

# The state of the sector: Shared Lives care and Homeshare in the UK 2021-22



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## Introduction



Ewan King, CEO,  
Shared Lives Plus



Richard Jones, Chair,  
Shared Lives Plus

Welcome to our first UK wide state of sector report for Shared Lives Plus which encompasses data collected from our Shared Lives schemes and Homeshare organisations from across all of the UK.

Having endured years of funding challenges and increased demand for support , the care sector is under significant pressure. Now, following the pandemic, and with the current cost-of-living crisis running on, capacity is reducing within the sector, and unmet needs are increasing. Despite this backdrop, the Shared Lives and Homeshare approach to supporting people, though still relatively small, has remained stable demonstrating its resilience against these continued and overlapping challenges.

According to regulators across the UK, Shared Lives remains one of the safest and highest quality care providers. This demonstrates the fantastic work of our carers up and down the UK, who whilst coming under increasing pressure, continue

to offer the fantastic levels of personalised care that make the Shared Lives model what it is.

This year we have seen a rise in the number of Shared Lives carers, with there now being 9,193 across the UK, rising by 13% on the previous year. Simultaneously, the number of people supported has stayed relatively stable, rising by a modest 2% to 10,549.

It is massively encouraging that the number of day support arrangements have risen, growing to 1,735, up 12% on the previous year. This follows a dip last year, but now we are seeing more services reopening after the Covid-19 pandemic, as demonstrated by the figures. There was also similar growth in short break arrangements which rose to 2,295, up 8% from last year.



These numbers show us that despite the difficult array of challenges facing the social care sector, Shared Lives still remains an attractive way of life for both carers and those receiving support. It's now important we ensure that becoming a Shared Lives carer is a viable option for those that are interested. We are fully aware of the difficulties our carers are facing, which is why we are relaunching our Invaluable campaign, which is aimed at addressing pay, as well as other issues facing our carers.

Homeshare enables two people to share a home for mutual benefit; typically, an older person with a room to spare is carefully matched with a younger person who will provide an agreed amount of low level support in exchange for good quality affordable accommodation. This year we also saw the expansion of Homeshare as new services were launched in both Merseyside and the North East, as well as the new social franchise model of Homeshare. It's the first time Homeshare UK

is delivering services directly and will enable significant growth in the North of England. We have also supported three Welsh pilots to launch their Homeshare services, and our Homeshare pilot with Clarion Housing group has continued, exploring the potential for Homeshare in social housing.

At Shared Lives Plus we would like to thank everyone across the UK who contributed to this year's state of the sector. Thanks to you we have been able to produce our most comprehensive set of data yet. We are proud to represent you, and so grateful for your help in supporting the continued development and growth of Shared Lives and Homeshare throughout the UK.



## About us

Shared Lives Plus is the membership charity for Shared Lives carers, schemes and Homeshare organisations. Our vision is a kinder, stronger society built on sharing our lives and our homes. We help build communities where everyone lives a full life, regardless of the support they need. We do this by turning Shared Lives care and Homeshare into thriving, mainstream options, with the right structures in place to support and guide people who want to share their lives and homes.

## About Shared Lives

In Shared Lives, a young person or adult who needs support is matched with a carefully approved Shared Lives carer, by their local Shared Lives scheme. Together, they share family and community life. Over half of the people using Shared Lives move in with their chosen Shared Lives carer to live as part of their household; and the remaining people visit for day support or overnight breaks. People get safe, personal care and support, in a place which feels like home. They make friends and become more active. Supported by 150 Shared Lives schemes, there are now over 9,000 carers who are supporting over 10,500 people across the UK.

All carers are approved following rigorous recruitment and training by one of the UK's 145 local regulated schemes. The Care Quality Commission consistently rates Shared Lives in England (which has the most Shared Lives arrangements) as the safest and best quality social care service. It can also save between £8,000 to £30,000 per person, for people with learning disabilities compared to supported living and residential care, and £8,000 lower for people with mental ill health.

