

General Information and Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Homeshare and Who Does it Help?

“Homeshare offers a simple but effective solution to meet housing and support needs”.

A homeshare is based on the principle of exchange; the “Householder” offers affordable accommodation, and the individual moving into the home, the “Homesharer”, can give practical support and offer companionship to the Householder. It is a very flexible concept that can meet many people’s needs and is adaptable to a variety of circumstances (note: Homeshare does not address personal care needs).

If you would like to contact the Supportmatch team, please skip to page 4.

How does a Supportmatch Homeshare Work?

Supportmatch Homeshare is a social enterprise with over 10 years of matching people and offers a very personalised service to both Householders and Homesharers giving the reassurance that there will always be someone to help. Supportmatch Homeshare is explained below.

The Householder offers a spare bedroom and a share of the home’s facilities in return for, typically, 10 to 15 hours a week of practical support (5 hours of the 15 weekly hours will be for the purpose of companionship and presence in the house only). However, the hours of support can be increased or decreased depending on circumstances. The hours of support can involve cooking, light cleaning and shopping but is based on the Householder’s needs and the Homesharer’s abilities. It does not include any personal care.

Homesharers continue their usual activities, such as employment, training, hobbies, appointments, job search and/or studies during the day. The 10 hours weekly support is usually spread across the week and weekend. This is agreed on an individual basis reliant on availability and preference of both parties.

The Homesharer has two days to themselves per week (although they still sleep in the house) and one weekend per month from Friday night to Sunday to go away, if they wish to (note: this weekend will include the aforementioned two days per week off). Any annual leave should be agreed and discussed between both parties prior to a match being agreed, for a maximum of 4-5 weeks per year.

What are the benefits of Homeshare?

If you’re a Householder:

Support&Match CIC in Partnership with Supportmatch Homeshare

www.supportmatch.co.uk

(Last updated April 2022)

- Receive live-in support
- Supports hospital discharge and maintaining independence
- Companionship, feeling less isolated and an overnight presence
- Help with keeping appointments
- Help with cooking, cleaning and housekeeping
- Basic DIY around the house
- Assistance with computing and other technology
- Going for walks and other social activities
- Walking the dog and pet care
- All Homesharers are DBS and reference checked
- Reassurance for the family and friends that you are not alone

If you're a homesharer:

- Access to affordable accommodation
- The chance to live-in an area or property that might otherwise be out of your reach financially
- Living in a safe and secure home
- A stable base to come home to after work or to get you back on your feet for employment or to retrain
- Companionship
- Serving the community
- Sharing life skills and experiences
- Support throughout the arrangement

Are there safeguarding measures in place?

There are safeguarding policies in place and all Homesharers and Householders are fully vetted (including a DBS check) and assessed on their needs. Supportmatch Homeshare provides ongoing support to both parties by monitoring the arrangement throughout its duration.

What is the application process?

After applying online at www.supportmatch.co.uk, a Supportmatch coordinator will be in touch to further refine your requirements. Once we have interviewed and fully vetted both parties (including a DBS), Homesharers are then matched to Householders based on factors, such as personality, interests, working hours and background. Supportmatch Homeshare will then introduce Homesharers to the Householder and arrange a meeting between the two parties. The Householder is welcome to interview more than one Homesharer if they wish. The Householder's family can also be

involved in the interview process. If the Householder is happy with the Homesharer and vice versa, a start date can be agreed.

Can I be referred to Homeshare?

Supportmatch Homeshare takes self, family, or any other third-party referrals and enquires.

What are Supportmatch's contact details?

sibel@supportmatch.co.uk or zaira@supportmatch.co.uk

Tel: 0203 6336066 (office hours or 24-hour answer machine service)

Mobile: Sibel 07742 807677 Mobile: Zaira 07847 072490

Email: info@supportmatch.co.uk

Website: www.supportmatch.co.uk

What does the Supportmatch team do?

The team identifies potential Homesharers and Householders through application forms which need to be completed by both applicants. We will carry out interviews with both parties and use this information carefully to match Householders with Homesharers based on factors such as interests and behaviours to ensure a sustained relationship. Householder's will be visited at home to assess their needs, preferences and their home.

An introductory visit is only arranged when the coordinator feels satisfied that the Homesharer and Householder are a positive match.

Homeshare is not an emergency service but coordinators aim to arrange a Homeshare match within one month where possible.

