

For immediate release



In the last year there has been a 37.5% growth in the number of Homeshare schemes from 16 last year to 22. It really is a win-win situation for Householders and Sharers alike. ‘As a Homesharer living in the house of an older and fascinating adult, my life has been enriched by the experience.’ The Homeshare UK 2017 Sector report recently published - <https://homeshareuk.org/hs-resource-library/homeshare-uk-sector-report-2017/>

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‘Undertaking a Homeshare with Wendy has been a transformative decision for me. It has enhanced my ability to be independent, and given me the opportunity to live in a city that I didn’t envisage being able to afford to stay in after graduating. ‘

Eleanor Minney writes about her experience with Homeshare Oxford.

October 2017, A Diary Entry as an Oxford Homesharer

It is a Saturday today and the garden fence is coming down, or more accurately – it has come down. Wendy, her son and myself have all been outside admiring the transformation, which forms the first stage of a new garden project, involving the demolition of a fence that has stood in Wendy’s garden for the last 30+ years! I have kindly been exempted from any involvement in this manual garden work, and my role as the homesharer today has been something of a less strenuous nature! It has become my usual routine to clean the kitchen and mop the floor every weekend, helping to check for any suspect vegetables that have been overlooked in the bottom drawer of the fridge (that is difficult for Wendy to reach), as well as a general clean of whatever bit of the house might need attention, if I haven’t already done so in the week – today it was a Hoover of the lounge and a little bit of ironing. Wendy and I have become accustomed to this flexible routine since I moved in as a homesharer in January. What began with a list of tasks that her daughter had helpfully composed, has developed and adapted as we have come to know one another and I have become familiar with the house. Now I automatically proceed with my ‘routine’ jobs (the kitchen, the floors, washing, changing and ironing Wendy’s bedding every two weeks, etc.), and Wendy will more comfortably suggest other things that she needs a hand with, for example sorting out the freezer or the larder. I have even become very practiced at setting up for Bridge!

Today I am working from home, so after the tasks of the morning I have come upstairs to my room to get on with some of my own work, and W has a friend coming for tea. This evening

we will get together for what we have established as our weekly Film Night. This is something that has naturally evolved and is mutually enjoyed. We realised that there wasn't much we would both be interested in on television, so Wendy's extensive and interesting selection of DVDs and Videos have provided us with much more agreeable entertainment. Now Film Night is a weekly arrangement that is flexible according to both of our commitments. Tonight we are going to watch Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* – the 1940s version (!), and I am confident that we are both looking forward to it. I have recently finished the book, and have since passed it on to Wendy, who is now pacing through it, meanwhile Wendy had seen the old film and wanted to revisit it and share it with me. We will derive great benefit from a relaxed evening and can then review the film together afterwards!

It is not every day that Wendy and I spend so much time together. Yesterday I was at work from 10-7pm and when I got home at 7.45pm she had friends over for a game of Bridge, which I didn't wish to interrupt. So aside from setting up the table in the morning before I left, and perhaps fetching in the milk or the post - generally checking in, we didn't see each other until this morning when we caught up on the events of the day before.

Undertaking a Homeshare with Wendy through Homeshare Oxford has been a transformative decision for me. It has enhanced my ability to be independent, and given me the opportunity to live in a city that I didn't envisage being able to afford to stay in after graduating. The whole family have welcomed me with such kindness, and been more than accommodating as well as giving me plenty of space. I am quite a solitary individual, and so I was apprehensive beforehand about maintaining my personal space and quietude. However, Wendy also has a need for independence and personal space, this is her family home of nearly 50 years after all, so with sensitive and respectful learning and understanding of one another, we seem to have developed what I consider to be a genuine friendship. As I am only 24 years of age, Wendy has a great deal more experiences to share with me of her 80 odd years and I enjoy listening to her anecdotes as well as contemplating her reflections on the present. I was certainly nervous before the move, and I imagine Wendy was not without her own concerns too. She is a remarkable lady to whom I feel an immense gratitude for inviting me into her home, welcoming me into her family, and trusting me in her space. In return I try my best to be proactive, helpful, and compassionate – to enhance her life and home as she and her home have enhanced mine. I would recommend everyone to consider Homeshare as an alternative way of living; I believe it is an opportunity that really does have the potential to transform lives.