## About Homeshare

Homeshare reduces loneliness and tackles the housing crisis by matching a person with a spare room, with someone who is looking for affordable accommodation, to live sociably together. Typically, a homeshare match is intergenerational where an older person with a spare room is matched with a younger person who provides up to 10 hours per week of practical support in exchange for affordable, sociable accommodation.

Both people benefit from the arrangement – they share their lives, homes and skills with one another. An older person can remain at home for longer and the young person has an affordable place to live.

Our Homeshare UK network of over 25 local programmes now support around 550 Homeshare matches benefitting over 1,000 people. Our members are seeing increasing demand for Homeshare, especially as older and younger people alike feel the pressure of increasing energy and household bills, which are readily shared in a Homeshare arrangement.

## Key messages - Shared Lives

- Despite the range of challenges facing social care, the Shared Lives sector has remained stable, growing slightly from the previous year: **13% rise in Shared Lives carers, and 2% rise in those receiving care.**
- Shared Lives is still **rated very highly** by the care regulators across the UK.
- As services have continued to reopen following the pandemic, **day support and short breaks have risen by 12% and 8% respectively** but we recognise that this is an area which still needs to grow to provide the support to our long term arrangements.
- The overall size of the Shared Lives sector remains far too small for an approach to support of such high quality. **Shared Lives accounts for just under 1% of total long-term social care in the UK by people supported, and just over 0.5% by workforce.** Shared Lives Plus will continue to press the case and provide practical support to the sector to enable it to grow.
- Shared Lives remains a highly cost-effective form of adult social care. An independent review found that **Shared Lives resulted in an average saving of between £8k and £30k per annum,** depending on the person's support needs and local alternative services.

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## Key messages - Homeshare

- In 2021 there was an **increase of 5% in the number of people Homesharing with homesharers** providing over 196,000 support hours to householders.
- Householders (typically older people) in Homeshare matches report the **top benefits being companionship, tackling loneliness and the comfort of an overnight presence in the home.**
- Homesharers report top benefits as a **safe and affordable place to live** as well as the feeling of giving back to the local community.
- By December 2021 there was a **41% increase from the previous year on the number of older people wanting to Homeshare.**



## Connor and Helga - Shared Lives

**Shared Lives carer Helga supports Connor at her home in the South West. They were matched together by Shared Lives South West, originally with Connor visiting for short breaks, however six months ago, Connor moved in full time, and enjoys spending time with the family and animals at Helga's home.**

Helga has been a Shared Lives carer for six years, prior to this she did voluntary work visiting day centres and care homes with her two therapy dogs. It was at these day centres that Helga first met Shared Lives carers based in Dorset.

"I then moved to Cornwall and was working in retail when a Shared Lives South West carer came into the store. We got talking and she gave me the number of the Cornwall office. I applied and the rest is history – I haven't looked back!"

Connor has become very much part of the family, and Helga finds the role very flexible, "I have three cows and ten sheep that need tending to, I also use them as part of my support by offering animal therapy." Since moving in with Helga, Connor is now responsible for his own sheep called Angel, who he cares for. Connor has also become great friends with Helga's son Harrison, they spend days out in Exeter together and go to the cinema. "My son Harrison has autism; he is 29 and has achieved so much, he works, drives and is independent in so many ways. I felt wanted to help others to achieve in life, which is why I became a Shared Lives carer."

Since Connor moved in, Helga has helped him to apply to jobs and start working, he went abroad for the first time and has gained a huge amount of independence. Connor says, "I got the job... I'm making new friends, it's brilliant!"

