers, students and other groups who need affordable housing.
- Potential to reduce isolation and loneliness caused by Covid-19 pandemic across communities in Norfolk.

## **Challenges for Homeshare in Norfolk**

- Concerns around safeguarding.
- Securing funding to start and sustain a scheme until it becomes financially sustainable.
- Lack of awareness of Homeshare in Norfolk.
- Concerns about the potential for compatibility between older and younger people in a Homeshare arrangement.
- Concerns around younger people being unable to provide 10-15 hours of support on a weekly basis.

There are more than 20 Homeshare Organisations across the UK and Republic of Ireland, all of which are members of Homeshare UK. We are the home of Homeshare in the UK and offer support, guidance and resources to Homeshare providers.

Homeshare brings together someone who needs some help to live independently in their own home with someone who needs somewhere to live. In return for low cost accommodation the Homesharer provides a minimum of 10 hours of support each week to the Householder.

The two are matched together by local Homeshare organisations who find the right match and offer back up and support to ensure it works for both people.



*Sylvia and Laura*

*Photo courtesy of Homeshare Living*

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**Homeshare UK is part of Shared Lives Plus**

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