



Luton Carers' Handbook

Practical information for unpaid carers in Luton

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Produced by Carers Central which is provided by The Disability Resource Centre

www.carerscentral.org.uk

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Are you an unpaid carer?

If you are supporting a family member or friend who has a physical disability or mental health needs then you could be classed as an unpaid carer.

A carer is someone who looks after a relative or friend who, because of age, mental health, physical or other disability, cannot manage at home without help. The type of care you provide may range from personal care such as going to the toilet, washing and feeding, to visiting, shopping and housework, mental health support and 24 hour care.

Even if you receive Carer's Allowance for your caring role, you are still classed as an unpaid carer.

You can live in the same household or separately.

The different types of carers fall into three categories

Adult Carers

These are carers over the age of 18 who look after a relative or friend.

Young carers

This means a child or young person under the age of 18.

A 'young carer' is defined in section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 as: '...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'. This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail, elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances.

Parents/carers of children with disabilities

Parents will often see themselves as parents rather than carers, but their child/children may have additional care needs and may be entitled to additional services.

Carers' rights and the Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 is about adults with care and support needs, and those who care for them.

Under the Act, anyone who a local council thinks might need care and support is entitled to a needs assessment, which must be provided free of charge. The assessment is usually carried out by a social worker, or sometimes an occupational therapist, and results in a care and support plan being drafted. The plan should, where possible, be produced with the input and agreement of the person needing care.

The Care Act 2014 recognises the equal importance of supporting carers and the people they care for. It gives all parties the right to support from their local authority. A Carer's Assessment should look at all your needs, including the things you would like to be able to do in your daily life.

A carer is someone of any age who provides care to someone who:

- Has a physical disability
- Has a sensory impairment
- Has a learning difficulty
- Has mental health support needs
- Has problems with drug or alcohol misuse
- Has a long term or chronic illness
- Is an older person who is physically or mentally frail

.....or any combination of the above.

Carers Central support



- **Website**

[Carers Central has a dedicated website](http://www.carerscentral.org.uk) allowing access to social and welfare advice. There are emergency numbers listed on the website with access to self-help information and links to specialist support: www.carerscentral.org.uk

- **Helpline**

A trained team of staff and volunteers are available from 10am to 4pm every weekday and every Tuesday evening until 7pm.

- **Face-to-face**

Usually we are available at the centre from 9am and 4:30pm. Please check on our website for the latest news about face-to-face appointments.

- **A referral from a professional**

Referrals can be made into the hub through the partner organisations or professionals like social workers.

Web chat

Visit our website which is for unpaid carers in Luton. Click the 'chat to us' at the bottom of every page: www.carerscentral.org.uk

Open from 10am to 4pm weekdays and until 7pm on Tuesday evenings.

Outreach

We provide various activities in the community to support unpaid carers including:

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- Coffee mornings for carers
- Carers' events
- Community events
- Community engagement e.g. libraries, community halls, shopping centres

Emails

Carers Central has a dedicated email address that is monitored daily by carers: **carerscentral@drcsbeds.org.uk**

Social media

We provide a **[Facebook community group for unpaid carers in Luton](#)** to share news and ideas. We have over 50 members who can post questions and reply to other members' questions, supporting each other throughout the week.

Carer's Assessments & carer's breaks

Carer's Assessment

A Carer's Assessment is your chance to discuss how your caring role is affecting your own life. You may not be aware of all the carer's services available, so an assessment is a good way for us to tell you about the support and services that will be most helpful to you and to the person you care for. The Carer's Assessment is usually carried out by your local council.

Contact the Carers Central team for help about Carer's Assessments on 0300 3030201 or email us at carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk

Assessment support

Carers Central can support the carer or the person being cared for to obtain the following:

Needs assessments

All adults (18 or older) who normally live in the Luton council tax area, and feel they have care and support needs are entitled to an assessment. Although not an entitlement if you don't normally live in Luton but are here temporarily, you can still request an assessment.