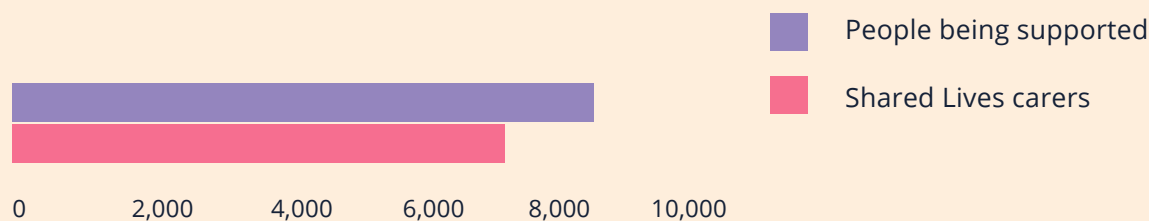
### Connor and Helga ▼



# The picture across the UK - Shared Lives

## England

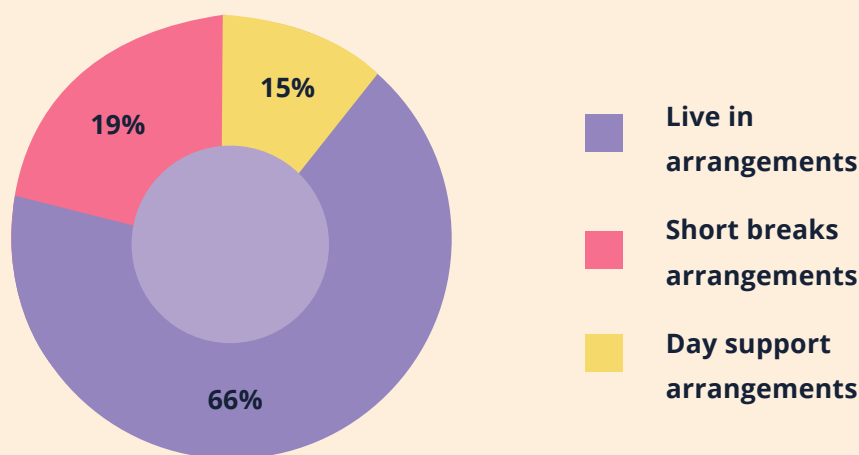
The number of people being supported stands at 8,491, shrinking slightly by -160 (-2%), while the number of Shared Lives carers stands at 7,568, increasing by 262 (+3.5%).



This year there were some interesting changes in care and support needs for those using Shared Lives in England. Most notably, the number of people with learning disabilities increased by 4% (+190), to 71% of all people supported. The number of people with support needs associated with old age and dementia decreased from 7% to 5% (-173).

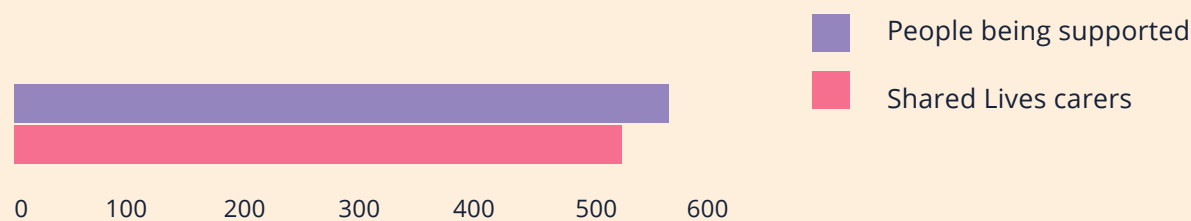
There was a marked increase of +5% (+307) working age adults aged 25-64, and a smaller, but notable increase +2% (+118) in the number of young adults aged 18-24 in transition to Shared Lives from foster care. This is certainly an area in which we can expand our service. By targeting transition teams, we can help make Shared Lives the first choice for social workers who are helping young people transitioning to adulthood.

Shared Lives remains a flexible support option, with different types of care available to those being supported. Long term, live-in arrangements made up 66% of the total number of arrangements, short break arrangements made up 19%, and day support arrangements made up 15%.



