



A Carers Guide to

Planning for Emergencies



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Carers Project

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A Carers 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 from any walk of life or culture and can be any age. Many carers feel 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 and 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, night, weekend or bank holiday.

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 cannot 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 (this is called a carers assessment). All carers have a legal right to an assessment which is carried out by the social services department. If you have not had an assessment you can ask for one. It can give you the opportunity to discuss what you need to be able to carry out your caring role.

When you have your carers' assessment, planning for unexpected events and emergencies should be included in the conversation. If it is not mentioned do not be afraid to ask about this. If you have already had a carer's assessment and planning for an emergency was not covered, you can ask to look at your assessment again.

Discuss your emergency planning with the person you care for (where this is 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? This could include:

- Being delayed from returning home
- You becoming ill

- You requiring a hospital stay
- Family emergencies, family illness, bereavement
- Friends and family are unavailable or cannot be contacted to step in and provide back-up care

You might need to think about, 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 or friends if you are not able to
- Contact emergency services or health professionals if needed

What if I become ill?

Try to think in advance who 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, for example providing 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. This could 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 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 with the **Integrated Service Teams**, who will 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 when required

Integrated Service Teams Duty Lines:

Abergavenny	01873 735885
Chepstow	01291 635666
Monmouth	01600 773041

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 vulnerable adult (those with mental health problems, physical or learning disabilities or older people) is in urgent need.

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

South East Wales Emergency Duty Team
Contact Number: 0800 328 4432

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 is the emergency services, support services or even family and friends who might not be aware of some of the details of your caring role.

How to fill in this 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 this does not have to be the case.

Imagine the form is being read by someone who does not 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.

After you have 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 family members or friends. You can ask that a copy of the form be scanned and attached to your carers' assessment and 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.

Other Useful Ideas to Think About

Carers Emergency Cards – 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.

The card has space on the reverse for you to write the names of two people who can be contacted in case of an emergency. Cards are available from Monmouthshire County Council Carers Support and Information Officers, and from GP surgeries.

In Case of Emergency – contact number (ICE) – add an emergency contact number to your mobile phone. By entering the letters ICE – which stands for In Case of Emergency – into the mobile phone contact 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 is 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, and a mobile phone number. Make sure the person whose name and number you are giving has agreed to be your ICE partner.

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.

- Send the word “register” in an SMS message to 999
- You will then receive SMS messages about the service
- When you have read these SMS messages reply by sending “yes” in an SMS message to 999
- You will then 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:.....

Work:.....

Mobile:.....

Relationship to the
person cared for

Section B – Person You Care For

Name

Date of Birth

Address

.....

Contact Numbers Home:.....

Work:.....

Mobile:.....

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 or 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:

Work:.....

Mobile:.....

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:.....

Work:

Mobile:.....

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 about who you would like to give copies to. Remember to review the plan to ensure that it is kept up to date.

