

HOMESHARE SCHEME

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Homeshare is a scheme in which older people – ‘Homeowners’ - provide an affordable home to young professionals or possibly students – ‘Homesharers’ - in exchange for help or support with everyday tasks (e.g. shopping and cleaning), and companionship. This pairing is intended to be mutually beneficial, whereby older people are provided with help and support to live independently and young people are offered a much needed home.

There are similar schemes in London, but nothing like this is currently in place in Leeds. This report presents findings from a research project conducted in Leeds to investigate the demand for this service and the feasibility of this type of scheme. The research was funded by Leeds Metropolitan University and Leeds City Council.

Aims and Objectives

The study aimed to identify and assess the needs of potential local service users from two perspectives: Homeowners and Homesharers.

The research aimed to reveal Homeowners’ and Homeshares’ expectations of the scheme; the demand for the service; and how much people would be willing to pay to join the scheme.

Methods

A qualitative approach was adopted using semi-structured interviews. 17 Homeowners and 7 Homesharers were interviewed. An additional 11 snapshot interviews were conducted with Homesharers. These snapshot interviews focused on 7 key questions.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and data was analysed thematically.

Findings

Interviews with potential Homeowners and Homesharers revealed several benefits to the scheme. The most common response was companionship for both parties, and financial benefits, particularly for the Homesharer.

Homeowners claimed they would feel ‘safer’ having someone in the house, who could help in emergencies, for example if they had a fall. The scheme was also considered to be rewarding on both sides; Homesharers thought it would be a valuable experience and Homeowners believed they could learn from the Homesharers, and would like to share experiences with them.

Although there were several positives to the scheme, both Homeowners and Homesharers expressed concerns. These mostly revolved around the matching process, and the uncertainty surrounding who they would be paired with.

The potential risks were discussed and there were concerns that both parties could ‘take advantage’.

Both Homeowners and Homesharers were apprehensive about joining the scheme as they did not know what it was going to entail. Homesharers claimed it may be difficult to fit tasks around work commitments and their social life. There were also concerns that they may not be able to cope and it could be emotionally demanding. Homeowners, however, were apprehensive about having a 'stranger' in their home and many of the participants said they enjoy living alone.

Both Homeowners and Homesharers discussed ways to overcome these problems and concerns.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There appears to be need for the scheme within Leeds. Homesharers were extremely positive about the scheme and free rent was very appealing to the participants. Homeowners however, were less keen and very reluctant to join the scheme. The majority of Homeowners interviewed said they would not join the scheme if it was available in Leeds, as there were too many uncertainties surrounding it.

A pilot scheme in Leeds is required to answer these questions and get an idea of what is expected from the Homeowners and Homesharers. There may also be a possibility to work in collaboration with existing services in Leeds to roll out the scheme.

Both parties believe it would also be important to have a trial period of a month to determine if the Homeowner and Homesharer were compatible. If they were to join the scheme, Homeowners and Homesharers would expect support and monitoring, possibly home visits and follow up interviews.

The findings reveal that Homeowners were not prepared to pay a join up fee. A monthly fee may be more appropriate. Homesharers, however, were willing to pay a one-off joining fee, considering the amount of money they would be saving on rent. Suggestions ranged from £100 to £1000.

Introduction

1.1. The Homeshare Concept

Homeshare is a pioneering scheme in which older people provide a much-needed home to young people in exchange for help and support to live independently. It is a mutually beneficial pairing arrangement, whereby the elderly person is given security and companionship while providing affordable accommodation for the young individual, and increasing understanding via intergenerational sharing of knowledge and experience.

- “Homeowners” are older people who own or are tenants in their own home, with some support needs or who have become isolated or anxious about living alone.
- “Homesharers” are often younger people, mature students or young professionals, who cannot afford housing where they work or study, or who may be unable to access housing.

In the UK, there is an over-riding concern to meet the needs of elderly people, whose family and friends cannot provide the required help, companionship and security. According to a recent report published by Age UK, the total number of people supported by local authorities has reduced by over a third between 2005 and 2013, with significant falls in the number of older people receiving community services and residential and nursing homes (35% and 17% respectively) (Age UK, 2014). As a consequence, older people could find themselves at risk of being admitted to hospital, and be passed around the health and social care system without any actual benefit or savings in public funding. In addition to this, increasing costs in housing has made it difficult for young individuals such as care workers, teachers or students to find suitable accommodation.

Homeshare arrangements rely on successful pairing of people, based on compatibility, who are willing to join the scheme and have something to offer to the arrangement. Homeshare schemes recruit and assess participants, and carry out DBS checks. It is governed by a carefully worded agreement, which does not involve developing a contract of employment or tenancy rights.

1.2. Current Schemes

The Homeshare concept is highly popular outside the UK with similar schemes already running in three continents: America, Australia and Europe.

There are currently 9 small Homeshare schemes operating across the UK, including London; East Sussex; Bristol; Cumbria; Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth; and Denbighshire. There are no reported schemes being implemented within the Yorkshire and Humber region.

1.3. Potential Market in Leeds

According to Office of National Statistics (ONS), the population of people aged over 65 has steadily grown in Leeds over the last 10 years. Population projections show that by 2035 the population of Leeds will rise to 939, 200, a percentage increase of 20.3% from 2010 reports. The age group with the greatest projected change in population is 65+ Years (47.6%).

Between 2008 and 2033, the number of households is projected to go up in Leeds from 334,000 to 472,000, a 41% increase (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010). This is greater than the percentage increase in Yorkshire and Humber (31%). Projected growth in population is the main reason for the increase in households, accounting for nearly three-quarters of the increase between 2008 and 2033. This pattern is reflected across the English regions; of the standard population variants, net international migration has the largest impact on household projections.

1.4. Aims of the Project

This study aimed to identify and assess the needs of potential local service users from two perspectives:

- Homeowners
- Homesharers

Key objectives were to identify:

- People's expectations of the Homeshare scheme
- If there is demand for this service in the Leeds area
- How much would be willing to pay for the service
- The benefits of the scheme for both parties
- Concerns about the scheme and potential barriers to joining

2. Methodology

A qualitative approach was taken which included:

- 17 semi-structured interviews with potential Homeowners
- 7 semi-structured interviews with potential Homesharers
- 11 snapshot interviews with potential Homesharers
- Meetings with existing adult care service providers

2.1. Data Collection

2.1.1. Sampling Strategy

This research involved a purposive sampling method where the participants were selected to obtain information-rich responses to the research questions. A framework was developed of the key variables/characteristics.

Snowball sampling was also applied in an attempt to recruit participants who may fall in the hard-to-reach category in the specific population.

2.1.2. Participants' inclusion criteria

Participants who were interviewed as potential 'Homeowners' had to be aged 60 years or over and living alone in Leeds. They could own or rent their accommodation but there had to be at least one spare bedroom.

