Looking after someone at home

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

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 Merseyside.

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/merseyside.

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 Merseyside

Merseyside has five councils: Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens and Wirral. Each line says which area it is for. Some NHS and charity services cover more than one area.

Help for carers. Liverpool Carers Centre: 0151 705 2307, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Sefton Carers Centre: 0151 288 6060. A carer's assessment in Sefton is free. Knowsley Carers Hub, for carers aged 18 or over: 0151 549 1412. St Helens Carers Centre: 01744 675 615, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4pm, and until 8pm on Tuesdays. Wirral: ask for a carer's assessment on 0151 606 2006.

Liverpool City Council adult social care. For people in Liverpool. Call the adult social care phone line on 0151 459 2606, or ask for an assessment online. Family can ask for you. liverpool.gov.uk

Sefton Council adult social care. For people in Sefton, including Southport, Formby, Crosby and Bootle. Call 0345 140 0845, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.30pm, Friday 9am to 5pm. sefton.gov.uk

Knowsley Council adult social care. For people in Knowsley, including Huyton, Kirkby and Prescot. Call the Front Door Team on 0151 443 2600. If you are worried about someone's safety right now, this number is answered 24 hours a day. knowsley.gov.uk

St Helens Borough Council adult social care. For people in St Helens or with a St Helens GP. Call Contact Cares on 01744 676767, 8am to 10pm, every day. Out of hours, for emergencies: 0345 0500 148. sthelens.gov.uk

Wirral Council adult social care. For people in Wirral. Call the Central Advice and Duty Team on 0151 606 2006, Monday to

Friday, 9am to 5pm. Out of hours, for emergencies: 0151 677 6557. wirral.gov.uk

Equipment. Equipment is lent after an assessment, often by an occupational therapist. Ask your council. Sefton: there is no charge for small aids and adaptations. Knowsley: equipment and small changes such as grab rails are free. You can try equipment at the Centre for Independent Living, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm, Saturday 10am to 1pm. Wirral: if you are eligible, equipment and small changes to your home are free.

Falls. Knowsley: the IKAN team helps people over 55 to stay steady. They can visit you at home, bring simple aids and run chair-based exercise. Call 0800 694 0270. St Helens: Contact Cares can help with falls prevention on 01744 676767.

Personal alarms. Liverpool: if you have an assessment, the alarm is free and so is the monitoring at the moment. A mobile response service costs extra. Knowsley: Lifeline alarm equipment is free, with a small weekly charge for monitoring. You can try it free for 12 weeks at the moment. Call 03333 204999. Sefton: ask adult social care about Careline. St Helens: ask Contact Cares about Careline.

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/merseyside.

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.