

# Homeshare UK – social media guidelines



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## Introduction

This document explains and provides guidance on using social media accounts to promote your local Homeshare programme. It will help to follow the guidelines, so your Homeshare organisation has the best chance of success.

A Homeshare UK network member should always be professional online, taking their social media responsibility seriously. Veering away from these guidelines could be detrimental to you as a Homeshare provider.

If you have any questions in relation to social media marketing or guidelines please contact Frank Fitzpatrick, Homeshare UK Membership Engagement Officer [frank.fitzpatrick@sharedlivesplus.org.uk](mailto:frank.fitzpatrick@sharedlivesplus.org.uk) or Jess Jackson, Communications Manager: [jess@sharedlivesplus.org.uk](mailto:jess@sharedlivesplus.org.uk)

## Social media channels

Homeshare UK recommends you set up social media accounts for:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

## General guidelines

- Make sure all content is relevant to your organisation, sharing the type of information that adds value and is interesting/entertaining for your target audience to engage with.
- You should use the links to your social media pages in their email signatures.
- Keep all your communications positive and respectful.



- Engage in conversation with your audience. Social media exists to communicate and build trust and value to your local Homeshare UK programme – so make sure you are responding to enquiries as well as pushing content out.
- Do not post any confidential or proprietary information.
- If a negative post or comment is found online about you, do NOT counter with another negative post. Instead, publicly offer to remedy the situation through positive action. You can also seek help from us (Homeshare UK).
- Engage in social media efforts for at least 15 minutes every day – engaging with comments, and scheduling posts.
- Tag in other people using @ - this might be partners or people you know might be interested or share your stories.
- Use relevant hashtags on all platforms. Often 1-3 hashtags is enough. Use #homeshareUKnetwork to make other Homeshare providers (and Homeshare UK) aware of your news and follow it to share other Homeshare stories.
- Be proactive, get involved and stay involved with your communities.
- Ensure you have a frequent online presence to keep engagement rates high.
- Use relevant national days and weeks to help you create content – don't forget to tag them in using their @ and #
- Key objectives are to: grow your following and gain more engagement on your content. We recommended paid advertising alongside organic posts.

## Facebook

- Homeshare UK have a national Facebook Page, we will try to publicise the content you promote on Facebook as much as possible.
- You should use the link to your local Facebook Page in all correspondence and marketing materials.
- The Facebook Page is for professional purposes only. Personal contacts and opinions should be left for your individual page, if you have one, but you should always uphold the values of Homeshare when communicating online.



## Facebook page set up

Prior to your launch, your Homeshare organisation should have set up your Facebook page. The page could have your logo, a cover photo, about sections and contact details.

Here is an example:

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook page for 'Homeshare UK North East'. The page features a cover photo of two women smiling in a kitchen, with the text 'Could you benefit from Homeshare?' overlaid. The page has 45 likes and 50 followers. A yellow line highlights the 'About' section, which is expanded to show the following information:

- About** [See all](#)
- i** Homeshare UK North East brings together people with spare rooms with people who are happy to chat and lend a hand around the house in return for affordable, sociable accommodation. [See less](#)
- i** Together, householders and homesharers share home life, time, skills and experience. Homeshare UK North East carefully vet, match and oversee each unique Homeshare arrangement. [See less](#)
- 👍** 40 people like this
- 👤** 43 people follow this
- 🌐** <https://homeshareuk.org/>
- ☎** 0151 227 3499
- ✉** [contact@homeshareuk.org](mailto:contact@homeshareuk.org)
- 📁** [Charitable organisation](#)
- 🛡** [Privacy Policy](#)

Examples of the about section on Facebook.

Website link: direct to your page listing.

Your work contact number and email address.



## Facebook audience

Our key target audience on Facebook is 'friends and family' – this is the friends and family of potential Householders (older people who would benefit from Homeshare) and content should be tailored to this audience.

## Facebook social media strategy – basics

Implementing the steps in this basics section will help you to grow your audience from launch onwards.

Homeshare UK will provide support with a lot of these steps when setting up your pages.

### 1. Complete Facebook profile

#### Facebook profile to feature:

- Opening hours, set as 9-5pm Mon-Fri
- Email address
- Website address (link to your directory on the website)
- About (a short description of Homeshare [UK](#))
- Cover image and profile picture

### 2. Basic posts on Facebook

Your posts should be friendly and engaging - think about talking to a real person, and create a call to action – what you want that person to do.

#### Where possible, your post should contain:

- An image - ideally with at least two people (to show connection)
- Who/what/where/when/why - your comment should make it clear why you are posting.