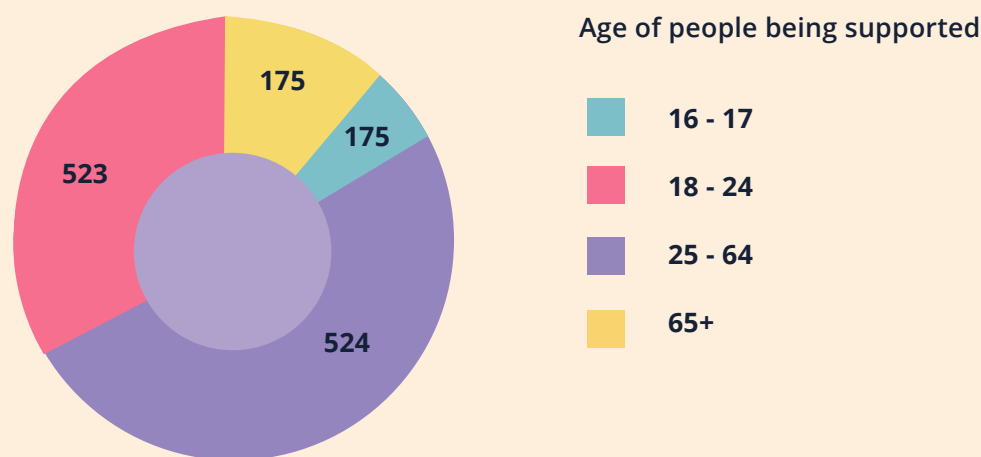
## Scotland

The data collected in Scotland this year presents a promising and exciting picture for Shared Lives in the nation. The continued re-opening of services following the pandemic has contributed to an **82% increase in the numbers of people supported this year, bringing the total number to 572**. This represents 80% of the people supported pre-pandemic and we expect that in the coming year the sector will pass pre-pandemic levels of support. As well as this there are **519 carers**. These numbers include, for the first time, data from a long existing scheme in Glasgow.



Of the people supported, **15% receive help due to dementia or a need associated with old age, 47% because they live with autism or a learning disability, 3% because they live with mental ill-health, and 35% were transitioning from the care system.**

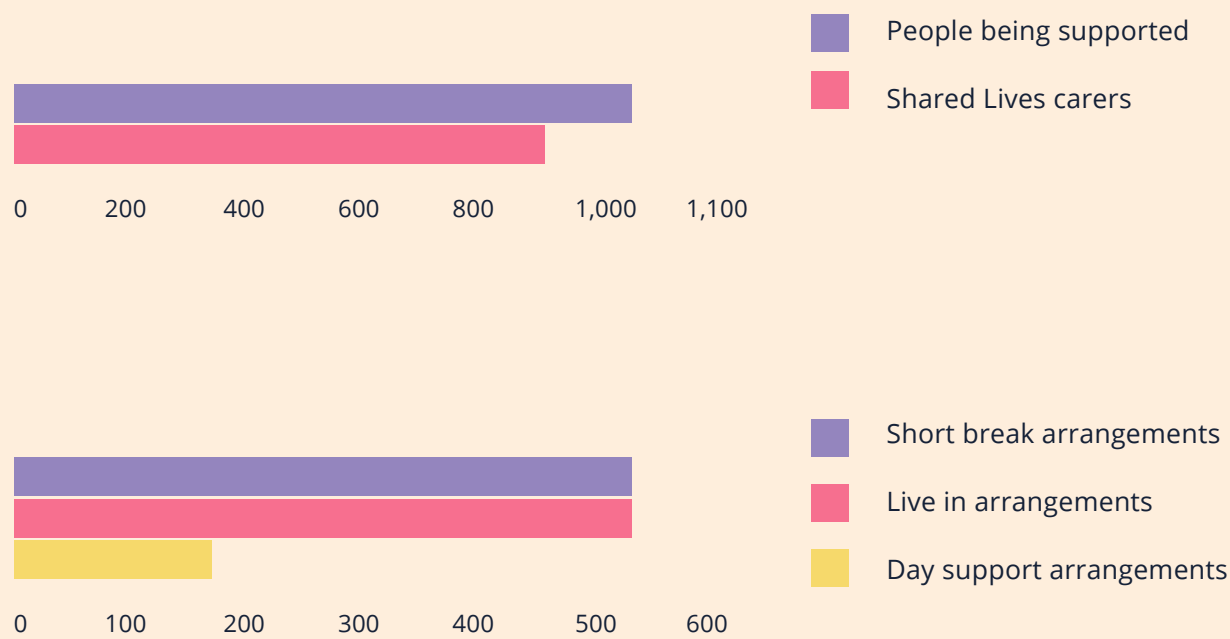
This is further shown by the fact that **33% of those receiving support are between the ages of 18-24**. The largest demographic supported by Shared Lives remains 25-64 year olds who make up 39% of those supported. 21% of people supported are aged 65+, and 8% are aged 16 or 17.





