



Supportmatch
Homeshare Service

www.supportmatch.co.uk

Supportmatch Homeshare Policy

Anti-Modern Slavery and Exploitation Policy

POLICY TITLE: Anti-Modern Slavery and Exploitation

ISSUED: October 2020

REVISED: October 2022

REVIEWED: October 2024

NEXT REVIEW DUE: October 2025

1. Policy Statement

Supportmatch has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery, human trafficking, and all forms of exploitation. We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our operations, including our Homeshare service, which pairs older Householders with carefully vetted Homesharers for mutual benefit. We fully comply with the **Modern Slavery Act 2015**, ensuring our practices protect all parties involved and uphold their fundamental human rights.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals and entities engaged with Supportmatch, including but not limited to Householders, Homesharers, employees, contractors, volunteers, coordinators, agency workers, third-party representatives, and business partners.

3. Unique Safeguarding Context: Homeshare

Although Homeshare is a voluntary and non-care-based arrangement, it involves vulnerable adults—typically older people—who may be at heightened risk of abuse or exploitation. Supportmatch is committed to safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of all participants through:

a) Voluntary Participation and Binding Agreements

Homeshare agreements are voluntary in origin but contractually binding once signed. No party should feel pressured to enter or remain in a Homeshare. The Joint Householder & Homesharer Agreement and the associated Terms of Service outline clear roles, mutual expectations, and shared consent. Tasks offered in exchange for accommodation must be light, non-regulated, and agreed upon collaboratively.

b) Respecting Vulnerability and Power Imbalances

Many Householders are older adults who may live alone or have health or social vulnerabilities. Supportmatch takes proactive steps to prevent exploitation by ensuring that Homesharers are properly vetted and that relationships remain respectful, transparent, and balanced.

c) Monitoring and Early Intervention

Ongoing check-ins and monitoring are conducted to ensure that Homeshare arrangements remain ethical, voluntary, and mutually supportive. Any red flags—such as signs of coercion, financial abuse, or over-reliance—are acted upon promptly and may lead to immediate termination of the arrangement and/or referral to authorities.

4. Due Diligence Framework

Before approving any Homeshare arrangement, Supportmatch conducts a thorough due diligence assessment, which includes:

- **Identity Verification:** Valid passport or government ID
- **DBS and Background Checks:** Criminal record screening and financial history review
- **Reference Checks:** From landlords, employers, or character referees
- **Motivational Interviews:** To assess understanding, intent, and emotional readiness
- **Household Safety Inspections:** Virtual or in-person visits
- **Skills and Health Checks:** Where relevant to tasks involved
- **Vulnerability Assessments:** For Householders, to evaluate risk and safeguarding needs
- **Modern Slavery Risk Screening:** Ensuring no signs of trafficking, coercion, or forced labour
- **Contractual Clarity:** Both parties must read, understand, and sign legal agreements
- **Trial Periods and Orientation:** Optional pre-placement trial to assess comfort and compatibility

5. Ongoing Monitoring and Engagement

Supportmatch coordinators maintain regular contact with both parties throughout the Homeshare placement. Spot-checks, reviews, and welfare calls are used to identify any risks of dependency, coercion, or deteriorating circumstances. Concerns are escalated immediately in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

6. Legal Compliance and Transparency

Supportmatch is committed to complying with the **Modern Slavery Act 2015** and publishes an annual Modern Slavery Statement where applicable. We will also report any suspected criminal activity to the appropriate authorities without delay.

7. Ethical Business Conduct

We expect all partners, contractors, and suppliers to comply with this policy and uphold ethical labour practices. Our agreements explicitly prohibit the use of forced labour, child labour, or any form of modern slavery. We will terminate relationships with any entity found to be in breach of this standard.

8. Reporting Concerns

Any individual associated with Supportmatch—staff, volunteers, Homesharers, or Householders—must report any suspicion of exploitation or abuse. Reports can be made confidentially to a senior manager or the Safeguarding Lead. Reports will be taken seriously and acted upon in accordance with our safeguarding and whistleblowing policies.

9. Consequences of Breach

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, contract termination, or legal proceedings, depending on the severity and nature of the breach. Breaches may also be reported to statutory bodies such as the police, DBS, or the local authority.

11. Review and Accountability

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required to remain in line with legal standards, operational risks, and good practice guidance.

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