



Keeping Safe and Well

Far too often, carers neglect their own health whilst taking care of loved ones. But you matter too! You are very important to the person you care for. Prioritising your health will help ensure you stay safe and well and can continue your caring role.

This toolkit is designed to help you find quick and easy answers to some of the challenges you may be facing.

Keeping safe and well covers home safety, how to identify fraud and scams, how to get a health check and how to apply for a carer's assessment.

You will also find a handy 10 top ten tips guide, so you have information close to hand at all times

➤ Home Safety

Safe and Well visits

Most of us spend a lot of time at home and we want to feel safe there, however more accidents happen within the home than anywhere else. It can be hard to spot a risk within your home when you are used to living with them every day. The fire service offers Safe and Well visits, these are so much more than just a free smoke detector.

During a Safe and Well visit, fire crews will visit your home to assess:

- the risk of fire in the home
- weight, exercise and healthy eating
- mobility and falls
- mental health, memory loss and dementia
- loneliness and social isolation
- smoking, alcohol, medication and drugs
- hoarding
- employment
- road safety
- home security

You will also receive a free handbook for the household providing information on safety and health and well-being along with details of any actions or referrals made by the visiting fire crew. To arrange for a Safe and Well visit contact 0800 389 5525.

Keeping up with clutter

When caring for your loved one, it may be difficult to maintain a tidy and clutter free home, but it's important that your house is a safe space and minimises the risk of slips and trips. Most falls don't cause serious injury but they can leave you or your loved one distressed. If you are struggling to cope on your own, ask friends and family to help or consider employing a cleaner.

Another option is to think about getting in more support through home care (also known as domiciliary care), which will also support your loved one with care services. Home care can include everything from help with cleaning the house once a week, to visits several times a day to help with washing, dressing and other personal care tasks.



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Is your home as safe as it could be?

West Midlands Police advise that burglars look for homes that appear to be empty or have easy access to the back of the building. They can also choose homes where there are no visible signs of protection such as alarms or security lighting, and where trees and high bushes provide good cover. In addition, something as simple as locking doors and shutting windows in unoccupied rooms can make a big difference.

Think about where you store your wheelie bins to avoid giving easy access to criminals who could use the bin as a way to climb over fences/walls etc. Always shred letters that contain any personal details, as criminals could use this information fraudulently.

Out and About

Getting out and about is important, however you need to keep yourself safe whilst doing so.

Always tell someone where you're going and what time you'll get back, if you have a mobile phone take it with you but make sure it's charged and you have credit, however be cautious about using your phone in public.

Keep valuables like jewellery, phone, money and keys out of sight and keep your bag wallet or purse on you at all times; never hang your bag or coat on the back of a chair, keep it close by at the front of your body where you can see it.

Don't carry more money than you need. If you need to take money out of a cashpoint use one inside the bank, make sure people can't see your pin number and more importantly don't tell anyone your pin number.

Keep to safe places when you're out and about don't walk through lonely or isolated places such as alleys or empty parks.

Try to look confident when you walk keep your head up and shoulders back and smile.

If you go walking a lot don't always go the same way and try not to use headphones.

Always walk or jog onto oncoming traffic this means the car cannot pull up behind you and don't walk home on your own after an evening out.

If you are getting a taxi when you're out and about always make sure you book a taxi in advance or use Uber if you haven't booked a taxi in advance you are putting yourself in danger. Never accept a lift from a stranger who approaches you even if they say they're taxi driver.

If you think you're being followed find somewhere where there's lots of people like a shop or a station and ask for help if necessary and you are any major danger call the police on 999 - don't be a hero if someone tries to take something from you, let them have it rather than being risk hurt.

Consider using an ICE system in your phone or as a card in your purse so in the worst case the emergency services will be able to contact your '**In Case of an Emergency**', you can pick up a card from your local police station or in a mobile add the word ICE to the start of the contact details.

➤ Fraud, scams and cyber risks

Phone scams are on the increase across the UK with criminals targeting households in an attempt to defraud people. Callers often try to trick people by pretending they are calling from a trusted source, such as your bank, the police or an energy provider, in order to get hold of your personal and financial information... Remember a bank, utility or a computer company will **never** ask you to give your bank details, account number, sort code or pin numbers.

Fraudsters can also convince you that they are real by asking you to call them back on the organisation's phone number to prove they are genuine. Before dialling, always make sure there is a dial tone as criminals may only pretend to hang up the phone, meaning you will still be speaking to the original caller.



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Doorstep criminals may call at your home unannounced, often claiming to be from a utility company or to be working in the area and have noticed a problem with your house that needs fixing urgently. They may offer to do the work for you and may pressurise you into paying them cash for work you haven't requested. Some doorstep criminals will pose as coming from a utility company and say they need to check something in your home, in order to try to steal from you. Sometimes these criminals pose as police officers needing to get access to your home. It is very important to check the identify of anyone who comes to your door. Always close the door and call the company they claim to be from (find the telephone number, do not use a number that they give you) before letting them in. You have the right to say no and to only allow people in who have pre-booked an appointment with you.

Postal scams include many different types; however, lottery and prize draw scams are two of the most common. Victims are told they have won a fantastic prize or large amount of cash but are asked to send some sort of fee to release it – money that you will never get back. Remember, you will never be asked to pay a fee to receive a genuine prize.

Banks and building society scams

Scammers sometimes send out authentic looking post and email claiming to be from banks and building societies, asking for your account information and/or cash. Never give out your bank details. If in doubt, contact your bank/ building society.

