



Planning For Emergencies

A GUIDE FOR CARERS

About Southwark Carers

We are an independent, well-established charity with over 4000 carers currently registered with us. We provide information, advice and support to carers across Southwark.

We are the voice for carers in the Borough speaking on their behalf about the issues that are important to them.

We aim to raise awareness of the rights and needs of carers in Southwark - working in partnership with other local organisations to make sure that carers receive the support they require. Our services include:

- Advice and advocacy to support carers on issues such as benefits and dealing with social services.
- An information pack and regular newsletter to keep carers fully informed on what is happening.
- Financial assistance to help carers take a break.
- Carers support groups.
- Social activity groups.
- Massage and relaxation.



A Helping Hand for people supporting their disabled, frail or ill relatives and friends in Southwark.



- Fuel Poverty Grants.
- Emergency Planning.
- Respite cover for carers to have a life of their own.
- Transport grants.
- Liaison with local health and social care to develop new ways of working.
- Forums.

About this guide

We have designed this guide to be a way of helping you think about some of the things that may be important to you should you be unable to continue in your caring role.



What is Emergency planning?

Emergency Planning is where you sit down either by yourself or with someone and think about what would be needed should you be unable to care for your loved one.

The questions that are asked are intended to help you make informed choices and decisions that suit your situation. The questions range from some basic questions, as a reminder, as sometimes it's

the obvious things that we forget to consider, through to areas that some people may not have thought about before.

Talking through these difficult areas with a close friend or relative might help you reach the decisions that are right for you. As everyone's situation is unique, it will be impossible for this booklet to cover everything. Think of this as a starting point.

What is an Emergency Plan?

No one plans to be caught in a traffic jam or to be taken ill or hospitalised – but accidents and emergencies happen to most of us at some time or other.

By creating an Emergency Plan you can be reassured should an incident occur in knowing that you have put plans in place for the person you care for to be looked after.

Emergency Plans are usually for 48 hours after an incident. This allows others to ask for leave from work or change their plans to step in and offer support.

It is also the minimum time needed by statutory services to put a Care Plan in place should you be unable to resume your caring role due to illness, accident or other circumstances outside your control.

Taking Control

An Emergency Plan is a written document of what should happen if you are unable to care for the person you look after. It is usually kept with family and friends and



also in a prominent place in your home. The process of putting together a plan and talking through what might need to be done with other people often helps carers shape and define their caring role in ways that they might not have otherwise thought of and helps others to understand the range of roles and responsibilities you have as a carer.

You are in control of the plan and you decide who to involve and when it's appropriate to involve them.

Getting others involved

The most important aspect of the plan is that everyone included in the plan is aware of it and understands it. This includes you, the person you care for and anyone who may be required to step in to provide care if you were involved in an emergency.

For most people, the first port of call will be family, friends or neighbours. But do they all know what to do if you are not there? By thinking about

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How much would those who step in know about what you do? How much detail would they need to know?

.....
your circles of support you can start to build up a picture of who you need to talk to about your plan.

If establishing stronger friendships with your neighbours would help, you may want to start that process now when you can take your time and be calm.

Important contacts

It's also important to have a list of contacts detailing who is important in the life of the person you care for and why. You should also have your own contact list of people who need to know what has happened.

Does the person you care for have particular friends that could visit for a couple of hours if you were late because of a traffic jam? Do you have work colleagues or friends or family nearby who understand your

position? And are willing to help.

Once you have identified who could take your place for a short period of time, talk them through the basics of what they might have to do and ask them whether they are still willing to take on this responsibility. If they agree, make sure their details; name and contact numbers and what they have agreed to do are written into your plan. Make sure that you give them a copy of the plan.

Clear Instructions

It's important that those you call upon know what to do with any medicines or equipment that the person you care for uses.

To make all of this clear for anyone else that might step in to help you, it may be useful for you to keep an up to date record of what needs to happen and at what times.

For example, a list of what medicines need to be taken, at what time, whether they should be

taken with a drink or with food, or between meals.

Considering all of these types of questions for all parts of the care you provide – medicines, equipment, or other forms of support – and write these down in a way that others will understand. In your discussions with people about what help they would be able to offer in an emergency they may well ask you some of these questions.

