



# Carer Contingency Planning

## Support for unpaid carers

Carers Oxfordshire is a free service that offers information, advice and support to unpaid carers aged 18 or over caring for someone living in Oxfordshire.

## Be prepared

Thinking about what would be needed if you, the carer, became unwell is always important. Planning now will support you and the person you care for to cope and feel better knowing you have done what you can to manage the situation. You may be a parent carer, you may be looking after a spouse or a friend, whatever your situation, putting in place a contingency plan for something unexpected is well worth the time for your peace of mind.

## What is a contingency plan?

It's a plan that sets out the best way of supporting you and the person you care for in an emergency. We've attached our template if you'd like to use it.

Contingency plans are often seen as being for carers who live with someone they support, but they can be equally useful if the person being cared for lives in their own home.

## How is a contingency plan helpful?

An emergency often means that there's no time to stop and think about things that need to be done. Preparing beforehand when you have the time to think and talk with the person you care for, family, friends, and paid workers will reduce anxiety and stress for you and the person you care for.

Creating a plan, means that you and the person you support can have more choice over who helps, support will be given by the people you know, and feel are best placed to do so. It will bring together important information to one place.

## Getting started

It is important to create your plan at a time that you can think about the things that need to be done and talk to those who will to be involved.

If you are caring for more than one person, make a separate plan for each of them as they will certainly have different needs and different people involved in their lives.

Before completing your plan, have a good think about the people who you can rely on for support who you can include in your contingency plan.

## Who can help?

Are there others in the household you need to include? Who could help practically? Who is vital to be included?

You may know immediately who might help. Or you may initially think you have no-one, but you will often find people who are willing to help by talking to people and telling them about the plan and what it is for.



## Who would be helpful and who needs to be involved:

1. Family members, friends and neighbours: people who can help practically such as key holding, cooking or shopping etc.
2. Paid support workers, or health professionals who provide necessary support to the person you look after.
3. Community organisations, this could be a faith group either or both of you belong to, a community centre or a club who can maintain social/faith connections.

Whoever you ask, you, the person you support, and any friends and family involved should feel comfortable with the arrangements, and remember for the person who needs the support, choosing who they would like to plan with and have support from, will help the support go well.

## How can people help?

Deciding how someone can help will depend on the person you support and what they need support with.

You could create a list of things that you do and use it to ask friends and family what they are able to cover for you.



Someone can give a small amount of help by picking up the phone to have a chat, a neighbour may keep a spare front door key or keep the person company while other arrangements are put into place. It may be practical things such as, shopping, cooking a meal or arranging and driving the person to appointments.

If they need more support someone may be able to come to stay for a while so that they can get help at certain times in the day.

Where professional support is provided it is vital that the support continues. Ensure that those providing care or medical support know you have made a plan and agree what support and contact details you will need to include for them.

**Try to have a clear idea about what people will do.**

## What to include?

A few pieces of key information can prevent problems arising.

Vital information about medication, diagnosis and treatment must be included.

List any equipment, products and supplies that are used and where they come from. Add details if they need to be replaced regularly e.g. continence products, mobility aids or pill dispensers.

List any medication you and the person you care for takes, include where it is stored. Add the times the medication needs to be taken and the dose. Include GP and any pharmacy details including any repeat prescription services used. Make a clear note of any allergies.



## Good day - bad day?

Information about the person you care for, how they communicate, suggestions of how to help them cope if you are not there.

Changes and disruptions to routines can cause worry and anxiety, however, knowing a few practical things can change what makes a good day, or a bad day. A good way of thinking about the information to include and is to look at their daily routine and what works well /not well for them.

## What is important to them?

The things they like, and help their day to go well, for example:

- I speak to my friend Ben every Friday.
- listening to music helps me relax.

## What is important for them?

The things they need to keep them safe and well, for example:

- I need a reminder to take my medication.
- I take my medication to school every day.
- I have an allergy to eggs.

It is helpful to write down as much information as possible, particularly in the case of a person who has difficulties expressing themselves.

Whether you decide to use our template or create your own plan ensure that you keep it up-to-date and in a place that can be easily found by emergency services, health and care workers, family and friends.

## Other practical things to do

1. If you have a pet, make sure that the emergency contacts have details about how to look after them. You may want to make a separate list about this.
2. If there is a child or young person in your family or is one of your emergency contacts, make sure that their school knows about this.
3. Register with your GP and make sure there is also a link on the record of the person you care for with your contact details.
4. Talk to any professionals who support you and/or the person you care for to be sure they understand you are a Carer.
5. Apply for a carers ID Card from our website that includes your emergency contact details.
6. Have a key safe installed at your house.
7. Fill out the In Case of Emergency (ICE) details on your mobile. You can put more than one number (ICE1, ICE2 etc).