The local council will visit you at a time and date that suits you, so that they can find out about the things in your daily life that you need help with.

They will talk to you about the things that you can and can't do, and the things that get in the way of your independence and your wellbeing.

Occupational Therapy Assessments

The aim of an Occupational Therapy Assessment is to help people to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Sometimes this can be done through making small changes to someone's home to help them get about more easily, or through giving that person a piece of equipment to help them in their day-to-day life.

Carers Central or your local council can give you more information about local support.

Contact the Carers Central team for help about Carer's Assessments on 0300 3030201 or email us at carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk

What is a carer's break?

The Luton Council says: "You may be able to receive some help that enables you to take some time out from your caring responsibilities by providing help for the person you care for – either in their own home, in day centres, or in a care home. We call this type of respite care "carer's breaks". It can also be valuable for the person needing support too, as it is a change of routine and a chance for you to meet new people and to have new experiences."

You will need to have a Carer's Assessment carried out by your local council before any support can be offered. See the [Luton Council](#) website.

Types of breaks for carers:

Respite day care

This is where the person you care for can spend some time in a variety of day centres in the community. They will have the chance to mix with other people and do the type of activities that they enjoy in a safe environment.

Sitting service

If the person needing care cannot be left unattended while you go out, a sitting service may be provided. This is where someone else comes into their home to be with them so that you can go out and have some time of your own. The sitting service is for up to 4 hours a week.

Short breaks for carers

This is when the person you care for has a temporary stay in a residential or nursing home, or a learning disabilities respite unit. You might want to plan your carer's short break in advance. Maybe you need to make arrangements for a special day out or you want to book a trip away or maybe you need to give your family and friends enough notice so they can arrange the time off too.

Other breaks for carers

If the person you care for would prefer to choose a service to meet their care and support needs, which will allow you to take a break, then please contact us at Carers Central or your local council, who can give you more information about local support.

Contact the Carers Central team for help about carers respite on 0300 3030201 or email us at carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk

Looking after the wellbeing of carers



The caring role can be an isolated role and without the right support it can become a real challenge.

As a carer, while caring for someone your own health and wellbeing can be forgotten or put to the side, you may even feel guilty when you spend time on ourselves.

As a carer it is important that you do spend time to think about yourself, as the caring role can be time consuming and stressful.

It is important for a carer to still have their own hobbies, friends and generally a little bit of time of their own.

If you feel that you are unable to cope with your caring role, you are entitled to a Carer's Assessment which looks at your needs as a carer. The main aim is to put things in place that give you a break or some time for yourself.

Total Wellbeing Luton - Referrals



Total Wellbeing in Luton “is a service that supports people living in Luton who want to improve their physical and emotional health. There are many ways that talking therapies can help you to improve your wellbeing. Everyone who refers themselves for help will receive a screening assessment. This is normally 30-40 minutes and can take place over the telephone or face-to-face. After this screening assessment the clinician will discuss with you which options they feel would best meet your needs.” Source: [Total Wellbeing Luton](#)

Telling your GP

Tell your GP that you have caring responsibilities as soon as possible. They can then record this on your medical records.

Contact the Carers Central team for help with wellbeing and contacting GPs on 0300 3030201 or email us at carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk

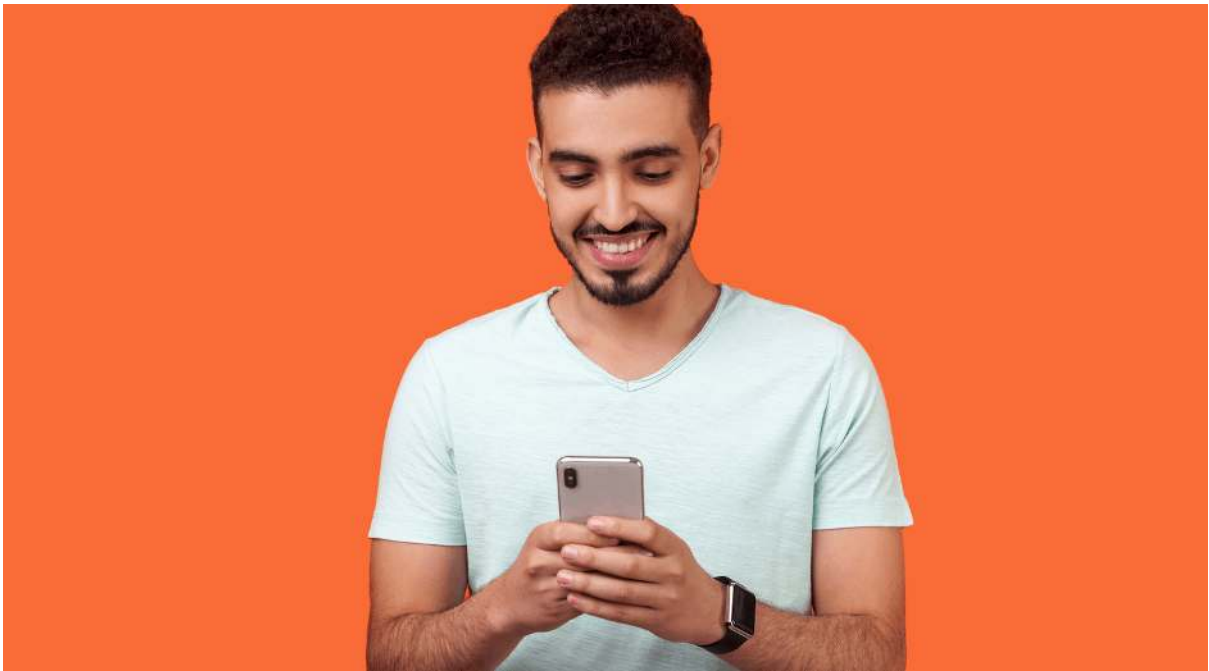
GPs in England are being urged to adopt new measures dedicated to ensuring all carers, including young carers, are offered flu vaccinations, regular health check ups and routine mental health screening.

According to Carers UK “These checks may include:

- Provide information and advice on medical conditions and treatments for the person you care for, to help you feel more confident in your caring role
- Referrals to services provided by the NHS such as continence services and patient transport to hospital appointment
- Other sources of support and advice which could include the social services department and local voluntary agencies
- Arrange home visits to you or the person you care for if your caring responsibilities make it difficult to attend appointments at the surgery
- Arrange 'double' appointments for both you and the person you care for at the same time to avoid having to visit the surgery twice
- Arrange for repeat prescriptions to be delivered by your local pharmacy to save you picking them up
- Provide supporting letters and information to enable you and the person you care for to access benefits such as Attendance Allowance or the blue badge car parking scheme”

Source: [Carers UK](#)

Wellbeing resources



[Visit the wellbeing page on the Carers Central website](#) where you will find over 40 web links to wellbeing resources to help with your physical and mental wellbeing.

Carer's benefits and money



The main financial benefit available to carers is Carer's Allowance. To be eligible to receive this benefit you must satisfy all of the following:

- You're 16 or over
- You spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone
- You've been in England, Scotland or Wales for at least 2 of the last 3 years (this does not apply if you're a refugee or have humanitarian protection status)
- You normally live in England, Scotland or Wales, or you live abroad as a member of the armed forces (you might still be eligible if you're moving to or already living in an EEA country or Switzerland)
- You're not in full-time education
- You're not studying for 21 hours a week or more
- You're not subject to immigration control
- Your earnings are £132 or less a week after tax, National Insurance and expenses (that is for the tax year 2022/2023)

The person you care for must already get one of these benefits:

- Personal Independence Payment - daily living component
- Disability Living Allowance - the middle or highest care rate
- Attendance Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the normal maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Constant Attendance Allowance at the basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

Source: [See the GOV.UK website for full details.](#)

This can be a complex topic so the team at Carers Central can help, just call 0300 3030201 or email us at carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk

How much am I entitled to?

