Looking after someone at home

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

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 Tyne and Wear.

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/tyne-and-wear.

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 Tyne and Wear

Tyne and Wear has five councils: Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland. Each line says which area it is for. Some NHS and charity services cover more than one area.

Help for carers. Newcastle: Newcastle Carers gives free help. Call 0191 275 5060, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Gateshead: Caregivers Connected Gateshead gives free help. Call 0808 801 0350, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. North Tyneside: North Tyneside Carers Centre (northtynesidecarers.org.uk). South Tyneside: Connected Caring South Tyneside is free for carers aged 18 or over (connectedcaring.org.uk). Sunderland: Sunderland Carers Centre, 0191 549 3768. In Gateshead and South Tyneside a carer's assessment from the council is free.

Newcastle City Council adult social care. For people in Newcastle. Call the council on 0191 278 7878 and ask for Adult Social CarePoint, Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm. You can also ask online. For an emergency at night or at the weekend, call the same number and ask for the Emergency Duty Team. newcastle.gov.uk

Gateshead Council adult social care. For people in Gateshead. Call Adult Social Care Direct on 0191 433 7033. The phone line is open 24 hours a day, every day. gateshead.gov.uk

North Tyneside Council adult social care. For people in North Tyneside. Call the Adult Social Care contact centre on 0191 643 2777. Out of hours, for emergencies: 0330 333 7475. mycare.northtyneside.gov.uk

South Tyneside Council adult social care. For people in South Tyneside. Call the Let's Talk team on 0191 424 6000, Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Out of hours, for emergencies: 0191 456 2093. southtyneside.gov.uk

Sunderland City Council adult social care. For people in Sunderland. Ask for an assessment online on the council website. You can fill in the form for yourself or for someone else. If you are worried about an adult's safety, call 0191 520 5552. sunderland.gov.uk

Equipment. Newcastle: ask Adult Social CarePoint. Gateshead: ask Adult Social Care Direct. Equipment such as bath seats, commodes and chair raisers can be lent. North Tyneside: call 0191 643 2777 for an assessment. South Tyneside: ask the Let's Talk team. The council lends equipment. For walking sticks and frames, ask your GP. Sunderland: equipment is lent free after an assessment by a nurse, occupational therapist or physio. Call 0191 561 4441, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.45pm.

Falls. Tell your GP about any fall. Your GP may refer you for more help. Sunderland: Steady On Your Feet is a free website. Answer a few questions and get your own plan to lower your risk of falling. Gateshead and North Tyneside: if you have the council's Care Call alarm, its team can come out and help you up if you fall and are not hurt. sunderland.steadyonyourfeet.org

Personal alarms. A button to press for help, 24 hours a day. Newcastle: Ostara gives a free telecare chat to find what suits you. Call 0191 277 7470. Gateshead: Care Call. There is a charge. Call 0191 478 7665. North Tyneside: Care Call. There is a charge. Call 0191 643 2777. South Tyneside: the Technology and Independence team. There is a charge. Call 0191 455 5523. Sunderland: Sunderland Care and Support runs a 24-hour telecare service. Call 0191 520 5000.

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/tyne-and-wear.

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.