Participants who were interviewed as potential 'Homesharers' were young individuals (aged 18 years and over). They could be professionals working full-time or part-time in any field or students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) studying any subject at any of the university/college institutions in Leeds.

2.1.3. Data Collection tools

The in-depth interviews were conducted using topic guides. Separate guides were developed for Homeowners (Appendix 1) and Homesharers (Appendix 2).

The topic guide for snapshot interviews (Appendix 3) had four key questions:

- What they can offer to a potential Homeowner
- Benefits of the scheme
- Potential problems of the scheme
- Fees

Potential Homeowners and Homesharers were given an information sheet (Appendix 5) about the study. All participants who were interested in participating signed a consent form prior to interview (Appendix 4). The process of obtaining informed consent was voluntary, independently informed and rigorously scrutinised.

2.2. Data Analysis

The data was analysed using a thematic approach. Throughout the analysis process, the aim was to provide rich description of the entire data set by highlighting predominant themes based on the research questions. Emergent themes were also identified, which were generated from the primary data itself. In order to provide supporting evidence to each theme, various data extracts were selected from participant responses, emphasising key issues or concepts.

All interviews were audio recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim for analysis, the results for which are outlined in detail in the next section.

2.3 Limitations

The potential Homeowners who were interviewed were recruited through social groups for older people in central Leeds, as a result they were generally people who were engaged and

active in society. Due to the time constraints of this research project, it was difficult to access hard to reach groups, such as the socially isolated, which this scheme is aimed at.

Two of the potential Homeowners did not meet the criteria fully but they have been included. HO03 lives alone in sheltered accommodation. She was included because she recently downsized from a 3 bedroom semi-detached house and could therefore provide an interesting perspective on what support she could have received to remain in her previous home.

HO19 stated in the interview that she lives with her daughter, but she explained that this was a temporary arrangement and her daughter will be moving out in the coming months. They live independently of each other at the moment, although they share the same house.

3. Findings

3.1. Homeowner Interviews

a. Benefits

Companionship has been identified as the most common benefit among Homeowners (88%), with a positive impact on reducing loneliness and social isolation among older people. In addition to this, a Homeowner could benefit from help and support around the house. Companionship together with the added support could result in an improved quality of life and standard of living, as highlighted by a number of Homeowners:

“Companionship is important, to have a cup of tea and a chat in the afternoon I think things like that is important and if you can go for a drive and sit somewhere with somebody, I think that’s just as important because it’s a stimulant you don’t want someone just to come and clean and clean, as humans we have other needs you know that need of, erm, communication and companionship and all those things those are important” (HO01)

“I think it would probably a new lease of life really, especially if they were chatty. If they wanted to spend a bit of time with you and I think that would be important – to sort of spend time with you, so just sat and chatting like we’re doing now.” (HO03)

“I think because you’ve got this interest and you’ve got this interest of other people being interested in you and it’s someone to talk to. I know, I know you can’t help Alzheimer’s but I think it would help them a lot to have somebody living with them.” (HO09)

Some interviewees have highlighted the importance of reliability and safety in joining a Homeshare scheme. Having another individual present in the household in case of emergencies such as falls, or the “security of someone being there at night-time” was often noted as a reassuring thought among Homeowners:

“And also as you’re getting older you worry about ‘what ifs’ you know what if I fell and broke my hip who do how do I get to a phone how do I get to but if you have

someone in the home they're there ready to phone up or do what's necessarily yeah so I'm looking at it from that point of view" (HO18)

"it all boils down to the company, companionship because there's so much you watching television, read a book and at certain times you need that human contact see somebody coming in and you can shout 'is that you john?' so you know those sort of things they are just as important" (HO01)

A number of Homeowners (65%) have recognised that a programme such as this could potentially benefit those who have specific needs for the service. Older people with physical ill health who struggle with everyday chores or are victims of social isolation could benefit from the support of a Homeshare:

"And, also people with mental health problems, that's an isolating experience. And I know that might, it's a big issue because people have misconceptions about mental health issues and pairing might be difficult in that case, but, yeah, that's, that's a big issue and I, I come across people all the time who could benefit, I think, from having some intermittent help." (HO08)

In terms of financial benefits, Homeowners have identified that costs from gardening, maintaining the house or hiring a painter could potentially be reduced. Interestingly, it was also noted that the bedroom tax being paid for a spare room could potentially be avoided by joining the Homeshare scheme.

The Homeshare arrangement could encourage integration between two different generations. It could provide a platform to form relationships and share knowledge and experiences with one another:

"Yeah, especially if somebody is reasonable you know the younger generation has so much to offer, lots of things they know educationally they're up there and you can always learn from them I think for me that's important..." (HO01)

"Even the older ones they can be a bit shy, you know, so yes it's...If you could get mixed properly I think some people would absolutely love the idea" (HO15)

b. Concerns and Potential Problems

The main concerns that were raised by the potential Homeowners were related to anxiety about who they would be matched with (76%) and the fear that the lifestyles of the Homeowners and the Homesharers would be incompatible (76%):

"But, I have set ways and I wouldn't want my ways to be interrupted, that's my main thing. I wouldn't want them coming in too late at night, all hours of the night. I wouldn't want them being scruffy. I would want them to be clean and tidy." (HO20)

"Well, I mean, surely, I'd certainly worry about, you know, who was I going to get. I mean, although, you say, yes, as you say, you do all the checks you can but, you know, people, old people, [...] they can be very gullible actually." (HO22)

Many of the interviewees (59%) felt concerned about what may happen to them in the future and how that would affect the Homeshare arrangement. This uncertainty about their own future was linked to the uncertainty of what living with a stranger would involve:

“The only thing would be if the person died, where would the person go then? They would have to leave the house, wouldn’t they? And find somewhere else?” (HO09)

“I would particularly want to know about what type of person I would get – would I have a say in the matter, would I meet them. As I feel really, as I get older, I’m more dubious...that’s not the word really...scared really, I think, of strangers...” (HO03)

The potential for conflicts and disagreements was another recurring theme in the Homeowner interviews. Several of the interviewees cited the tolerance levels of the older person as being a significant concern:

“...there would have to be a lot of give and take on both sides, and if there wasn’t, erm, arguments might arise and you know discomfort on both sides. I think that would be the biggest drawback” (HO18)

“I might be too particular, I might, I could be too tidy, too fussy, awkward, argumentative, which you do get a bit as you get older, type of thing.” (HO21)

“...you’d have to supply the older people with patience tablets because they’d need it. It’s hard being old but it’s hard being young. It swings and roundabouts.” (HO11)

A high percentage of the potential Homeowners (69%) believed that having another person living in their house would affect their benefits, and may have a negative impact on their finances in general:

“I think if you share your community charge, you wouldn’t get an exemption if you share and if they break anything you insured you have to claim it.” (HO01)

The people interviewed said that respect and trust were a vital part of a Homeshare arrangement, and in many cases they were concerned about whether they could trust a stranger coming into their home:

“Trust is very important because I’m not somebody for locking up stuff, hiding stuff in my room so, and if you don’t have that trust you can’t, you wouldn’t feel safe so it’s being comfortable and not wondering who’s going through your stuff.” (HO01)

Over half (54%) of the people interviewed were concerned that being part of a Homeshare would restrict their daily activities and several felt it could even lead to them taking on added responsibility for the Homesharer:

“... I just feel it was a bit of a restriction, somehow, you know. I feel, I’ve got, I’ve got to be on my best behaviour or something, you know. And I, I mean, I like my

television on as loudly as I like or, you know, and whenever I, when I like it, and I actually play the violin and nobody wants to listen to me playing the violin..." (HO22)

"I think I'd worry if they came in late [...] In case they were, anything had happened to them." (HO09)

Many participants expressed concern about the potential for both the Homeowner and Homesharer to take advantage of the other individual in the scheme and several mentioned the danger of it becoming a 'master-servant' relationship.

"But I think there are a lot of people who would rather like that, and I would be afraid not for the older person who is doing it, but the younger person because they could be a slave. I wouldn't like that. I wouldn't like to think that I was a part of it, to be honest. Not at all!" (HO03)

"...they (the Homeowner) can be really taken for a ride, I think, and especially financially, you know, you have to be really, really very careful." (HO22)

c. Resistance to the scheme

The majority of participants (71%) claimed they would not join the scheme as a Homeowner if it was available in Leeds. Several reasons for this were discussed throughout the interviews, with many participants expressing their hostility and resistance to the Homeshare Scheme.

Over half of the Homeowners interviewed (59%), stated they would not join the scheme because they enjoy living alone and having their own space. Many of the participants had lived alone for several years, often after being widowed, and have simply 'got used to' living by themselves:

"I don't know cos I've always been on my own so I'd always after I lost my husband I've been on my own for the last since 1992 so er [laughs] I'm very self-supported you know very independent so I have no idea what it's like sharing with anybody" (HO18)

As a result of this, the Homeowners were apprehensive about sharing with another person, claiming it would be an 'invasion of privacy':

"If you're on your own sort of you do things as you want sort of sort of people come in and invade your space and your privacy, I mean I dropped everything to come to the lunch club if someone else was there I'd have to be a bit careful I haven't washed the dishes I've left my cereal bowl on the table" (HO01)

"I like my privacy and I've always been like that. We've been brought up to be independent and there's no way I could alter that in me. I think it's good for anybody who it would suit but I'm not one of those people." (HO16)

Other Homeowners commented on not having the space for a Homesharer and their home being unsuitable for the scheme.

Several of the participants were concerned that, if they were to join the scheme, they would in fact lose their independence. Out of those who were interviewed, 53% claimed they were “managing” with everyday tasks such as shopping and cleaning, and “what I can, I do”. It was thought that if a Homesharer were to do these tasks for them, they would lose the ability to do them themselves, and would therefore become dependent upon the Homesharer:

“I was going to say that doing a big shop once a week would be nice but I have the access bus and I go to Sainsbury’s once a week and do my shop. And I can still manage that. And while I can do that, I would do it.” (HO03)

“No, no not independent living if you’re putting somebody in – you’ve lost your Independence.” (HO07)

Homeowners considered themselves to be independent and coping alone; they did not need to join the scheme:

“I don’t think it’d work with me. I’m a very independent person.” (HO21)

A recurring reason for not wanting to join the scheme was the anxiety associated with having a ‘stranger’ in their home. Nearly half of the Homeowners interviewed said they would feel uncomfortable having someone they did not know move into their house. The potential risks and anxiety associated with this were enough to deter Homeowners from joining the scheme:

“I’m too long in the tooth to have somebody come in and live in my home that isn’t a relative. It would cause me too much anxiety. That’s the only reason.” (HO11)

“I mean, most people, and most young people, old people would be fine, perfectly honest and, you know, want to make it work in the, not, not, you know, not take advantage of anyone but there’s always that risk that, you know, you can get the bad apple and it, it can go very horribly wrong.” (HO22)

In many cases, the Homeowners believed they have enough help and support from their family that they would not need to join the scheme. Children and grandchildren were said to help the Homeowners with odd jobs, for example cleaning and changing light bulbs. Similarly, Homeowners were reluctant to join the scheme because family members are regularly visiting and require a room; therefore although the participant had the spare for a Homesharer, this was being used by a family member which was considered to be an important source of support:

“...the only thing is that I’ve got, my family do come and stay with me, you know. But I think if I was on my own, I would consider it.” (HO09)

Many of the Homeowners also claimed they would not join the scheme because their family would be very uncomfortable with them doing so, with many stating their family “would not allow it [to happen]”:

“And the other thing is, my family would want to agree and I can’t see them doing that because they would hate me to have a stranger in the house.” (H020)

d. Overcoming concerns/problems

In many cases there was a strong resistance to the idea of Homeshare as a whole which meant that the interviewees were not all forthcoming with suggestions for how to overcome concerns.

Having support from the scheme provider was identified as a key way of overcoming or preventing problems:

“I would expect there to be somebody there that I could liaise with. I would hope that there would be a follow-up of somebody coming and checking that everything was right...” (HO03)

Many people felt that establishing clear ground rules would help the scheme to run more smoothly, particularly in relation to protecting each person’s privacy:

“We don’t go into anybody else’s room unless invited in, so you preserve the area of privacy that each person has. Everybody’s, every room in the house has a key. I never lock my bedroom door. The key is there, if I wish to use it I could but I don’t see any need to provide, I shut my door when I want my privacy. If anybody’s going to abuse that, then they need to leave.”

The idea of having a trial period, after the participants of the scheme had been vetted and matched, was popular amongst those interviewed. Most people suggested one month as being a sufficient amount of time to get to know the Homesharer and to judge how well the Homeshare was working:

“Vetting before they moved in with you. Someone qualified to vet them and match you up really, and then on say, a month’s trial, with no bitterness either way. They leave you or you show them the door.” (HO21)

c) Other themes

Although the majority of the Homeowners interviewed would not join the scheme if it was available, some of the participants claimed they may consider the Homeshare Scheme in the future if their physical health deteriorates, or in the past, before they had downsized:

“Not in the foreseeable future but it would be nice, it’d be nice to know there was something like that if we ever needed it, type of thing.” (HO21)

Conversely, one participant said they would rather go into sheltered accommodation than join the scheme.