The team will carry out an enhanced DBS check and obtain 2 references from the Homesharer.

If the match is successful and acceptable to both parties, they sign an Agreement laying out the expectations and rules of conduct for each. They also receive and sign a document from Homeshare setting out the terms and conditions for the on-going support they will receive from the organization.

Throughout your time with Homeshare the team will be available to assist you with any enquiries or issues you may have. The team will also follow their own monitoring process and organize reviews to ensure that the match is maintained successfully.

If the arrangement is not working for either person, we will support both of you with the process of ending the agreement and identify new matches where possible.

Do I receive support throughout the process?

The Supportmatch team provide support to the Householder and Homesharer on an on-going basis. During the first month, following the agreement of a Homesharing match, Supportmatch closely monitors how things are going and help to clarify and resolve any difficulties. Following this, Supportmatch keep in regular contact and also offer an annual review of the Homeshare arrangement on request.

The Homeshare service operates in office hours (Monday- Friday, 9am- 5pm) and staff are available to take telephone calls and respond to all other contact. If you do leave a telephone message or email outside of these hours Supportmatch aim to respond to your correspondence in a timely manner.

Homeshare aims to provide an efficient, professional, and friendly service. A complaints procedure is available if users of the Homeshare service are dissatisfied with the standard of service they receive. Complaints aim to be dealt with promptly and with sensitivity.

How much does Homeshare cost?

Supportmatch charges are competitive and affordable. A **total** monthly fee of £99 is charged to the Householder and £169 to the Homesharer. There is no extra “rent” element to this arrangement.

There are other arrangements Supportmatch can explore with the applicant on a case-by-case basis, including applicants receiving support with payment.

Aside from the monthly fee, both the Householder and Homesharer are charged a one-off £30 registration fee. All fees are paid directly to Supportmatch; there is no exchange of money between the Householder and the Homesharer.

How is this good value for money?

The cost of social care can be expensive. According to [Age UK](#), care at home costs an average £15 per hour. If someone receives, for example, 1 hour of help with domestic tasks at home per day, over a week that equates to £105 or £420 over 4 weeks.

Therefore, a £99 fee per month for the Householder to receive 10-15 hours of support per week results in a huge saving.

The cost of housing can also be expensive. According to Hometrack, in 2021, the average rental price in Cornwall is £773 per month. Therefore, a £169 fee per month for the Homesharer results in a huge saving.

Supportmatch receives the fee directly and uses the fee to provide ongoing support to both Householders and Homesharers, including guidance, advice and monitoring the arrangement throughout its duration.

What does the householder need to provide?

The Householder needs to provide a spare room for the Homesharer. The bedroom will need to be furnished with a bed, storage for their clothes and a desk. The Householder will ensure that the property has up-to-date fire alarms, gas safety certificate that is checked each year by a [Gas Safe Engineer](#) and electrical appliances are safe to use. The Householder will also allow the Homesharer the use of common areas such as kitchen, living area and bathroom (where a private bathroom is not available). The Householder will provide the Homesharer with some space (fridge and cupboard) for their food and kitchen utensils.

If the Homesharer has their own furniture to bring, this can be discussed with the Householder and Supportmatch.

What does the homesharer need to provide?

The Homesharer needs to provide, typically, 10-15 hours of their time every week helping with tasks such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, light DIY, gardening, looking after pets, dog walking, admin duties and most of all companionship. The hours can be flexible and are usually agreed between the Householder and the Homesharer from the very beginning. Where needed Supportmatch can provide help and guidance in setting up a weekly schedule. Homesharers are not involved with any personal care.

Is there a contract?

Yes. An agreement is signed between the Householder and the Homesharer. The agreement's purpose is to set up rules between the two parties to facilitate a respectful and mutual arrangement of cohabitation. This agreement can be provided on request.

In addition to this, a Terms of Service is signed between the Householder and Supportmatch and the Homesharer and Supportmatch. A summary of the Terms of Service is included below.

To ensure the match is working, there is a one-month trial period.

What are the Terms of Service within the Homeshare Arrangement?

