



# Carers Support

## A Carers' Guide to Planning for Emergencies

Carers Support Service

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## A Carer's Guide to Planning for Emergencies

This leaflet is for people who provide unpaid care and support for a family member or friend. A carer can be defined as someone who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability.

Anyone can become a carer; carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be of any age. Carers don't choose to become carers, it happens out of an overwhelming concern and compassion for the person they care for. Many carers do not consider themselves to be a carer, they are just looking after their mother, son, or best friend, just getting on with it and doing what they feel anyone else would do in the same situation.

Many carers choose to manage with little or no outside help, but may worry about what to do if certain urgent situations arise. It therefore helps to give some thought to what you can do if ever faced with an emergency, either during the day, or at night, or weekends.

Carers are often so busy dealing with everyday events that forward planning can seem a bit of a luxury. However, thinking about what might happen could prevent a mishap turning into a disaster, and help reduce the stress for everyone concerned.

**Being prepared can't stop emergencies happening but it can make them just a little bit easier to manage at a time when you need it most.**

# Carers Assessment

Your first action when planning for an emergency should be to get an assessment of your own needs (carers assessment). All carers have a legal right to an assessment, carried out by the social services department. If you haven't had an assessment, ask for one: it can give you access to further help.

When you have your carers assessment, planning for unexpected events and emergencies should be included, if it doesn't don't be afraid to ask about this. If you've already had a carer's assessment and planning for an emergency was not covered, you can ask to look at your assessment again and put this right.

Discuss your emergency planning with the person you care for (where appropriate). They may have a view about what information is included and, if alternative arrangements for care are to be made, how and when these will be implemented.

## Forward Planning

### **What do you need to think about?**

What types of 'emergency planning' might you face as the main carer -

- Being delayed from returning home
- Becoming ill
- Requiring hospitalisation
- Family emergencies, family illness, bereavement
- Friends/family are unavailable or cannot be contacted to step in and provide back-up care

Can the person you care for -

- Safely stay at home alone for any period of time?
- Manage alone with limited supervision for a short period?
- Contact family/friends if you are not able to?
- Contact emergency services, health professionals if needed?

## What if I become ill?

Try to think in advance whom you could ask to help if this happens. What would you need help with and who could you ask? Some relatives or friends could perhaps be asked to take on part of your caring role. If there are things you do that you do not feel anyone else in the family could help with, such as intimate personal care, make sure you know how to contact Social Services for help.

## No one else can do it ...

If the person you care for is used to having only you care for them, it may be a good idea to occasionally call on outside help so that they can get used to this, which will make having help in an emergency less of an upheaval for them. Consider discussing this with the person you care for.

The same thing applies to respite care and day care services. If the person you care for has previously received respite and or day care, it may be easier for them to go there in an emergency.

## What can Social Services do in an emergency?

**During office hours** - contact can be made to the Adult Services Duty & Information Team (ASDIT), who may be able to arrange the following help -

- Arrange to visit the person at home to ensure that they are safe
- Arrange urgent care, for example emergency home care, respite care, if necessary
- Ensure longer term arrangements are in place where required

**Adult Services Duty & Information Team  
(ASDIT) contact number: 0808 1002500**

## **Outside of normal office hours** - the South East Wales

Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT) provides an emergency social work service for the five local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen.

They will only deal with emergency situations that cannot wait until the next working day. Members of the public and professionals can contact SEWEDT if:

- A child or young person is in urgent need of protection from harm.
- A parent, foster carer or child needs emergency help, advice or support.
- A carer or a vulnerable adult (those with mental health problems, physical or learning disabilities or older people) is in urgent need.

The service operates whenever other Social Services offices are closed, including weekends and bank holidays.

**South East Wales Emergency Duty Team  
contact number: 0800 3284432**

**Please note - for medical emergencies you must call your GP  
or an ambulance.**

### **Complete an Emergency Plan**

You will find an emergency plan at the back of this leaflet that you can complete to provide information to help anyone who comes to give you assistance, whether it's the emergency services, support services or even family and friends who might not be aware of some of the details of your caring situation.

### **How to fill in the form**

This emergency plan is designed to contain basic, useful information in one document. Think about who you would like to be contacted in

an emergency, both for you and the person you care for. This could be the same person, but they could also be different.

Imagine the form is being read by someone who doesn't know you or the person you care for. Make the information you include simple and informative.

List the conditions the person you care for has. Are they having ongoing treatment? If they take medication where is it kept? Do they have mobility or communication issues that should be considered? List that information too. Do you or other people have a key to the person's home? This information will be useful for anyone who needs access to the property of the person you care for.

