

SHARE YOUR HOME AND CUT YOUR COSTS

Virtually every older person you speak to would like to continue to live in their own home – but this can become a problem when they start to need help. For many, the cost of a care home is prohibitive and not at all a desirable option.. At the other end of the age spectrum, London rents and house prices are often simply prohibitive for younger people seeking to make a life in the capital.

Fortunately, there's now an affordable service called Supportmatch run by Homeshare, which offers a potential solution to both parties. It's an exchange of help and affordable accommodation between, usually but not restricted to, an older person who needs a little help to live more independently in their own home and a younger individual who is willing to live in and offer assistance with tasks such as cooking, cleaning, companionship, shopping, hospital appointments, computer skills and gardening, by offering 10 hours of their time every week to the householder.



In central London, Fiona Harrington and Cathy Smith* (pictured left) are two such people who have shared a home together successfully for much of the last year. For Fiona, an extremely active lady in her nineties, this has given her the security and support she needs. She says: “It really has put my mind at rest as Cathy is here every day and night. She’s brilliant. I think everyone over a certain age should have someone living in with them.”

Homesharer Cathy is studying for a higher qualification in hospital nursing at a nearby hospital following a divorce. For her the advantages are twofold. She says: “First, I like helping people so helping take care of someone seemed like a good idea. Second, I can also save some money towards a mortgage.”

“I just help out with light household duties – such as getting the newspaper and putting out the rubbish, and we have a good chat every day. Of course, you have to have patience because it’s two people who don’t know each other coming together. There also has to be tolerance from both sides”

For this [Supportmatch](#) service, Homeshare charges the householder a reasonable £99 per month and the homesharer £149 per month. Every homesharer is fully vetted and interviewed and must supply three references and undergo a DBS check; each sharer must commit to a minimum six-month stay. Homeshare also offers a 24/7 call and ongoing support service to both parties once the match has been made.

For more details of this useful service contact Homeshare’s senior coordinator, Zaira De Novellis, on 01604905517 or 07847 072490. Or you can email her.

* Names of interviewees have been changed