When thinking about joining the scheme, there appeared to a reluctance to ask for help from the Homesharer. Some Homeowners considered it reasonable for the Homesharers to tidy up after themselves and kept their room clean. They would not expect any additional support or help around house, in exchange for affordable accommodation:

“I would do that [take a Homesharer in] through the goodness of my heart.” (HO11)

“...I don’t want, to be honest I don’t want to feel too much sympathy for myself you know what I mean sort of getting people doing this I try to get out and do as much as I can for myself...” (HO01)

Although the scheme was considered to be a good idea by some, these participants believed it was not feasible and would not be taken up in Leeds:

“Think it’s a brilliant idea but it’ll never work; only because we have such a terrible and I don’t mean everybody but we’ve got a terrible society.” (HO07)

e. Fees

Table 1: Homeowner response to a join up fee

Interview	Would you be willing to pay a one-off joining fee?	How much would you be willing to pay?	Would you consider joining up?
HO01	No	N/A	Yes (“in the future”)
HO02	Yes (prefer monthly fee)	<£500	Maybe (“depends on how my health lasts”)
HO03	Yes	£500	No (“I don’t feel I would benefit from that personally”)
HO07	No	N/A	No
HO08	Yes	£30	Maybe (“it’s a big step”)
HO10	Yes	£50	No (“I don’t need it”)
HO20	No	N/A	No (“because I know my family wouldn’t let me”)
HO12	No	N/A	No
HO22	Yes	<£500 (£500 “sounds steep”, £500-750 “ouch”)	No
HO21	Yes	£25	No (“not for the foreseeable future”)
HO18	Yes	“no idea”	Yes (“I think I need it”)
HO19	No	N/A	Yes (“I’d consider signing up but my big problem would be what payment you’re asking for”)
HO09	Yes	£500	No

HO16	No	N/A	No
HO15	No	N/A	No (“It takes away my freedom”)
HO13	Yes (prefer monthly fee)	£20 (per month)	No (“I want to be by myself”)
HO11	No	N/A	No (I’m too long in the tooth”)
Totals	Yes – 9 No – 8	Range – £25 to £500	Yes – 3 No – 12 Maybe – 2

3.2. Homesharer Interviews

3.2.1. In-depth interviews

a. Benefits for Both Parties

All of the participants stated the main benefits of the scheme were that it provides companionship, and there would be a clear financial gain:

“...to have someone there who really would benefit from your company, like, really appreciate it. It’s something really positive and you think that’s one less person sat on their own. It’s something that you feel really positive about yourself.” (HS08)

“...it would benefit the people who are doing the chores and helping out for cheaper accommodation. That would just help with a lot of money...” (HS03)

Many of the interviewees (71%) discussed the potential for personal gain from taking part in the scheme. It was considered to be rewarding and Homesharers could gain valuable experience which would lead to personal growth; an appreciation of what making a commitment entails, and a better understanding of others:

“...it could give them [the Homesharer] a wider experience of dealing with people, ‘cause they have to, have to commit to something, and then they have to follow it through.” (HS02)

“...it probably gives people quite a good character-building exercise...” (HS02)

The Homeshare scheme was also described as a way of giving something back to society which was of mutual benefit to the individuals involved. It could also act as a cultural exchange and improve cultural awareness:

“...this is part of my social responsibility towards my society...” (HS04)

Several potential Homesharers believed that the Homeshare scheme would have a positive impact on the physical and mental health of the Homeowner, and that living with another person would help to keep their mind active:

“...and keeping their minds interested and [...] they feel like a part of what you’re doing...” (HS01)

An additional benefit to the Homesharer would be the standard and location of the accommodation.

"It'd be a nicer house, in my head, like, better than a student house because they're not very nice" (HS03)

b. Concerns and Potential Problems

A number of concerns were raised by the potential Homesharers with all of them highlighting the importance of autonomy, and the concern that by entering into the Homeshare scheme, they would be restricted in what they could do. Another related concern was about compatibility and the difficulties involved in fitting the two very different lifestyles around each other, particularly regarding whether the Homesharer could invite friends around. The majority of the young people interviewed expressed concern about feeling uncomfortable living in someone else's home:

"...I suppose from a selfish point, it kind of hinders your own life and how you, kind of, get on with things..." (HS05)

"I think socially as well, you've got to know what they're, erm, what they'd be happy with, and if my friends were coming to visit could they stay, could they not stay. That could be an issue." (HS01)

Many of the individuals interviewed (86%) spoke about the importance of matching expectations and their worries about disappointing the Homeowner or 'letting them down':

"...I wouldn't ever want to let them down or feel like it failed for them." (HS02)

An equally high number of the people we spoke to (86%) cited potential conflict as being a major concern:

"...you're sharing a house a space with a complete stranger and there is an element of risk there what if you don't get along with this person what if that person is, erm, introvert or the opposite and you are neither this or that. I mean there is an element of risk" (HS08)

Over half (57%) of the interviewees were concerned about their ability to cope with the demands of taking part in a Homeshare. Several talked about their apprehension in general at the idea of moving in with someone:

"...I can call an ambulance but I don't see, because I'm a very, in spite of my size, I'm a very fragile person when it comes to calamities, I just can't cope [...] I mean of course if this person was on fire my impulse would be there but what I'm saying as a point of access [...] I would feel guilty if anything happens, so why put myself through trauma" (HS04)

"I wouldn't want to be like tied to somewhere forever, like I'd want to know that I could leave when I wanted or needed to [...] I wouldn't want to be like feeling that they might be upset by me leaving [...] I wouldn't want it to be the case where they get

really used to relying on me and then I go and they might not get someone else so I kind of would like to think there was kind of ability for continuity I wouldn't want to feel that I'm moving in and I couldn't move back out again" (HS08)

There was also concern about people's motivation for signing up to the scheme and the potential for people to take advantage of others:

"I think there's a lot of potential for like vulnerabilities on both sides so you've got a kind of protect both the, the person who's renting out the room and the person who's staying there [...] there's nothing they can do it's behind closed doors, but also there's a lot of potential for say emotional abuse or intimidation or coercion or like, I think, yeah, I think you need to get that balance of power..." (HS08)

"If someone sees it as a free ride then it would probably be the wrong kind of person to have." (HS02)

c. Overcoming/Preventing Problems

All of the potential Homesharers highlighted the need for participants of the scheme to be matched carefully, and vetted appropriately before they were allowed to take part. The Homesharers felt that a trial period would make them feel more comfortable about joining the scheme:

"...maybe there could be like a trial time because what if they just, like, had, like, habits that just, I don't know..." (HS03)

Every potential Homesharer said that transparency and having information up front would help to prevent problems from arising. They felt that establishing ground rules and having some form of contract with the Homeowner would make each person's role clear and avoid misunderstandings. Meeting the Homeowner prior to moving in was also considered to be essential:

"...I would quite like to be well informed about what is going on to happen, what ,like, the expectations are, possibly what you know, even down to the type of house that you might be expected to be living in the type of person, possibly if there was a choice of people that you might live with..." (HS07)

The majority of those interviewed (86%) stressed that the scheme would have to offer support once a Homeshare was underway:

"...but I think kind of a visit or even an office we could pop into like something, like that sort of thing, but yeah to have an awareness of how often it's going to happen, so if they say when we start right we're going to catch up with you and review it every couple of months to start and then every 6 months ..." (HS08)

Many of the potential Homeowners mentioned that there would need to be guidelines on privacy and that they would need their personal space:

“...I think you’d expect to be left alone for the most part if you wanted it that way, so having as I say having your own room, being able to shut yourself off having maybe having a TV or laptop or something in there if you just want your own time [...] so definitely have your own privacy” (HS07)

Flexibility was also identified as a way of overcoming problems:

“...I think it would be beneficial being flexible I think if you start imposing certain criteria that has to be done it might put people off.” (HS07)

d. Other themes

The young professionals and students who were interviewed emphasised the importance of mutual respect, trust and honesty for a scheme of this kind to work.

On the whole they were positive about the idea of a Homeshare but most of the participants (71%) were sure that the scheme was not something that they would take part in.

“It’s not for me really. I think, in fairness, it wouldn’t be the right, I wouldn’t be the right person for it.” (HS05)

e. Fees

Table 2: Homesharer response to join up fee and suggested payments

Homesharer	Suggested fee	Would you pay a join up fee of: £500 - £750	Would you pay a join up fee of: £750 - £1000	Maximum
HS01	£150	N	N	£150
HS02	£250	N	N	£250 (£700 would put me off instantly)
HS03	£10 - £30	Depends	N	£300 if definitely matched
HS04	From £1000	Y	Y	From £1000
HS05		Y	N	£750
HS07	£100	N	N	£100
HS08	£50	N	N	£100
TOTAL	Range: £10 - £1000	Yes – 2 No – 4 Depends - 1	Yes – 1 No - 6	Range: £100 - £1000

3.2.2. Snapshot interviews

There were four distinct themes that arose from the analysis of snapshot interviews.

a. The role of the Homesharer within the arrangement

All of the potential Homesharers interviewed were quite positive and keen on the concept of Homeshare. All participants felt they could provide some form of support to the Homeowner. Providing companionship (82%) and helping out with household chores (91%) were among the most common responses:

"...companionship, I think that's really important for the elderly [...] helping out around the house" (SI23)

Among other responses were running errands such as going shopping and collecting things from the pharmacy; gardening; maintenance of the house; taking the Homeowner out; and "looking after them". Interestingly, one Homesharer identified that they could provide support with the use of technology:

"...if they don't know anything about technology, like, I can show them and, like, having some fun with them..." (SI02)

b. Benefits for both parties

One of the most common benefits of this scheme was again to provide companionship (73%) to the Homeowner, which in turn could prevent loneliness and reduce social isolation. One participant who has been out in district nursing reported:

"I think the most important thing is that they'll have companionship [...] I've seen how lonely a lot of older people are so that would be the biggest advantage for me" (SI 21)

It was also highlighted that providing companionship and support could improve the Homeowner's physical and mental health, which would allow the Homeowner to stay in their homes for longer without having to shift to care homes or sheltered housing. In addition to providing company, 64% of participants mentioned that the Homesharer could help with everyday tasks, especially:

"...things they [Homeowner] can't do themselves" (SI21).

The majority of participants identified at least one particular type of financial benefit of implementing this scheme. For Homesharers, saving money on rent was a key benefit with some participants highlighting the improvement in the standard of accommodation:

"students pay so much for rent here... student accommodation and rent and you don't get [...] as good a place as you would with some old age pensioners have some really nice houses and their [...] life savings are in those houses" (SI23)

Also, Homeowners could potentially reduce the amount they spend on domestic help and garden maintenance. Interestingly, one participant reported that a scheme such as this could have an impact on government funding and reduce the strain on the NHS:

“...save costs to like the NHS for carers and home help and meals on wheels, things like that, [...] it would save lot of money for things like that...” (SI20)

A number of interviewees also expressed the view that taking part in a Homeshare scheme could have potential societal benefits and make them feel like they are contributing to society. Other benefits were: exchanging knowledge and understanding of culture and language; increasing positive character traits such as *“learn some respect for the elders”* (SI06); and health benefits to the Homeowner.

c. Potential problems of the scheme

The most common problem which the interviewees anticipated was a difference in lifestyle (55%), in particular, the fact that the Homesharer might have an active social life which involved inviting friends to their home and staying out late at night:

“...if the younger person wants to bring friends and things like that or stay out late [...] as well, the elderly person might be really old fashioned and you’ve got to be in by a certain time [...] so it’s all things that could clash really.” (SI23)

A common concern was regarding disagreements or clashes of personality/culture; and the Homesharer taking advantage of the Homeowner or not behaving appropriately:

“...someone may look like they’re wanting to help but they could also have other ideas...” (SI03)

“a potential homesharer could pass all the interview stage and then turn out to be a horrible person or [...] try to take advantage of the initial generosity in some way.” (SI06)

Other potential problems included the lack of personal space; housework being done badly or not at all; and the Homesharer not being sufficiently equipped to deal with emergencies with the Homeowner:

“...there may be a time where they [the Homesharer] don’t have experience to look after the homeowner. Say if the homeowner had [...] some kind of issue, or health wise, and, you know, the, the youth [...] might not be able to look after them initially...” (SI06)

One participant was concerned that her student finance entitlement would be affected:

“...as a student there might be some problems with, say student finance for example, it asks you what your rent is and stuff like that, and so it could cause problems with getting the amount of money you’re entitled to perhaps.” (SI05)

d. Fees

Table 3: Homesharer response to join up fee and suggested payments from snapshot interviews

Snapshot	Would you pay a join up fee of: £500 - £750	Would you pay a join up fee of: £750 - £1000	Maximum
SI01	Y	Y	£1000
SI02	Y	Y	£1000 Depending on home
SI03	Y	Don't Know	-
SI04	Y	N	£700
SI05	Depends	N	£200
SI06	Y	Depends on future fees	Would have to work out overall annual cost
SI20	N (£500 too much)	N	£100
SI21	N (£500 too much)	N	£100
SI22	N	N	£200
SI23	N	N	Less than £500
SI24	Y	N	£500 - £600
TOTAL	Yes – 55% No – 36% Depends – 9%	Yes – 18% No – 64% Don't Know/depends – 18%	Range: £100 - £1000

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

There appears to be need for the scheme within Leeds. Homesharers were extremely positive about the scheme and free rent was very appealing to the participants. The main benefits were considered to be that the scheme would provide companionship for isolated people and there would be a clear financial gain for the Homesharer.