In the section called "Any other information", you can add any other relevant details. Perhaps the person you care for has a home security alarm, or pets that need to be looked after etc.

### **Once you've filled in the form**

Once you have filled in the plan, keep it somewhere you can find it. Think of who you might want to have copies, such as members of your family or friends. Ask that the form be attached to your carers assessment and also cross-referenced to the information held for the person you care for. It may also be useful to give a copy to the GP or other health professionals.

Keep the plan up to date. If the plan includes help from Social Services, remember to tell them if things change so the plan they have is accurate, if and when needed.

## Other Useful Ideas to Think About

**Carers Emergency Card Scheme** – the free card is the size of a credit card and should be easy to keep in your wallet or purse and is used as an instant source of identification in case of accident or sudden illness. Social Services will hold your registration number and details where help can be coordinated to assist you both, while you are receiving attention. By making a brief phone call, help can be summoned for the person you look after.

The service is confidential. No personal details are held on the card, so that all identities are protected. The only means of identification is the registration number on the card. In an emergency the Scheme respond by carrying out the instructions on the registration form and your emergency plan.

You can join the service by contacting the Carers Support Worker on 01443 864604, or by emailing [carers@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:carers@caerphilly.gov.uk) and requesting a pack.

**“In Case of Emergency”** contact number (ICE) - put one into your mobile phone. By simply entering the acronym ICE - for In Case of Emergency - into the mobile's phone contacts list, the emergency services will have the name and number of someone who should be contacted in an emergency. Emergency services staff recognise 'ICE' as an “emergency contact” person.

Make sure you choose a number that's easy to get in touch with. A home number could be useless in an emergency if the person works full time. If possible enter both daytime and evening telephone numbers, or a mobile number. Make sure the person whose name and number you are giving has agreed to be your 'ICE' partner.



**“Message in a Bottle”** - is a plastic bottle kept in the fridge at home. The bottle comes with a green cross sticker that you place on the fridge door or someplace visible. This will alert emergency services staff that you have vital details, including whom to contact as a result of a sudden illness or accident. Bottles can usually be obtained free of charge from local pharmacies or ask your GP.

**The emergency SMS service** - lets deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people in the UK send an SMS text message to the UK 999 service where it will be passed to the police, ambulance, fire rescue, or coastguard. Simply by sending an SMS message to 999 you can call for help and the emergency services will be able to reply to you. You will need to register your mobile phone before using the emergency SMS service,

1. Send the word ‘register’ in an SMS message to 999
2. You will then receive SMS messages about the service
3. When you have read these SMS messages reply by sending ‘yes’ in an SMS message to 999
4. You will receive a SMS message telling you that your mobile phone is registered or if there is a problem with your registration

You can check your mobile phone registration by sending the word ‘register’ in an SMS message to 999.

# Carers Emergency Plan

## Section A – Carer’s Details

Name .....

Address .....

Contact Numbers Home:.....

Mobile:.....

Work:.....

Relationship to the person cared for .....

## Section B - Person You Care For

Name .....

Date of Birth .....

Address .....

Contact Numbers Home:.....

Mobile:.....

Work:.....

Details of GP .....

Please give details of any sight, hearing or communication difficulties:  
(You may want to record how best to communicate with the person you care for)

Details of illnesses, disabilities or health problems (Please do not include medication as this often changes, however you may want to record where you keep medication for the person you care for).

Please give details of any mobility difficulties and what (if any) equipment you have to support this.

Please give details of any known allergies:

Are there any cultural/religious considerations?

Please give details of any other information you think may be of use

## Section C - Professionals Involved

Please give details and contact numbers of any professionals involved in the planning of care and support, such as a social worker, district nurse or health visitor. (You may only want to record the organisation and contact number if names may change)

## Section D - Emergency Contacts

Please give the details of two emergency contacts. It is important that you discuss this with them and that they are in agreement to be a contact.

### 1st Contact

Name .....

Address .....

Contact Numbers Home:.....

Mobile:.....

Work:.....

Relationship to the person cared for .....

Are they able to gain access to the home (a key holder) YES / NO

## 2nd Contact

Name .....

Address .....

Contact Numbers Home:.....

Mobile:.....

Work:.....

Relationship to the person cared for .....

Are they able to gain access to the home (a key holder) YES / NO

Completed By: .....

Date: .....

I will review this document on :.....

Now you have completed the plan, keep it somewhere you can find it. Think of who you might want to have copies, such as those you have listed as the emergency contacts. Ask that the form be attached to your carers assessment and also cross-referenced to the information held for the person you care for. It may also be useful to give a copy to the GP or other health professionals.

Remember to review the plan to ensure that it is kept up to date.



**This publication is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.**