- What is the point? How will it affect your audience? What is the most important thing they need to know?
- A call to action. A phrase such as Find out more. Click here. Get yours now or tell us below tells your audience what you want them to do. Simple and direct is usually best.
- A link - if relevant. For example, if the post is about an event, link to the event, or if it's about a Homeshare opportunity, link to the page on your website about that opportunity.

### **Example**

“Do you know someone with a spare room who would benefit from companionship or some practical support at home? Homeshare brings together two people for mutual benefit and may be the ideal solution for them! Visit our website for more information: [www.homeshareuk.org](http://www.homeshareuk.org)”

### **3. Sharing posts on Facebook**

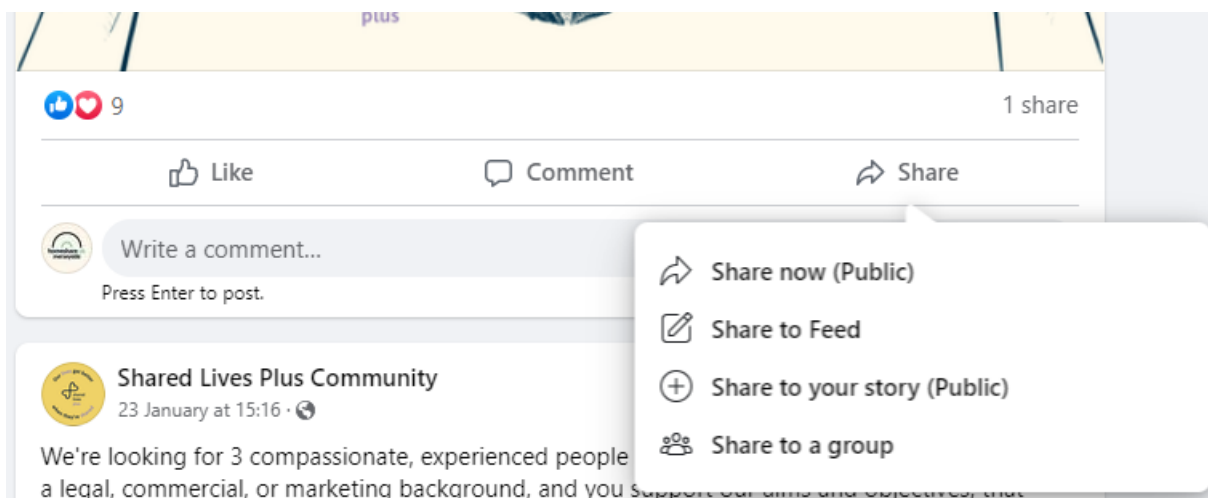
If you find content on Facebook or Twitter that is relevant to your audience, or from local organisations that align with Homeshare UK values, you can share or retweet that content on your local Homeshare UK social media pages.

#### **How to share posts on Facebook:**

1. Click “Share” in the bottom right of the post.
2. Click “Share to feed”
3. Enter your message - speak directly to the audience, showing the importance/benefit of this information to them



4. Click Post (in blue at the bottom)



#### 4. Facebook events

Facebook events help your events to be seen by more people. Whenever you have an open day, a gala, a fundraiser, or any other kind of event, it's a good idea to create a Facebook event.

##### Creating an event:

1. On the left hand side of Facebook, click Events
2. On the left hand side of the Events screen, click the Create Event button
3. Choose Create Public Event
4. On Event Host, choose the name of your Homeshare scheme
5. Upload an event photo or video. This will appear at the top of the page stretching across, so should be in landscape/horizontal orientation. Choose a picture of a previous event if you have one.
6. Enter the event name, location (address), date and time, a category (choose "other" if none of the options fit your event very well), a short description of your event, keywords (e.g. "book sale" if relevant). If you're comfortable with responding to





people's messages on Facebook Messenger, click Yes on "Let people ask you questions about this event on Facebook Messenger".

7. If people have to buy tickets, copy and paste the address of the website where they can buy tickets in the Ticket URL box.

8. Allow "Anyone can post" and "show guest list" so as many people as possible can engage.

Once the event is created, invite your colleagues, stakeholders, volunteers, or anyone you know who might be interested themselves, or have friends who might be interested.

Ask all of your colleagues to respond with a 'Yes' (even if they aren't going) so the event looks busy and well-attended.