# Wales

The number of people supported in Shared Lives increased by 18%, to a total of 1,022, as day support and short breaks for individuals and family carers returned as Covid restrictions eased. There are now 524 short break arrangements, a 42% increase, and 175-day support arrangements, a 22% increase. There are 523 live-in arrangements in Wales. These arrangements are facilitated by the 893 Shared Lives carers in Wales.

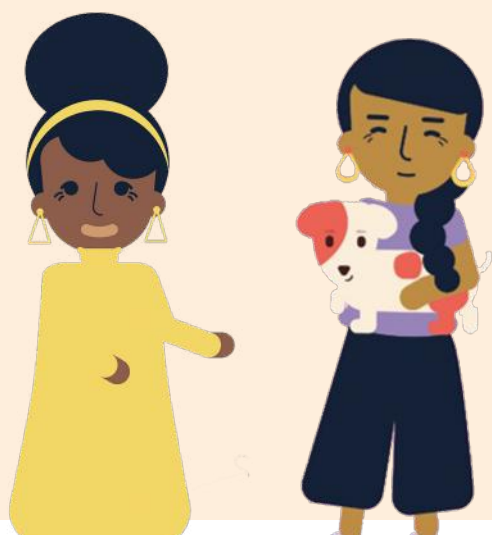
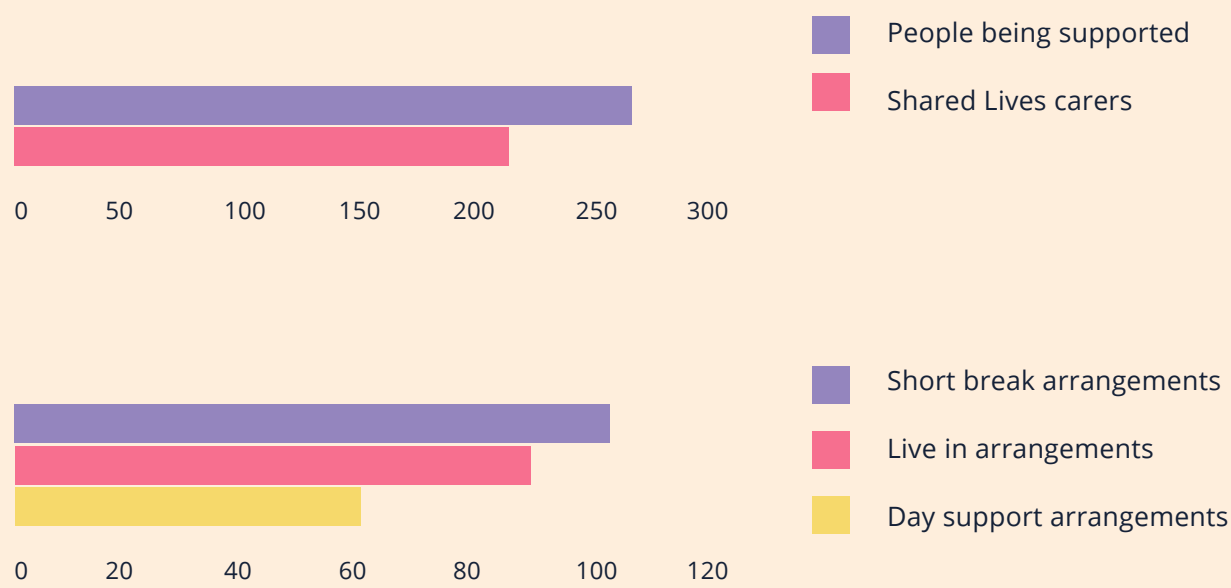