- The first month is a trial month where only two-week's notice is due to terminate the Homeshare arrangement, thereafter one month notice is required
- Where possible we advise to spread the Homesharers 10/15 hours over 4-6 days
- A Homesharer is not a professional carer; personal care is not provided and must be requested by the Householder separately to this scheme
- Supportmatch offers an excellent monitoring service both via telephone and in person, if needed the Householder is visited regularly and helped to facilitate a routine with the Homesharer. Homesharers are regularly monitored to guarantee the Householder is receiving the agreed support
- Supportmatch offers a unique service to both Householders and Homesharers where the Supportmatch team offers a 24/7 answer machine service for emergencies and are able to promptly resolve problems to minimize the impact of issues between the Householder and the Homesharer
- Supportmatch will respect confidentiality of information held at all times
- The Homeshare Agreement sets out the relationship between the Householder and the Homesharer. The Homesharing relationship is not intended to be an employment relationship
- The Homesharer is responsible for their own food and personal bills
- The Householder will allow a share of facilities of the house (kitchen, bathroom, living area)
- The Householder will be able to provide a bedroom for the use of the Homesharer within the health and safety standards
- Homeshare services are provided in accordance with our equal opportunities policy

How long is the match for?

The Homeshare agreement can last as long as the homesharer and householder want it to. Though we expect a commitment of a minimum of 6 months from both parties.

What if the match does not work?

Both the Householder and the Homesharer will receive support from Supportmatch through-out the whole arrangement. If the match does not work, Supportmatch will work to find a replacement as soon as possible for both the Householder and the Homesharer, where applicable. Generally, there is a one-month notice period.

Will Homeshare change my council tax, housing benefit or universal credit?

Individual circumstances can be taken into account, so it is best any householder or Homesharer contact relevant services. If you are a single person, your 25% single person council tax discount will be impacted. However, you are encouraged to speak with your Local Authority. There is a small charge for Homesharers to contribute to the Council Tax on a monthly basis.

Can I pay for Homeshare with my social care personal budget?

Supportmatch Homeshare works with local authorities in providing the Homeshare service. Homeshare can be part of direct payments and you might be able to have financial support towards the monthly fee. It is important this is clarified with your social worker or local authority according to your personal circumstances.

Who pays the household bills?

The Householder will continue to be responsible for household bills. However, the Householder is entitled to request a small agreed and capped contribution towards the council tax. Homesharers should be aware that if there is too much usage/inconsiderate use of utilities, they will be asked to pay for surplus use.

Who pays for the food?

Each party will be responsible for their own food expenses, however sometimes they might decide to share the costs. This is usually discussed and arranged between the two parties as convenient.

Can I apply as a couple?

Householder

Yes, Supportmatch welcomes applications from couples, but the application should state who is in need of support (both or one person).

Homesharer

Yes, you can apply as a couple, however it may be more difficult to find a match, but we will take this on a case-by-case basis, depending on what the Householder is comfortable with. Moreover, you will be required to complete the application process individually.

I have children, can I still apply?

We may have applicants that are happy to accommodate children, however it may be more difficult to find a match, but we will take this on a case-by-case basis.

What is not involved in a Homeshare?

- The Homesharer is not a live-in carer, housekeeper or cleaner (even though they will help with cleaning but should not be considered as such).
- The Homesharer does not provide support with any personal care, such as bathing, dressing, using the toilet or taking medication.
- Homesharers need to offer commitment and time. Homeshare is not simply affordable accommodation.
- The Supportmatch team facilitates the partnership and can offer support, but Householders and Homesharers remain in control of the process and take responsibility for its success.
- It is important that if you want to be part of a Homeshare arrangement that you have a good understanding of Homeshare.

Can you tell me more about Supportmatch's partnership with Cornwall Council?

Cornwall Council have partnered with Supportmatch to deliver a Homeshare scheme in Cornwall. This scheme is designed to help alleviate housing and health and social sector pressures, as well as decrease loneliness; an all-too-common feeling felt by residents across the county.



The partnership commenced in March 2022 and already has a number of key stakeholders supporting the scheme. These include adult social care, Disability Cornwall, Cornwall Housing and the faith sector.

We strongly encourage interested parties to get in touch with Supportmatch, using the contact details provided on page 4 of this document.

If you have any specific queries about Homeshare's potential impact on your housing benefit or Council tax, please visit [here](#) for information about housing benefits or Council tax or [here](#) to submit a query form. Alternatively, you can call 0300 1234 121 with your housing benefit query or call 0300 1234 171 for your council tax query.