## 5. Facebook groups

A group is a page within Facebook where small communities can unite to chat. They aren't owned by any business or organisation, and anyone can set one up. The creator of a group is called the Admin, and they can set the rules within the group (e.g. no harassment, no sales posts). If a user does not abide by the rules they have set, the admin has the right to remove the post, or remove the user from the group. Groups receive good visibility in the newsfeed on Facebook.

It is a good idea to find and join local interest groups in your area, particularly those that serve the key target audience of householders and their families. Once you have joined groups, if the group rules allow, you can share news about your Homeshare UK programme and invite people to contact you for more information. If you create events, you could share these in local groups too.



# Twitter

- Homeshare UK have a national Twitter Page.
- Homeshare UK and you can contribute content to each other's pages and share relevant information from each other's pages.
- Members should post comments following the general guidelines on page 3.
- The Twitter Page is for business purpose only, personal contacts and opinions should be left for your individual page, if you have one, but you should always uphold the values of Homeshare when communicating online.

## Twitter account set up

Prior to your launch, your Homeshare organisation should have set up your Facebook page. The page could have your logo, a cover photo, a bio, and a link to your website.

Here is an example:





## Twitter Audience

Key target audiences are other organisations (locally and national) who align with your values and work, e.g. older people orgs or community groups. It's a great platform to showcase operational aspects of your work.

As well as this Twitter is a great channel for reaching and interacting with local media and journalists in order to gain awareness of Homeshare in your local area.

## Twitter social media strategy – basics

Homeshare UK members can participate in the online conversation effectively by tapping into conversations and themes that are being shared surrounding housing, loneliness, cost of living and adult social care.

### 1. Complete Twitter profile

#### Your Twitter profile should include:

- Short description of the service you offer
- Location
- Website address (link to your directory page on the website)
- Cover image and profile picture

### 2. Sharing or 'retweeting' posts

#### How to "retweet" (share) posts on Twitter:

1. On the tweet you want to share, click the image of the two arrows in a circle (the second icon from the left underneath the tweet).
2. Choose 'quote tweet' to add a comment.
3. Enter your comment in the box – speak directly to your audience, showing the importance/benefit to them of this information.
4. Click Tweet.



### 3. Creating lists

You can create 'lists' of interest on Twitter, e.g. other Homeshare organisations, or organisations you want to connect and interact with.

As stated on Twitter's website: "Twitter Lists allow you to customize, organise and prioritise the Tweets you see in your timeline. You can choose to join Lists created by others on Twitter, or from your own account you can choose to create Lists of other accounts by group, topic or interest. You can also pin your favourite Lists to the top of your timeline so you never miss a Tweet from the accounts that are most important to you."

#### To do this:

1. Click on **Lists** in the navigation bar.
2. Click the **Create new List** icon at the top.
3. Choose a name for your List, and a short description of the List. List names cannot exceed 25 characters, nor can they begin with a number. Then select if you want the List to be private (only accessible to you) or public (anyone can follow the List).
4. Click **Next**.
5. You can then search for people and add people to your List.
6. Remember that accounts are notified when you add them to a list, so it is worth bearing this in mind when setting up the name of your list and thinking about who to add to it.

## LinkedIn

As LinkedIn works more on an individual networking basis, we recommend you join LinkedIn as a social enterprise owner and therefore have your own profile page.

You do not have to list previous work history if you would prefer not to.

LinkedIn is a great place to connect with local organisations with similar values to your Homeshare organisation.



We will cover the best use of LinkedIn during your social media training, but here are a few guidelines to remember:

- Use LinkedIn to network with people/organisations based in your local area, building strong working relationships that drive referrals to your Homeshare programme.
- Represent the national Homeshare UK network by always posting professionally.

## LinkedIn account set up

This process is different to the set-up of your Facebook and Twitter pages (which Homeshare UK will set up for you), instead on LinkedIn you will need to set up your own personal profile.

- Go to [this web page to sign up](#), add in your email and choose a secure password.
- Click agree and join, you will then be prompted to add in your first and last name
- LinkedIn will then take you through the steps to get set-up.





## LinkedIn Audience

LinkedIn is an online networking platform – a chance for you to connect with other professional locally and nationally from organisations that align with our work.

It can also be used to connect with press and media, though twitter works best for making initial contact and developing relationships with journalists. When it comes to news outlets, LinkedIn can help you to find and connect with producers working in TV, for example.