Shared Lives supports 7% of people with a learning disability who are known to social care services. With investment, many more people could be supported in a Shared Lives household to live well, independently and with control over their lives.

## Northern Ireland

Shared Lives in Northern Ireland still has massive scope for growth, and has remained stable over the last year, which is very promising given the challenges facing the wider care sector. There is a total of 264 people supported by Shared Lives in Northern Ireland. Of those 264 people supported, the vast majority (253) have a learning disability, with others being supported in relation to; mental ill health, dementia, physical impairment, and domestic abuse. The vast majority of the 264 people supported are aged 25-64, with 216 people fitting into this age range.

There is a total of 213 Shared Lives carers across the nation, and just as with the other nations, they offer several types of support. There are a total of 255 arrangements, 104 of which are short breaks arrangements, 89 long term arrangements, and 62 day support arrangements.

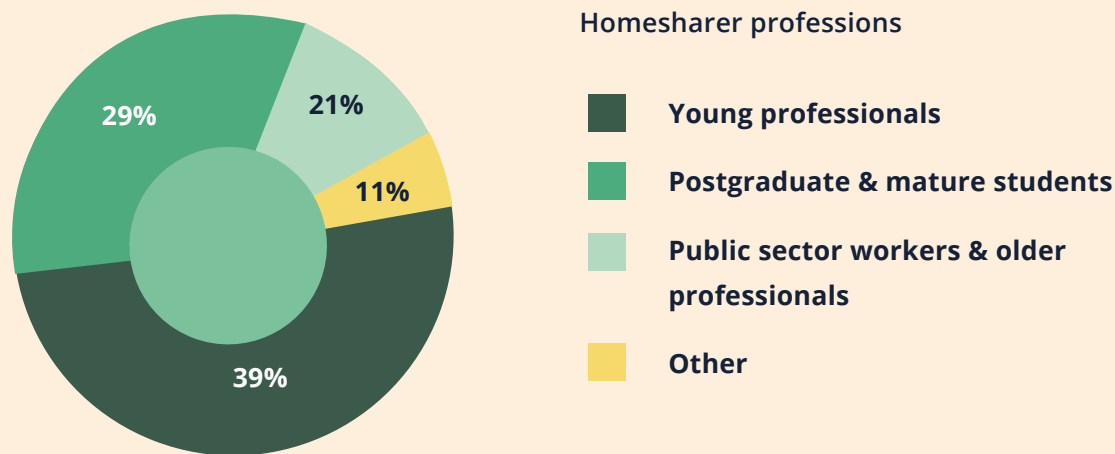




## The picture across the UK - Homeshare

During 2021 there was an **increase of 5% in the number of people Homesharing in the UK**, with homesharers providing over 196,000 support hours to householders.

The key groups of householders using Homeshare during 2021 were older single people and older couples between the ages of 70 and 90. **The majority of homesharers are now aged between 26 and 49 and include young professionals (39%), postgraduate and mature students (29%), public sector workers and older professionals (21%) in need of affordable accommodation.**



## Homeshare Expansion

In October 2021, **Homeshare UK secured a £1.2million grant to support the scale up of Homeshare across the UK.** With this investment, the Homeshare UK staff team has grown and launched a Social Franchise model of Homeshare as well as starting two new Homeshare programmes in the North of England.