For more information about Homeshare Oxford please visit our website www.homeshareoxford.co.uk , email us Homeshare@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or telephone 01865 410 670

Homeshare Oxford is funded by Lloyds Bank Foundation as part of the Homeshare Programme, developed by Lloyds Bank Foundation and Big Lottery Fund in partnership with Age UK, Shared Lives Plus, and the Foyer Federation

ENDS

About Age UK Oxfordshire

Age UK Oxfordshire is an independent local charity dedicated to giving older people in Oxfordshire comfort, support and opportunities and enabling them to love later life.

We provide free local information, advice and support; commercial products and services; and research and campaign on the issues that matter to people in later life. We work with our national partner, Age UK, and our local Age UK partners in England. Our work focuses on five key areas: money matters, health and wellbeing, home and care, work and training and leisure and lifestyle.

You can find further information on all our services and volunteering opportunities by telephoning 0345 450 1276 or by visiting our website: www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire

Age UK Oxfordshire is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered charity number 1091529 and company number 4328143). For all media enquiries please contact Sophie Dyer on 01235 849 403 or 07827 235405 or email media@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk.

Notes to Editors:

‘The Homeshare Programme’ refers to a three year £2m national Homeshare Programme which has been developed by [Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales](#) and [Big Lottery Fund](#) in partnership with [Shared Lives Plus](#), [Age UK](#), [The Foyer Federation](#) to put homesharing on the map as a viable solution to the parallel issues of a lack of affordable housing for young people and the growing number of older people who are lonely or isolated and in need of practical support and companionship.

Homeshare matches young people seeking a place to live with older people with a spare room who need a helping hand at home. The younger party typically pledges around 10 hours of companionship and light domestic help (not including personal care) to their host in return for accommodation. Both parties contribute an affordable monthly fee which contributes towards the cost of the matching process, running the scheme and creating a sustainable service.

Homeshare Oxford is one of a number of schemes which operate nationally

For more information about Homeshare Oxford please visit www.homeshareoxford.co.uk email, telephone 01865 410 670

For more information about the national Homeshare Programme visit <https://homeshareuk.org>

For further information about the national Homeshare pilot programme please contact Sara Guy Sara.Guy@ageuk.org.uk or Amisha Korla at Lloyds Bank Foundation akorla@lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk

The Partners

The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk

The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales is an independent, registered charity which

invests in charities supporting people to break out of disadvantage at critical points in their lives, and promotes practical approaches to lasting change. The Foundation derives its income from Lloyds Banking Group. It has awarded over £300 million in grants to 42,000 charities across England and

Wales over 30 years. The Foundation has invested £1m in the Homeshare Programme to support pilot programmes and evaluation.

Big Lottery Fund www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

The Big Lottery Fund supports the aspirations of people who want to make life better for their communities across the UK. We are responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by the National Lottery for good causes and invest over £650 million a year in projects big and small in health, education, environment and charitable purposes. The Big Lottery Fund have allocated up to £1 million to the Homeshare Programme.

Shared Lives Plus www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk

Shared Lives Plus is the UK network for family-based and small-scale ways of supporting adults. Members are Shared Lives carers and workers, homeshare programmes and enterprises. They use different approaches to enable people to achieve goals such as; being in control of their services and their lives, pursuing ordinary lives within their chosen families and relationships and being valued by their communities and feeling like they belong. Shared Lives Plus will support the Programme by providing connection to their network of existing homesharing schemes and helping to identify areas for growth.

Age UK www.ageuk.org.uk