



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Homeshare?

A Homeshare is where one person offers a spare room in their home and in return another person offers up to ten hours of social support.

What's the difference between a householder and a homesharer?

It's simple really. The *householder* is the person who is offering the spare room. The *homesharer* is the person who takes up the offer and gives up to ten hours social support in return.

Social support? What is that?

Sometimes *householders* just need a bit of support to enable them to live a more full life as they get older or try to juggle family life with work. So social support can be anything that **is not** personal care. Whatever the two parties agree. For example gardening, window cleaning, going to the shops or even taking someone to the pub.

So it's not like being a carer then?

Definitely not. Professional carers help with things like dressing, bathing and medication. *Homesharers* **don't** do that sort of thing. Their contribution is purely about social support along the lines of the things mentioned above.

That sounds great. Is it free?

The *householder* doesn't make a charge for the room, the *homesharer* gives their support in return. They split the bills, like gas, electric and water. They each pay a monthly service charge to the PossAbilities Homeshare scheme. You also have to pay a one off fee of £25 to register for Homeshare.

Sounds fair enough, but what's this service charge for?

PossAbilities Homeshare operates the Homeshare scheme. The service charge covers the costs of vetting prospective householders and homesharers, setting up agreements, monitoring the arrangement and help dealing with any issues or disputes that may arise. It's a full support service to make sure that the Homeshare arrangement works, is safe and successful.

Does the homesharer have to stay in their room?

No. Usually homesharers also share common parts of the house such as the kitchen and living room. It's not unusual for homesharers to find that they have things in common – even when there is a significant age gap – and they enjoy spending time together as well as spending time alone.

Are there any Homeshares available in my area?

We are building up a big database of people who want to be *householders* and *homesharers* across Greater Manchester. One of the important things is to find a good match. The best way to find out is to get in touch with us and we can explore what you are looking for.

How long does it take to make a match?

It varies. Matching the right people together is our priority rather than just rushing into a match that might not work. So the sooner you get in touch, the sooner we can start the process of finding out more about you and who would make a good match for you.

Is a Homeshare just temporary or does it have to be forever?

Forever is a long time. A Homeshare can last for as long as both parties want it to. All Homeshare arrangements have a trial period to see if it works for the *householder* and *homesharer*. After that we tend to see them as short term for up to eight weeks; medium term which is around the length of an academic year and good for students; or long term for as long as it suits both parties.

Is living with a stranger safe?

By the time the Homeshare arrangement starts you won't be strangers and we will know a lot about both of you. There will be checks too, like references, DBS checks and we will meet with both parties to satisfy ourselves that there are no risks to either the *householder* or *homesharer*.

Next, when we feel that we have found a suitable match, we will introduce you and let you get to know each other. If that feels right, we can organise a trial period. You will know at each stage whether you feel comfortable and safe progressing to the next stage. If at any stage you don't we are contactable at all times.

Sounds like a lot of hoops to jump through, why shouldn't I just rent a place or hire some help?

You could do that, but think about the benefits of Homesharing first: -

As a *homesharer* you could save about £4,000 a year in rent – that's a big contribution to paying student fees; it might be the deposit for a place of your own; or even pay for that trip of a lifetime you've been planning.

As a *householder* you will have someone on hand to do those tasks that maybe you just don't have the time to do; maybe it will be just the thing that helps you to stay in your own home as you get older; for those who live alone, just having someone around the house can be a great comfort. Also don't forget that ten hours support a week would cost you about £4,000 a year.

The amazing thing about Homeshares is that people often become friends and they find that they have things in common or things that they can teach each other. It can be so much better than living alone.

Will I lose any benefits or allowances?

There is no rent changing hands and no tenancy agreement with a Homeshare so that makes things a lot simpler. Though, everybody's situation is different. What we will do is take a look at any benefits or allowances that you are eligible and help you to work these through before you make a decision to join the scheme.

What if it doesn't work out?

We make every effort to ensure that things will work out – finding a suitable match; making introductions; setting a trial period; and keeping in contact with you during the Homeshare. Usually, when all of these things are done, people learn to get along and live with each other quite happily. It's possible that a Homeshare arrangement may break down. If it does you are free to end it without any financial penalties, and for the *homesharer* we will signpost you to other agencies that may be able to help you find accommodation.

I'm interested, what do I do next?

Great. You will find a really simple application form in this pack. If you need any help completing it, just give us a call.

Once we receive your application form there's a simple and easy process that we will help you to go through which will lead to your first Homeshare. We follow these steps: -

1. We meet for a chat and to find out more about you.
2. We do all necessary checks such as taking out references.

3. If everything is okay, you get the 'all clear'

4. You are in the Homeshare scheme and we try to find you a suitable match.

To contact the Homeshare Team: Homeshare@possabilities.org.uk