## Homeshare UK North East and Homeshare UK Merseyside

During July 2022, Homeshare UK North East and Homeshare UK Merseyside launched; this is the first time that Homeshare UK is delivering Homeshare services directly; this will enable significant growth for Homeshare in the North of England, with more profile and resources, so that Homeshare UK network members can catch up with the rest of Homeshare internationally and benefit from this wider exposure.

In 2022 central Liverpool ranked #1 of 32,844 neighbourhoods at risk of loneliness in England. Newcastle is home to two universities and has a student population of approximately 42,000, many in need of accommodation; this is projected to grow year on year up to 2030. In both Merseyside and the North East there is a distinct lack of preventative services that offer low-level daily living support for older people, demonstrating the need for Homeshare in these areas.

## Social franchise

As well as running our own Homeshare services in the North, during 2022 we launched our Social Franchise model for Homeshare, suitable for delivery in smaller towns and rural locations, with aims to make Homeshare more accessible across the UK, in areas where there is not a local Homeshare provider at present. The launch marks a step-change in growth of the sector which has had steady growth but remained London-centric over the past five years, with 70% of matches within the M25 boundary.

Homeshare UK franchisees will join the current network of providers across the UK and draw on our good practice guidance and quality assurance framework whilst utilising the Homeshare UK brand.

## Wales pilot programmes

In 2021, the Welsh Government funded Shared Lives Plus to develop three Homeshare programmes in Wales, and during 2022, we have supported pilots to launch in Pembrokeshire, Swansea, and Gwynedd, all of which are working to form their first Homeshare matches.

In Wales, older people believe that Homesharing would reduce their anxiety about being home alone (71% of those surveyed) and would value being able to give a young professional or student a safe and affordable home to live (81% of those surveyed).

## Graham and Lee - Homeshare

Graham's family were looking for some extra support for their father after he was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia at aged 69. They wanted Graham to have company and the feeling of security, especially at night.

Lee was living in a bedsit and was looking for more comfortable and affordable accommodation. He had volunteered at a lunch club for older people before the pandemic and felt that a Homeshare would allow him to continue to support the older generation and at the same time help him find a new home. Lee works in the entertainment industry and can fit his work around the 10 hours per week of support. Lee said, "I have shared with a lot of people before I met Graham. I think Graham is the easiest person I have lived with."

Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow, and Brent matched them in June 2022 and since then Lee has found additional groups for Graham to attend, including a Dementia Support Group at the local library and a Walking Football Group. Lee has also taken Graham to play table tennis with a group of his friends and in the Summer, they enjoyed going to the pub!

Graham's family are happy with the Homeshare so far and it gives them peace of mind that Lee is around to support their father. Graham said, "Having someone else in the house at night helps me feel safe. Especially making sure the doors are locked before I go to bed."

Graham and Lee - Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent ▼





## Conclusion

Over the last year the social care sector has faced several difficult challenges, including a cost of living crisis, the ongoing challenge of Covid-19 and pressures on budgets. Encouragingly, the figures in this report show a Shared Lives approach to support that is resilient against both these challenges, and the sector has remained stable. At Shared Lives Plus we are committed not only growing shared lives but to retaining our current carers by working to address some of the main issues they are facing, and our membership team is always there to provide our carers with support.

The case for Shared Lives and Homeshare is clear: it supports people to live the life they choose. Shared Lives care creates the best outcomes for people who need support and helps them to live the best lives they can.

But we know that more work is needed from both within and outside Shared Lives Plus to ensure the continued growth of Shared Lives and Homeshare. Growing Shared Lives and Homeshare takes time and a set of promising conditions in which to flourish. As budgets continue to be stretched within local authorities it's vital that cost effective models of care, such as Shared Lives, receive new investment.

Growing Shared Lives will help transform the social care landscape, giving far more people a better quality, more personalised care and support option, along with significant potential cost savings for commissioners. We call on leaders across social care to join us in developing a positive vision for the future and to commit to growing Shared Lives.





**To find out what Shared Lives and Homeshare can do for you, please contact us:**

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