Looking after someone at home

A practical guide for carers: getting support, moving safely, falls, medicines and an emergency plan, with local help in Cambridgeshire

For adults who look after a partner, relative, friend or neighbour who is ill, older or disabled. This edition adds a list of local help in Cambridgeshire.

Their own care plan comes first. If the person you look after has advice from a hospital, GP, physiotherapist or care team, follow that. This guide is general information. It is not a care plan.

Help for you as a carer

- You can ask for a carer's assessment. It is free. Contact adult social services at your local council.
- It looks at how caring affects you: your health, work, free time and relationships. You can ask for it at the same time as the assessment for the person you look after.
- Help that may follow includes breaks from caring, training in moving and handling, local support groups and advice on benefits.
- If you care for someone for at least 35 hours a week, you may be able to get Carer's Allowance. The person you look after must get certain benefits. Check on GOV.UK. In Scotland it is called Carer Support Payment.

- Breaks help stop you becoming worn out. Options include a sitting service, where a trained volunteer keeps the person company for a few hours, a day centre, or a short stay in a care home. The council only pays for a break when it has assessed that one is needed.
- Our free guide to your rights as a carer covers the assessment, money help and your rights at work: mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/carers-rights/cambridgeshire.

Moving and helping them safely

Helping someone stand, walk, or get in and out of bed can hurt you both if it is done the wrong way. Back injuries are the most common injury for carers.

- If you help someone move often, get training, or ask a health professional to show you how.
- Ask the council for an occupational therapy assessment. It can show you the right way to help, and what equipment would make it safer.
- The council may provide equipment free, such as a hoist, stand aid, transfer board or slide sheet.
- Do not buy lifting equipment until an occupational therapist, physiotherapist or social worker has advised you. Try equipment before you buy it.
- Your council may run free moving and handling courses.

Helping to prevent falls

- Keep floors clear of clutter, loose wires and rugs.
- Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower.
- Encourage regular eye tests and hearing checks. Ear problems can affect balance.

- If you think a medicine is affecting their balance, speak to their GP or pharmacist.
- Help them stay active every day. Activities that improve strength and balance, done at least twice a week, help too. Our free sheet of simple exercises is at mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/balance-exercises.

If they fall

- Keep them comfortable and warm.
- If they can get up, help them carefully. Do not try to lift them yourself.
- Call 999 if they cannot get up, or they may have hurt their head, neck, back or hip.
- Call NHS 111 if they may be in pain, hurt or unwell.

Tell their GP about any fall, even if they were not hurt.

Medicines

- Give medicines at the right time of day. Check whether each one should be taken with food or between meals.
- A pharmacist may be able to give you a pill box with a section for each time of day.
- If they take several medicines, their GP surgery may offer a free review with a pharmacist. Try to go with them, if they would like you there.
- Keep all medicines in one place, ideally locked away. Order repeat prescriptions in good time.
- Never give a double dose to make up for a missed one. Check with a pharmacist before giving a medicine you have bought.

- Never give medicine without their agreement. Check with their doctor or pharmacist before you crush tablets.

Plan for an emergency

If you were ill, or could not get to them, who would step in? Make a plan now, while things are calm.

- Ask a relative, friend or neighbour who could help at short notice. Make sure they have a key or the key safe code, and know what care is needed.
- Write down the care they need, with their medicines and any dos and don'ts. Keep it somewhere easy to find, and tell people where it is.
- Look at the plan again now and then, and keep it up to date.
- Some areas have a carers emergency card scheme. Ask your local carers service.

My emergency plan

Name and address of the person I look after:

Who can step in (name and phone):

Their GP surgery and pharmacy:

Their medicines, and where they are kept:

Allergies:

Care and support they get, and who provides it:

Walking aids and other equipment:

Anything else people need to know:

Local help in Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire has two councils for adult social care. Cambridgeshire County Council covers Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon, St Neots, March, Wisbech and the villages. Peterborough City Council covers Peterborough. Each line says which area it is for. Some NHS and charity services cover both.

Help for carers. Caring Together supports carers across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Call 0345 241 0954, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4.30pm. To ask for a carer's assessment: Cambridgeshire County Council area, call 0345 045 5202. Peterborough, call 01733 747474. caringtogether.org

Cambridgeshire County Council adult social care. For people in the Cambridgeshire County Council area. Call 0345 045 5202, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Out of hours, if someone is in danger or cannot stay safely at home, call 01733 234 724. cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Peterborough City Council adult social care. For people in Peterborough. Call 01733 747474 and ask for Adult Social Care, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. You can also email adultsocialcare@peterborough.gov.uk. Out of hours and at weekends, for emergencies, call 01733 234724. peterborough.gov.uk

Equipment. Equipment is lent after an assessment, often by an occupational therapist. Cambridgeshire County Council area: call 0345 045 5202. Peterborough: call 01733 747474 or email adultsocialcare@peterborough.gov.uk. You can also buy small aids yourself without an assessment.

Falls. Cambridgeshire County Council area: Healthy You runs free strength and balance classes for people aged 60 or over

who feel unsteady or have had a fall. The course runs for 24 weeks. Call 01223 386 200. Peterborough: ask your GP to refer you to the NHS Falls Prevention Service.

Personal alarms. A button you wear and press for help, 24 hours a day. Cambridgeshire County Council area: the council lists approved alarm companies on its website. For advice, call the council's technology team on 01480 378 160, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Peterborough: call 01733 747474. The first 6 weeks are free. After that there is a monthly charge.

Local contacts checked 16 November 2026. Services can change, so check before you rely on one.

Coming home from hospital?

Our free hospital checklist covers what to sort before they leave, home safety, when to get medical help, and a 14-day diary: mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/after-hospital-checklist/cambridgeshire.

General information, not a care plan. Prepared by Mobile Physiotherapist UK from NHS, GOV.UK and Carers UK guidance. Sources checked 2 November 2026. Free to print, copy and share. Local contacts checked 16 November 2026.