Parcel delivery scam

A card is posted through the victim's door stating that a delivery service was unable to deliver a parcel and that they need to contact the service by phone. The card gives a premium rate number to call, this turns out to be a long, recorded message and all the victim receives is a hefty phone bill.

We all think that we wouldn't be caught out by one of these scams, but the psychology the scammers use, is very powerful, so powerful it can shut down a person's normal thought process. Scammers try to befriend and brainwash their victims; victims might become secretive agitated and truthful or even aggressive. Scammers can cause victims to suffer from declining mental and physical health this can be brought on by stress and by neglecting their own welfare as they struggle to keep up with the scammers demands.

How to protect yourself from fraud and scams

You can set up a password with utility companies - only genuine callers will know what it is.

Keep your front and back door locked and always put on the chain or door bar on it before opening the door to a person you don't recognise or are not expecting.

Genuine callers will be happy to arrange a future appointment, that way you can arrange your friend or family member to be present with you. Genuine callers will also carry ID. Always take that ID and call the company to double check that this is a real person – don't call the number on the ID, call your supplier (you can find the number on your bills), or simply just turn them away. You don't have to let anyone in.

If someone suspicious comes on your door and you are intimidated or scared, call 999 if they are still on your property, if they have left call 101.

Think! if it seems too good to be true, it probably is! Take advice. Don't be rushed and always seek professional advice before providing any personal details or account numbers and before signing up to any type of scheme.

Don't suffer in silence

Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline Telephone 03454 04 05 06 (you can also contact Trading Standards for one to one help via this number)

Report any concerns about scam mail to the Royal Mail

Scam.mail@royalmail.com or telephone 0800 011 3466

Or write to Royal Mail Freepost Scam Mail.



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To report a loan shark Telephone 0300 555 222

Visit www.actionfraud.police.uk to find out more about scams or to make a report – Telephone Action Fraud 0300 123 2040

➤ Staying Healthy

Your Health and Wellbeing

Caring for a loved one can be emotionally and physically demanding. You may be so busy looking after someone else that you neglect your own health. It's important that you take care of yourself not only for your own sake but also to give you the strength to carry on caring.

Healthy eating has an impact on your quality of life, there's a lot you can do to introduce healthier foods into your diet without giving up all your favourites.

To get the best from your diet eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables and drink plenty of water but try and avoid sugary drinks, eat more fish, drink less alcohol, limit your salt intake and try not to skip meals especially breakfast.

Keeping physically active also helps improve your health, quality of life and can also help you live longer - it's never too late to start doing some exercise - try some of these daily activities;

- Walk upstairs instead of using a lift
- Get off the bus or train a stop earlier
- Spend more time enjoying active interests like gardening and golf
- Vacuuming the house can also help with your daily activities, taking a walk helps improve your mental health as well as your physical wellbeing. There may be groups within your area that you can take part in, not only are you keeping healthy you're also improving your friendships and social networks.

Health Checks

Make sure you let your GP know that you are caring for a loved one. As a carer you will be able to benefit from additional services with your GP, including:

- a free health check which will look at your blood pressure, weight, height and ask general questions around your health and wellbeing.
- arranging for appointments to be made at the same time as your loved one so you only have to make one visit
- arranging for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy or home.
- the annual flu jab for free

The person you care for can give consent for the GP to discuss their health with you so you can be involved in their care.

Carers Assessment

Whilst you are caring for a loved one you have the right to a free Carers Assessment; it doesn't matter how much care you provide whether it is practical, emotional or financial support. The assessment will look at what your caring role involves and how much time is taken out of your day to day routine to care for your loved one.

A Carers Assessment will be used to help understand how your caring role impacts on your wellbeing. Your assessment must look at whether you're able or willing to continue to care for the person you're looking after and how it is affecting you.



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If you're struggling and feel you can't manage anymore, do not be afraid to let the person carrying out your assessment know as they will be able to signpost on ways to get more support.

Some of the questions that will be asked during your assessment will be;

- Are you getting enough sleep or is it disturbed by your caring role?
- Is your health affected and if so how?
- Are you able to go out without worrying about the safety of the person you care for?
- Are your other relationships being affected?
- Do you need information about what support benefits are available?
- Is your caring role having an impact on your job?
- What equipment is needed by the person you care for to enable you to care for them safely?
- Do you need any training for example in first aid or safely moving the person you care for?
- Do you wish to spend less time in your caring role?
- Do you wish to go back to work or attend a course or do you just want to have more time to yourself?

If the person you are caring for lives in Birmingham, you can contact the **Birmingham Carers Hub**. If you live in another area contact your local social adult care team or you can call **NHS carers direct Hotline on 0300 123 1053**

Register with the Carers Emergency Response Service

Birmingham Carers Hub runs the Carers Emergency Response Service known as 'CERS'.

CERS is a **FREE** emergency back-up service for those caring for a dependent family member, neighbour or friend living in Birmingham.

Once registered, they will assess your caring situation and agree an emergency back-up plan and then be able to step in if you are unable to provide care in the event of unforeseen circumstances such as illness or an accident. You'll receive a dedicated emergency contact number for times of crisis so CERS can spring into action when you need them most.

Back up care is provided 'at home' for up to two days, allowing alternative arrangements to be made with family, friends or social services. You can also benefit from a planned sitting service, so you can get to important appointments, such as at the doctors or hospital.

Register today with CERS by calling 0121 442 2960