

The Who, What & Why of Emergency Planning

*Who will pick
up the pieces
when you can't
be there?*



Who?

Emergency planning is relevant to all carers irrespective of the age of the carer, the age of the person they care for or the health needs or disability the cared-for person has.

What?

So, what is emergency planning?

An emergency plan sets out the practical arrangements for short term, unplanned circumstances when the carer is unable to fulfil their caring role. An emergency plan is a written document.

An emergency could be an illness, personal crisis or event that unexpectedly, or at very short notice, results in the carer being separated from the cared-for person or in an escalation of the cared-for person's needs.

It could include a family funeral, a transport delay, family illness, admission to hospital, last minute doctor or dentist appointment, or a personal incident affecting the carer.

And what is future planning?

Future planning is different from emergency planning.

Future planning refers to the longer-term plans for the cared-for person when the carer is no longer able to provide care. This could be because of illness, old age, change in circumstances or death.

Future plans are more in-depth than emergency plans and the carer, cared-for person and all other relevant family members, friends and professionals should be involved in creating the plan. The wishes and preferences of the carer and the cared-for person should be taken into account.

It is a process that involves thinking ahead and should be developed over time. Issues to consider include, but are not limited to, current and future care and support, living arrangements, practical, legal and financial provision including Power of Attorney, guardianship and wills and trusts (if relevant).

Why?

Why plan?

Having a written emergency plan is important as it can prevent an emergency becoming a crisis.

As a carer, you are the expert in the care you provide to someone. If something happens to you, that knowledge needs to be available to others.

By planning in advance, with the hope that the plan never has to be used, you can share your knowledge and allow someone else to be able to step into your caring role. This reduces anxiety for you and the person you care for should an emergency occur.

Planning also allows you to have conversations with family, friends and neighbours about the role they could play in an emergency.

Where?

Where should the plan be kept?

We believe that all emergency plans should be held on social work systems but, at present, this is only possible in some local authority areas.

As such, we recommend the following:

You should have a copy of the emergency plan in your home and the home of the cared-for person (if different).

You should share the plan with everyone who is named as an emergency contact in the plan.

You should share the plan with the cared-for person's GP and allocated social worker.

It is also worth considering sharing the plan with any services, clubs or activities the carer and the cared-for person attend.

When?

When should you plan?

NOW!

We recommend planning at the earliest possible opportunity as, by their very nature, emergencies are unpredictable.

We also recommend reviewing the plan annually to ensure that all the details are still accurate. Plans should be reviewed as soon as any changes that affect the plan occur.

How?

How to create an emergency plan.

Think about the care needs of the person you care for.

Now, think about the people who could provide interim care in your absence.

Talk to these people about what care they would be able or willing to provide. Are there certain days they can or cannot help? Is overnight care required? Who is able to stay overnight? What are the contact details for these people?

Are emergency contacts listed in order of preference?

Think about who has access to the house. Do you need to provide keys to the emergency contacts? Is there a key safe? Who has the code? Are there pets in the property and have arrangements been made for them in an emergency?

Where is the cared-for person's medication kept?
(We recommend pharmacy-packed dosette boxes or blister packs as best practice as this removes the potential for human error).

Does the cared-for person have any allergies?

What is the routine of the cared-for person?

Are there any dietary requirements?

How does the cared-for person communicate?

Who are the relevant professionals and services, and how can they be contacted?

Does the individual have specific health or care needs that require specialist input? If so, we recommend speaking to the care manager or social worker about what would happen in your absence.

Is there anything else an interim carer would need to know?

SHARE with emergency contacts

You should pull all of this information together into a plan that should be read and signed by everyone named as an emergency contact. Everyone should have a copy or know where to access the plan.

SHARE with professionals

As we mentioned earlier, the plan should be shared with all relevant professionals and services. The more people who know about the plan, the more likely it is that the plan will be successfully activated should an emergency occur.

Help with planning

Your local carers centre or social work department may be able to help you complete your emergency plan. **ENABLE Direct** can provide you with information on carers services in your area: **T: 0300 0200 101, E: enabledirect@enable.org.uk.**

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