Homeowners, in general, were less keen than the Homesharers and very reluctant to join the scheme, although they did believe many people could benefit from having the company of a young person in the house. The majority of Homeowners interviewed said they would not join the scheme if it was available in Leeds, as there were too many uncertainties surrounding it. Finding Homeowners who meet the criteria and who are open to the idea of sharing their home with an unknown person is the most significant challenge of this scheme.

The findings reveal that Homeowners were not prepared to pay a join up fee. A monthly fee may be more appropriate. Homesharers however were willing to pay a one-off joining

considering the amount of money they would be saving on rent. Suggestions ranged from £100 to £1000.

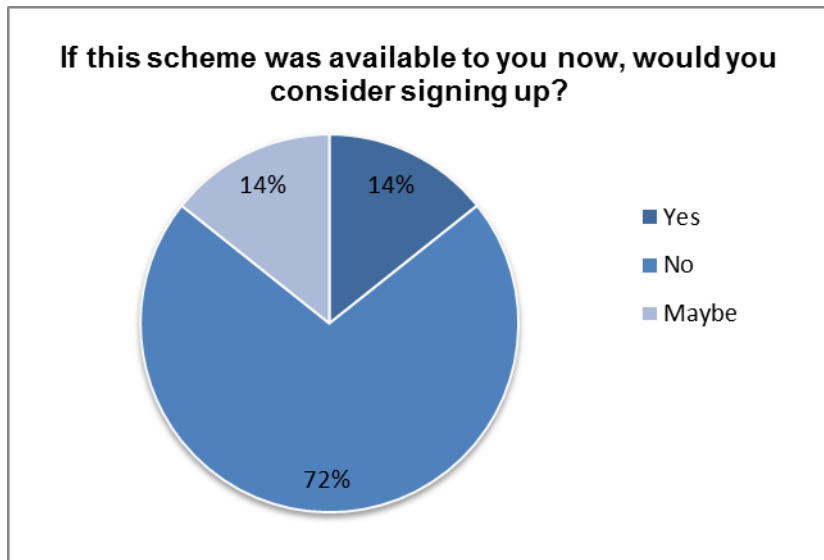


Figure 1: Snapshot interview response to the question 'If this scheme was available to you now, would you consider signing up?'

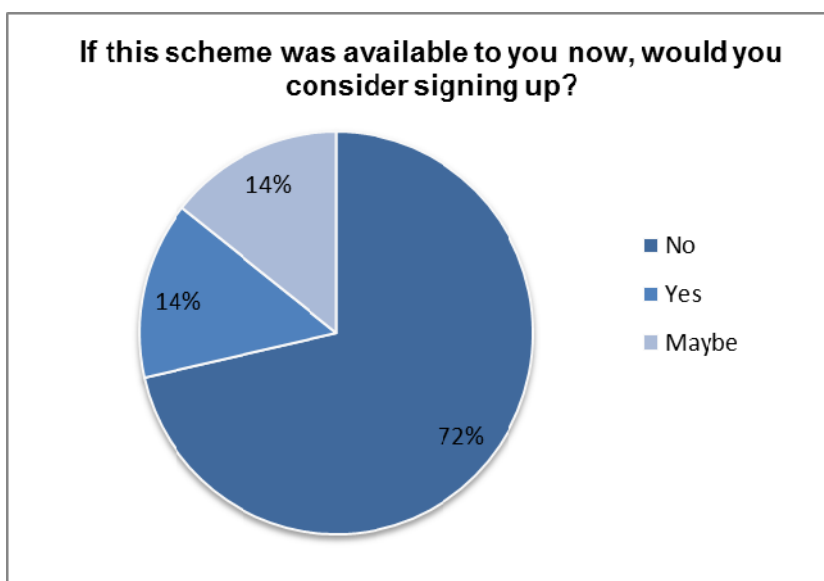


Figure 2: Homeshare interview response to the question 'If this scheme was available to you now, would you consider signing up?'

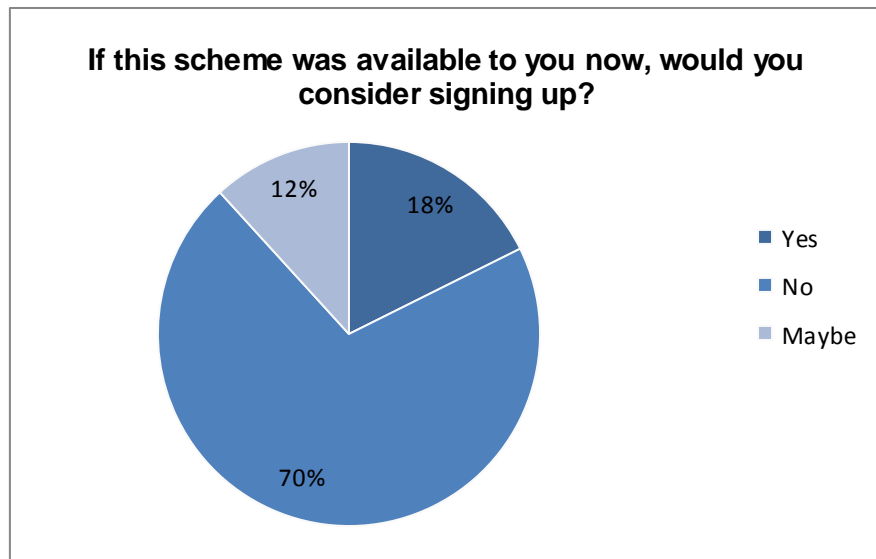


Figure 3: Homeowner interview response to the question ‘If this scheme was available to you now, would you consider signing up?’

4.2. Recommendations

4.2.1. Fees

Recommendation 1: Homesharers could pay the initial join up fee in one transaction at the beginning of the programme however, the option to make monthly payments spread over a set time period should be available for Homeowners.

Potential Homeowners are accustomed to the concept of paying a large sum of money, either as a deposit or as rent at the start of the month. However, many homeowners may struggle to provide the same amount of money at one time, especially since they receive their pensions on a monthly basis.

4.2.2. How the scheme could work

Recommendation 2: The Homeshare agreement should document the support requested by the Homeowner and the support offered by the Homesharer, and the expected contribution to household bills. Advice should be provided to ensure the agreement does not become a contract of employment or tenancy.

The agreement should set out the specific support requested by the Homeowner and the support offered by the Homesharer in exchange for being provided with accommodation. Both parties need to be provided with as much information as possible and transparency should be maintained throughout the programme. This agreement should be signed by both parties to prevent any misunderstandings.

Recommendation 3: If a match looks feasible, introductory meetings should be set up between Homeowner and Homesharers.