## LinkedIn social media strategy – basics

### 1. Creating a compelling profile

To ensure you can be found on LinkedIn, you will need to fill out your profile well. This includes:

- Adding a profile picture – this should be a professional headshot. You can snap this on a phone. But to be professional it simply needs:
  - A clear background
  - For you to be facing forwards
  - For you to be standing in a professional pose
- Add an 'about' section – This is your opportunity to talk about what it is that you do, why you are passionate about it, and offer a call to action, letting people know who you are looking to connect with. Try to avoid cliched phrases typically found on CV's such as 'I am motivated' or 'I work well in a team as well as on my own initiative'. This section should be more about you personally and your organisation.

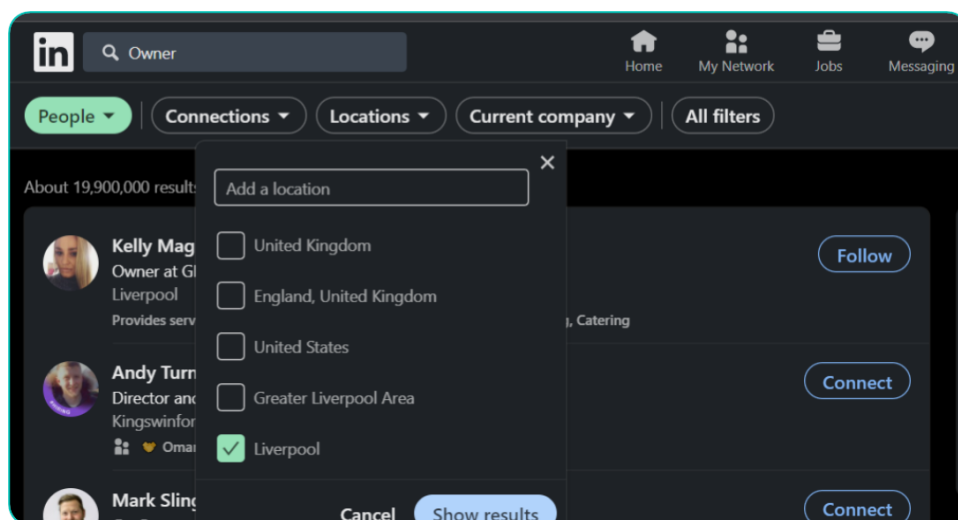
### 2. Finding and Making Connections

It is often a good idea to start out by connecting with people you already know in your network, as the more connections you have, the wider LinkedIn allows you to search to find more connections.



When searching for new people to add to your network it is worth following these steps:

- Consider the job title of the people you would like to connect with and type that in the search bar, then narrow down results to 'people'
- Narrow down by 'Location' to find contacts in your local area



- Click to 'Connect' with people, or if their button is showing as 'follow', head over to their full profile and click the 'more' button showing under their photo to find the connect option.
- Chose the 'add a note' option and offer a sentence introducing yourself, as you vastly improve your chance of having your connection request accepted if you add a personalised note.

### 3. Posting or Publishing

You should try and be active on your LinkedIn account at least once a week, posting an update or sharing relevant content from your network. If you have a lot of content to share, then you could consider publishing this as an article by choosing the 'Write an article' option instead while making your update. This gives you more room to say what you want to say and will notify your network when it is published. A published article is more like a blog post so can be used for bigger news items, whereas regular updates can be your more day-to-day activity.



# Language

## Words and phrases to avoid or use

We avoid using the word **vulnerable**, across all our work, instead our work is about **empowering** people who are in Homeshare matches.

In Homeshare we want to ensure both sides of the match are empowered, and whilst an older person may be experiencing feelings of isolation and loneliness, the match goes two ways; each person involved has something they need and something they can give - therefore we reflect this in our language and communications, always defaulting back to the question: is **this empowering?**

## Capitals and acronyms

Capitals to be used at the start of headlines or titles, Not In the Middle of Sentences or Headlines like this Example. It makes it more difficult to read / less accessible and adds a sense of importance that distracts from the message itself.

- However, ALWAYS use capitals on Homeshare UK and the name of your local programme, for example 'Homeshare Gloucestershire'.
- There should always be a space between 'Homeshare UK' instead of 'HomeshareUK'.
- Don't use acronyms such as HSUK. To your audience on social media or in general this doesn't mean anything to the general public.
- Homeshare always has a capital, however you don't need to capitalise 'householders' or 'homesharers'.

# In depth social media strategy

Within the members area of the Homeshare UK website you will find two more in-depth documents that will assist you in success on social media:

- [Social media strategy and toolkit](#)





- [Recommended social media hashtags for Homeshare](#)



## **Shared Lives Plus**

[www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk](http://www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk) <http://www.homeshareuk.org>

Company Number 4511426

Reg Charity Number (England and Wales) 1095562

Reg Charity Number (Scotland) SC04274



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