It's important to write down all the information that you give them, as they probably won't be able to remember everything that you tell them.

Are there any gaps that you have identified? Note those in your plan too.

Planning Ahead

Delays are sometimes unavoidable from being held up for a few hours to being away overnight. But you can plan for them.

Planning ahead for what to do if you are delayed is about being prepared.

Getting Prepared

Knowing what needs to be done, who can do it, and how to alert people to the need to put the plan into action is what will make an emergency plan work.

Getting all of these things together

when you aren't present – because you are stuck elsewhere – can be difficult. Having a plan in place and contingencies in place will make life your life easier and provide you with the comfort of knowing your loved one will be taken care of in an emergency.

Making a list of key names and phone numbers on an Emergency





Hospitalisation

If you were to be hospitalised, even for a short time, it's important to consider what could happen when you were discharged.

If, for example, you had minor surgery that meant you were in and out of hospital in one day would you need some help for a couple of weeks to do the lifting and moving of equipment for your cared for person? Would you be restricted in other ways?

If any of these are likely to be true, then you may want to ask a willing friend or relative to come stay with you for a week or two to help out. Planning something like this in advance helps to take the stress out of the situation and everyone involved can have a shared understanding of what to expect during these circumstances.

If a friend / relative is unable to help, assistance may be sought from social services to provide respite cover for you. Alternatively, if this is

not available Southwark Carers may be able to arrange respite cover.

Social Services

If there isn't anyone who can take the time to help you then it will be essential that Social Services or another organisation be asked to offer some support for a few weeks while you recover.

If this is what you think you might need then it's important to speak with them in advance. This is to ensure that support package can be organised and put in place when it is needed, rather than organised in a hurried and haphazard way.

Carers Assessment

It's useful to have a Carers Assessment because you will then

be registered with Social Services as a carer and you won't have to go through the process of doing this when you are ill.

You have the right to have a Carers Assessment completely independently of the needs or services of the person that you care for. You are entitled to an assessment even if your cared for person does not receive any services from Social Services.

Having a Carers Assessment should include a detailed discussion about what your needs might be in an emergency.

You can tell the social worker what your plans are and what you have talked about, and who with.



Long Term Emergencies

What if the emergency is going to mean that you will be unable to care for a lengthy period of time? Detailed planning for long term emergencies in your caring routine will help to reduce stress for you and the person you care for.

The person you care for may be able to cope for a day or two, but how would things be if you were away for a week or months? Who would step in for that length of time?

Would it be easier if the person you cared for went to stay with a relative, rather than have the relative stay with them? Or would a stay in residential or nursing accommodation be the right solution?

All of these questions, and others, will have to be considered if, for example, you had to be in hospital yourself for a lengthy period of time.

When talking with your friends or relatives about what support they could offer for a few hours



or overnight, would be the ideal opportunity to ask them what they would do if the emergency situation were to go on for sometime. In these circumstances the support of Social Services may be crucial in organising respite care.



Planning ahead for long term emergencies is essential. It would be useful to have this conversation with Social Services at your Carers Assessment, or review of your assessment.

Finally...

Over time things change, so it's important you go back to your Emergency Plan from time to time, at least on a 6 monthly basis to make sure that the details are up to date and that what has been agreed still suits all those involved.

You could use the diagram on page 14 to help you think about the different areas of your caring role and the different groups of people or services that could be involved in any emergency plan you develop.

You can use the checklist on page 15 to note down any questions that you want to ask people, ideas that you might have or to start creating a list of people to speak with about your plan.

Other support services

Message In A Bottle

For those who may care for someone who may not live with them a Message In A Bottle Kit is a unique way of storing essential information about who you care for, that persons details and needs on a prepared form that is kept in a bottle and stored in the fridge.

You can get a free Message In A Bottle Kit from Southwark Carers.

Emergency Card

This card fits easily into a purse or wallet and provides key contact information to others should you be involved in an accident. You can get a free Emergency Card from Southwark Carers.