Once a potential match has been identified, introductory meetings should be set up to give the opportunity to understand one other and explore what living together would be like. This meeting could initially take place in a neutral setting and later at the Homeowner's home.

Recommendation 4: A trial period should be implemented before making a decision to join the programme.

Once a potential match has been found and the arrangement looks feasible, a trial period should be offered. A trial period would give the opportunity for both Homeowners and Homesharers to have an attempt at this arrangement and understand their individual roles and responsibilities before making an informed decision about joining the programme on a long term basis.

4.2.3. Support and Monitoring

Recommendation 5: A follow-up system should be considered to monitor the Homeshare arrangement.

Homeshare is a contract between two adults both of whom have the capability of making informed decisions regarding the arrangement. Although the scheme providers facilitate this arrangement, they do not take the responsibility of the individuals taking part in the Homeshare. However, there are potential risks involved and in order to protect the wellbeing of both Homeowners and Homesharers, some level of support and monitoring is required. This could include quarterly home-visits and regular telephone contact.

Recommendation 6: Emergency contact details, e.g., a helpline or an office address should be provided to both parties.

When the scheme is ready for implementation, a support system needs to be put in place for the participants. This may include a 24-hour helpline in case of emergencies, an office address with a named contact. This is because people expect to have a rapid response and problems to be dealt with as soon as they arise.

Recommendation (with relation to Homesharers) 7: Additional support for Homesharers

After joining the Homeshare programme, the young professionals and students need the assurance that additional support is available if they find themselves in situations where they cannot cope, in particular health-related issues of the Homeowners.

4.2.4. Next Steps

- Pilot the scheme to get an idea of costs, feasibility and demand for the service within Leeds. Our research suggests that there is a demand amongst young professionals and students, however the findings seems less positive from potential Homeowners. Often Homeowners were discouraged by the uncertainty surrounding the scheme: what was expected of them and what they would receive from the join up or monthly fee. A pilot may answer these questions and encourage Homeowners to join the scheme in the future.

- Ambassadors from existing schemes could run workshops and meetings with potential Homeshare participants, to share their experiences and sell the scheme.
- Leeds Metropolitan University could use existing contacts such as Student Accommodation Services to recruit potential Homesharers. Similarly, Leeds University Student Accommodation Service could advertise the scheme.
- It may be possible to set up the scheme in collaboration with existing care giving organisations or voluntary groups. St Anne's Community Services have expressed an interest and Methodist Homes Association (MHA) are piloting the Homeshare Scheme in Manchester (Appendix 6). St Anne's Community Service has a great deal of experience and expertise in pairing people for home shares, albeit vulnerable people with carers, and felt they could offer this to the Homeshare Scheme.

5. References

NAAPS UK (2011). Homeshare: Good Practice Guide 2011.

Coffey, J. (2010) An Evaluation of Homeshare Pilot Programmes in West Sussex, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. School of Health and Social care. Oxford Brookes University

6. Appendices

6.1. Participant demographics

6.1.1. Age range

Age	Homeowner participants (n=17)	Homesharer participants (n=7)	Snapshot participants (n=11)
18 – 24 years old	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	8 (73%)
25 – 34 years old	0 (0%)	4 (57%)	3 (27%)
35 – 44 years old	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
45 – 54 years old	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
55 – 64 years old	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
65 – 74 years old	3 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
75 years or older	13 (76%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

6.1.2. Gender

There were significantly more female than male participants in all three interview groups.

Gender	Homeowner participants (n=17)	Homesharer participants (n=7)	Snapshot participants (n=11)
Male	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (9%)
Female	16 (94%)	7 (100%)	10 (91%)

6.1.3. Ethnicity

There were significantly more participants of White ethnic background in all three interview groups.

Ethnicity	Homeowner participants (n=17)	Homesharer participants (n=7)	Snapshot participants (n=11)
White	15 (88%)	6 (86%)	7 (64%)
Hispanic or Latino	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Black or African American	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Native American or American Indian	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (27%)
Other	1 [Black Caribbean] (6%)	1 (14%)	1 (9%)

6.1.4. Marital status

Marital status	Homeowner participants (n=17)	Homesharer participants (n=7)	Snapshot participants (n=11)
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Single, never married	2 (12%)	6 (86%)	9 (82%)
Married or civil partnership	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (18%)
Widowed	12 (70%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Divorced	2 (12%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
Separated	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Co-habiting	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

6.1.5. Employment status

In the Homeowner category, all participants were 'Retired' with one participant who was retired but also a part-time mature student.

In the Homesharer category, 2 participants were students (29%); 4 were employed for wages (57%); and 1 participant was 'out of work but not currently looking for work' (14%). In the Snapshot category, 10 participants were students (91%) and 1 participant who was employed for wages (9%).

Topic Guide – Home Owners Interviews

BACKGROUND

1. Could you tell me about our current living arrangements?

2. What services do you currently use?

- Who provide these services [if known]?
Family members
Carers
- How did you find out about them?
- How frequently do you need to use these services?
- Why do you use these services?
Needs
- Is there anything missing from these services?

EXPECTATIONS

3. Are you aware of any Homeshare Schemes?

4. [Explain the scheme] From what you heard about it, what would you expect from this service?

- What specific help would you like to receive?
 - Gardening
 - Cleaning
 - Shopping
 - Had to reach/heavy lifting
 - Companionship**Hours/days**
- How flexible would you like this service to be?
Specific days and times
A set about of hours (minimum 10-15) – would like more/less than this?

5. How is this scheme different from the other support you receive?

- What is it adding?
Supplementing existing services
- How do you seeing it working with the other services you access?

BENEFITS/CONCERNS

6. What do you think are the benefits of this scheme?

- What positive impact will it have on your everyday life?

7. What do you think are the potential problems to the scheme?

- What negative impact could it have on your everyday life?
Changes to benefits and/or family's benefits
- What concerns do you have?
Barriers to joining e.g. signing up online
- How do you think we could overcome these concerns?

**8. How do you think it would affect your living arrangements?
Is there the space?**

- How would it affect the condition of your home?
Safety and hygiene

SAFEGUARDING

9. How do you expect to be treated by the home sharers?

- What can the scheme providers do to ensure you are treated in this way?
With respect and dignity

**10. If you had any concerns or issues, who would you expect to contact?
Home visits**

VALUE

11. What value do you think this service provides?

Independent living/keeping own property

12. How do you feel about paying a join up fee/one-off fee?

- Would you be willing to pay a monthly fee?
- Would you be willing to pay a one-off fee for the initial pairing and then an admin fee on a yearly basis?
- How much would you be willing to pay for the one-off fee?
 - £500-£750
 - £750-£1000
 - Over £1000?
- Would you expect to receive any types of incentives to join the programme?

