

‘What if...’ emergency plan

Planning for an emergency – guidance notes

We are all facing uncertainty in these challenging times and we are all needing to make ‘What if...plans’

If you are a carer it can be even more important to think about everyone's needs and choices and make a plan that is relevant to your situation.

If the information and contact details you or others might need to know is in one place and easy to find, this can help everyone involved to make better decisions, quickly, if they need to.

This might be in a situation which is:

- likely to happen or does happen
- unpredictable or an emergency

It can save time and stress in an already stressful situation. It can help others make better decisions on your behalf if they need to, but don't know you or the person you support, and it can help give you peace of mind to have a ‘What if... plan’.

What should it include?

Your situation is unique, so what you include will be personal and should contain whatever you decide is relevant.

Consider what the plan might need to be for:

‘What if...I’m ill / I can’t walk the dog / the person I care for has a urine infection again /...’

It might be brief or longer:

It could be the contact details of three people who know your situation, needs and wishes really well, and the order someone should try and contact them.

On the other hand, it may contain more detailed information about one or more ‘What if...’ situations.

Whatever you include, keep it as short as you can, so it is easy for someone else to find what they need. Too much information might mean the right bit doesn't get used.

If you do need to include more, because your situation is complex, you may want to make a contents list and tick what is included. It helps to include the DATE on anything you put in, so you can check later that it is the most up to date information.

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Suggested things to include in your plan

Contacts:

Think about what might need to be done, and who could be asked to do what.
(remember to discuss it with them, get their agreement and let them know they are in your plan)

Family, friends, neighbours, for example:

- A neighbour may have your key safe number, be able to feed pets or drop off some shopping, but not help with personal care
- A family member may live in another country, but they may be able to do an online shop or support you emotionally at a difficult time.

Agencies or workers involved, or who might need to be called or alerted e.g.

- Changes in needs or arrangements may need to be discussed with care workers or Personal Assistants (PA's)

Services: What is the right service to contact and what might they be able to do?

- For a known or anticipated health issue, it can help to discuss in advance with a health practitioner who knows you, or seek medical advice to consider what to do, either yourself, under their guidance, or to know when, and who to call for help.
- This might be the GP, community nursing team, dialling 111 or if it is a medical emergency, 999
- Other contacts you might want to include: Social Care, the pharmacy you use, the company that provides your gas or electricity, and of course Caring for Carers!

Emergency numbers

- These might be friends, family or services, but it helps to have at least one or two main people who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

What are the most important things someone else needs to know about the person you care for?

If the person you care for cannot speak for themselves, for whatever reason, this could help someone providing urgent replacement care at home or a copy could be given to ward staff if they needed to stay in hospital.

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Include information regarding their specific needs:

To do this you might:

- include a short description of their medical condition and the effects it has on them, if it is rare.
- use one of the templates provided, or alternatively, write your own.
- include a copy of an assessment someone else has written.
- include a copy of most recent prescription

Personal wishes and useful personal information

It would be helpful to include some information to help another person understand how the person you care for likes to live on a daily basis.

Legal documents which inform a decision someone else may have to make:

Include a copy of any documents you currently hold, for example:

- TEP or Treatment Escalation Plan
- Power of Attorney Certificate
- Capacity Assessment

Don't forget about yourself

Is there any information about you that needs to be included?

For example:

- Do you have a medical condition yourself?
- Where is your medication kept?
- Who is your GP if different?
- Anything else?

If you don't have access to print this yourself and require a paper copy of the plan please phone Caring for Carers on 01752 201890 and ask for a 'What if ...Plan' folder to be sent in the post.

Where to keep your plan

At home!

Most importantly – keep your plan at home and let key people know where it is kept. Choose a place that is easy to find and do not move it from there.

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The Lions Club 'Message in a Bottle' Scheme provides a small pot (pictured) that is stored in your fridge, with a sticker to be placed by your front door. This alerts any emergency services that enter your property to check the fridge for the pot.

Place a short message inside the pot, confirming you have a 'What if...' emergency plan and its location. To help with this, our plan includes a sheet that can be completed and placed in the pot.

Bottles are free of charge and can usually be found in your local Chemist or Doctors Surgeries. If you are unable to find a Bottle, please contact your local

Lions Club by emailing mdhq@lions.org.uk or telephoning 0121 441 4544

Please try to keep your plan as up to date as possible – this will help others to look after the person you care for