Carers Assessment

Although a Carers Assessment from Social Services is unlikely to get you immediate access to lots of services or support, as most carers are not regarded as having sufficient need, it is certainly worth going through

the process of assessment so that you are then registered with Social Services as a carer.

This means that in an emergency you can bypass this first step and that social services have many of the key details that they need. An Emergency Plan should also be considered and discussed as part of the Carers Assessment – contact your local social services team to organise an assessment.

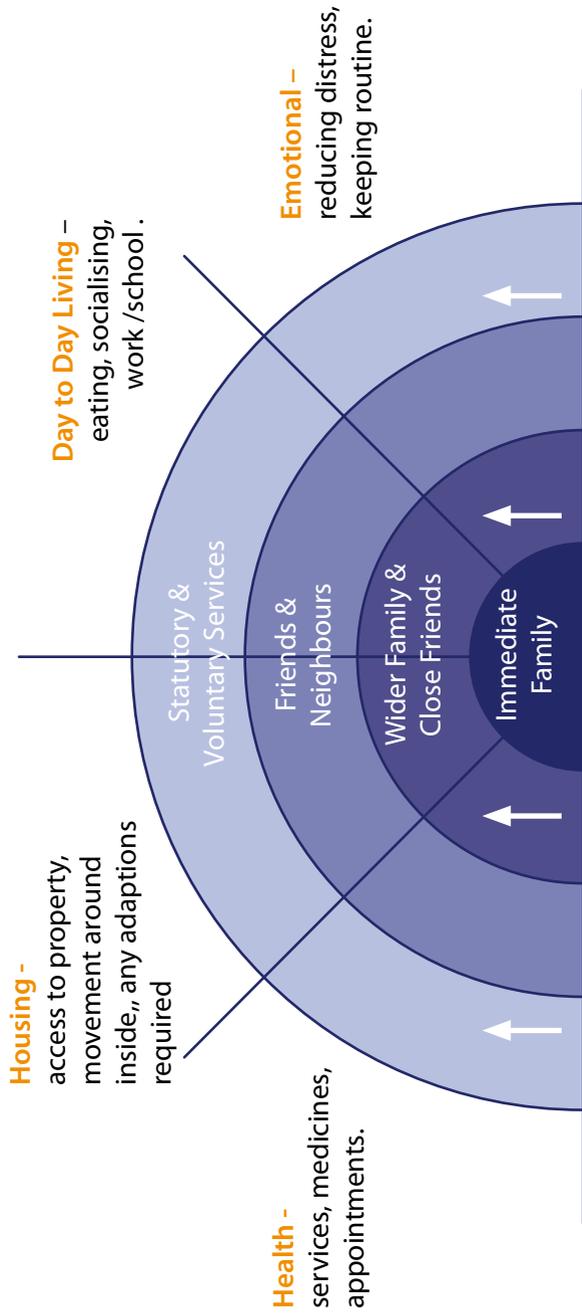
Health and Social Care Call Centre
- 020 7525 3838

Emergency Respite

As a carer you may be eligible for emergency respite. This provides up to 48 hours respite cover for planned emergencies, where Southwark Carers have drawn up an emergency plan with you and emergency respite cover is listed within the plan.

There is also limited respite cover for unplanned emergencies.

Some possibilities for you to include in your plan



Emergency Key

Holder –

who has a key to get in should you not be available? Do they know who should be let in and why?

Registering as a

Carer –

have you registered with Social Services? Is your caring status flagged on your medical records with your GP?

Understanding

needs & familiarity –

who knows how to reassure the person you care for? Who is familiar to them and understands them?

Help with cooking –

Do you keep special dietary information written in your folder? Who knows what the person you care for likes to eat?

Your Checklist to Start Building Your Plan

We have started with some of the most common questions you might like to consider, please use the remaining space to make notes about what you might like to be included in your Emergency Plan

Do you carry an Emergency Card?

Do you have a Message in A Bottle Kit?

Is the kit completed and are signs for it visible?

Do you have someone to step in if needed at short notice?

Do they know what to do?

Are all relevant details written down and kept in one place?

Are all appointments and visits detailed in one place?

Have you had a Carers Assessment from Social Services?

Emergency Planning
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