**Financial
Benefits**

13. If this scheme was available to you now, would you consider signing up?

Topic Guide – Home Sharers Interviews

BACKGROUND

1. *Could you tell about your current occupation?*

Student/young professional

Benefits

- What are your work commitments?
Full time/part time
Spare time
- Do you have any other commitments or responsibilities?

2. *Could you tell me about your current living arrangements?*

EXPECTATIONS

3. *Are you aware of any Homeshare Schemes?*

4. *[Explain the scheme] From what you heard about it, what would you expect from this service?*

- What support could you (or would you) like to offer if you were to join the scheme?
Specifics – shopping, cleaning, gardening, companionship, heavy lifting/hard to reach
- How flexible would you like this service to be?
- How do you feel about committing a minimum of 10-15 hours a week of support or companionship according to the home owner's needs?
Everyday day activities – shopping, cleaning, odd jobs.

BENEFITS/CONCERNS

5. *What do you think are the benefits of this scheme?*

- What positive impact will it have?
Career e.g. CV
- Would it improve your financial situation?
How would it improve it?

6. *What do you think are the potential problems to the scheme?*

- What negative impact could it have on your everyday life?
Time commitments
Space and hygiene

Changes to their benefits

- What concerns do you have?

Barriers to joining

- How do you think we [the scheme] could overcome these concerns?

7. How do you think it would affect your living arrangements?

- Would it improve your current living conditions?
- What impact would it have on your leisure activities or what you do in your spare time?

Current living arrangements and access to facilities e.g. the internet

SAFEGUARDING

8. How do you expect to be treated by the home owners?

Privacy

Freedom

- What can the scheme providers do to ensure you are treated in this way?

9. If you had any concerns or issues, who would you expect to contact?

Home visits

VALUE

10. What value do you think this service provides?

11. How do you feel about paying a join up fee/one-off fee?

- Would you be willing to pay a monthly fee?
- Would you be willing to pay a one-off fee for the initial pairing and then an admin fee on a yearly basis?
- How much would you be willing to pay for the one-off fee?
 - £500-£750
 - £750-£1000
 - Over £1000?
- Would you expect to receive any types of incentives for join the programme?

Financial

Benefits

12. If this scheme was available to you now, would you consider signing up?

Snapshot Interview Questionnaire – Homesharer

We are currently working on a research project on Homeshare schemes. We will explain what it is and ask you a few quick questions. Homeshare is a scheme in which older people – ‘Homeowners’ - provide an affordable home to young professionals or possibly students – ‘Homesharers’ - in exchange for help or support with everyday tasks (e.g. shopping and cleaning) and companionship. There are similar schemes in London, but nothing like this is currently in place in Leeds. As

- 1. From what you have heard about the scheme, what do you think you can offer to a potential Homeowner?**
- 2. What do you think are the benefits to this scheme?**
- 3. What do you think are the potential problems to this scheme?**
- 4. Would you be willing to pay a monthly fee?**
- 5. Would you be willing to pay a one-off fee for the initial pairing and then an admin fee on a yearly basis?**
- 6. How much would you be willing to pay for the one-off fee?**
 - a. £500-£750**
 - b. £750-£1000**
 - c. Over £1000?**
- 7. If this scheme was available to you now, would you consider signing up?**

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 5

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

We do not anticipate that there would be any disadvantages in taking part in the study other than the time involved for completion of questionnaires and/or interviews.

Would my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

If you agree to participate in this study, any information you provide would be completely confidential. Your name and any other personal details would not be reported as part of the study. Any other information such as tape recordings, written notes and consent forms would be kept in a locked cabinet. Data generated during the study will be retained according to Leeds Metropolitan University privacy policies and will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a minimum period of five years.

Who is funding the research?

Leeds Metropolitan University and Leeds City Council have funded the study.

Who has reviewed the study?

Faculty Research Ethics Committee at Leeds Metropolitan University have reviewed and approved this study.

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

Study Title: HOMESHARE SCHEME – Leeds Metropolitan University

You are being invited to take part in some research. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank

Twenty-First of June, 20XX

At Eleven O'clock

Location of the Event



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

What is the purpose of the study?

Homeshare is a simple way of helping people to help each other. A Homeshare involves matching two compatible people with different sets of needs, both of whom have something to offer to the arrangement.

Homeshare is pioneering a scheme in which older people (“Home-owners”) provide a much-needed home to people who can give them help and support in return (“Home-sharers”).

Homeshare programmes have been successfully running in three continents for a number of years, however, there are very few programmes in England. The purpose of this

with any suggestions that you have for improvement of the existing service model.

If you feel unhappy at any stage you will be free to stop the interview. In addition, you will have our telephone numbers so that you can contact us if there were any queries. All discussions with you will be regarded as confidential.

Why have I been approached to participate in the study?

This is a potential new service and your opinions and feedback will help to shape and enable the development of an effective and sustainable Homeshare programme.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet and be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to take part in the study. If you decide to take part, you will still be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

Appendix 6

The Methodist Homes Association (MHA) is currently piloting a Homeshare scheme in Manchester. The pilot began last autumn but has yet to produce a match. Jo Holloway-Green, the Development Manager for Community Services at MHA, explained that they have encountered problems with publicity and resistance to the scheme as nobody seemed to understand exactly what the scheme involved. They are working with Shared Lives to set up the pilot, and have been advised to concentrate on targeting Householders, as they feel that Homesharers can be found easily through advertisements on Gumtree.com and Spareroom.com.

They have just applied for some funding for a research project which will use older people as Community Champions for Homeshare to explain to people what it is and how it works.

The main barrier that they have identified is that older people are fearful of having someone in their home. Jo believes it will take at least another year to get the scheme off the ground.

In the Manchester scheme, Homesharers are expected to provide ten hours of their time in return for their accommodation. They can do household chores or care for pets, depending on the Householder's requirements. There is an initial administration fee of around £35 and then a monthly fee of less than £100 (possibly around £75), with the Householder paying a little less than the Homesharer.

The participants must have DBS checks, provide references and have more than one meeting with the scheme providers before entering into the Homeshare. Once a pairing is made, there will be monthly contact. There will be a face to face meeting after the first month and then probably a telephone call to each person each month thereafter.

One important recommendation from MHA is that Homesharers are told they must have alternative accommodation in case the Homeshare breaks down. It is stressed that they are not tenants and so do not have the same rights. This is a potential problem as part of the reason Homesharers want to participate in the scheme is that they do not have alternative accommodation.

If the Manchester pilot is successful, MHA would like to set up Homeshare schemes in other cities in the UK. Jo Holloway-Green was very keen on the idea of collaborating with Leeds Metropolitan University, although the decision to work with a partner would be taken higher up in the organisation. MHA approached Manchester University for help with making contact with students but they were unwilling to offer any support.