Carer's Allowance is currently paid at £66.60 a week. If you receive a State Pension in excess of £66.60 per week you cannot receive Carer's Allowance, however you should receive an 'underlying entitlement'.

If you receive Carer's Allowance, or an 'underlying entitlement' you may be eligible for a Carer Premium. This means that an additional amount will be added to any means-tested benefit you claim such as Income Support, Pension Credit and Housing and Council Tax Benefit. However, if the person you care for receives means-tested benefits their total amount may be reduced when Carer's Allowance is paid to a carer. If the person you care for does receive means-tested benefits and you are thinking of applying for Carer's Allowance it is recommended that you call either:

- Contact Carers Central on 0300 3030201 or email us at carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk
- [Contact the Carer's Allowance Unit](#) on 0800 731 0297

Report a change in circumstances

You must report any change in your circumstances if you are claiming or have applied for Carer's Allowance.

This includes if you get a job, temporarily stop providing care for someone or stop being a carer altogether.

If you do not report changes straight away or give wrong or incomplete information, you could be paid the wrong amount and have to pay it back. You could also have your Carer's Allowance stopped, get a fine or be taken to court.

You must tell the Department for Work and Pensions if the person you are caring for dies.

Source: [GOV.UK](#)

If you temporarily stop providing care for someone

You can take a break from caring for any reason for up to four weeks in every 26 weeks and still be paid Carer's Allowance. You must have

been providing 35 hours or more of care a week for at least 22 of the past 26 weeks (up to eight weeks of a stay in hospital for either you or the person you are looking after can be included in the 22 weeks. The person you have been caring for must have been in receipt of a qualifying benefit for that period.

Carer's Allowance will continue to be paid for up to 12 weeks if you go into hospital. You must have been providing 35 hours or more of care a week for at least 14 of the past 26 weeks. The person you care for must have been in receipt of a qualifying benefit for that period. Carer's Allowance will stop if your total breaks add up to more than 12 weeks in the past 26 weeks.

It can be difficult to understand this complex topic so call the team at Carers Central on 0300 3030201 or email us carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk

Travelling abroad

You can continue to be paid Carer's Allowance for a temporary period whilst you are abroad if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You go abroad with the person you look after, they continue to receive a qualifying disability benefit (this is likely to be a maximum of 26 weeks) and the purpose of your trip is to look after them

If the person you look after goes into hospital

If the person you look after goes into hospital and you are no longer providing care for at least 35 hours a week, you can continue to get Carer's Allowance for up to 12 weeks or until their disability benefit stops.

If you are looking after a child who was under 18 when they went into hospital, their disability benefit can continue to be paid for the whole time they are there.

If you look after an adult aged 18+ their disability benefit will stop after 28 days and may stop sooner if they have been in hospital or residential care in the 28 days before this current stay.

Contact Carers Central on 0300 3030201 or carercentral@drcbeds.org.uk

A new carer claiming Carer's Allowance

If you have been made redundant and are now providing 35 hours of unpaid care to a family or friend you may be eligible to claim Carer's Allowance, the person you are caring for must be in receipt of one of the benefits mentioned above.

Reduction in working hours

Some unpaid carers who work part time may be still eligible to claim Carer's Allowance. If you earn £128 or less per week, and the person gets specific benefits, you may qualify for Carer's Allowance.

You have the right to ask for flexible working

[See the Carers UK website](#) for useful information about flexible working.

Employment support for carers



It can be difficult to find time in your week to focus on you and your wellbeing. [The many free support programmes available from The Disability Resource Centre for carers](#) could be the starting point you need to help manage your wellbeing, learn new skills and/or gain paid work.

For autumn and winter 2022/23:

[Improve your wellbeing with the new and free Life Matters short course](#)

This free programme for Luton residents offers training to support your physical, mental and financial wellbeing. Spaces on this course are very limited so please [sign-up to book your place today](#).

[Free care skills training for unpaid carers and PAs](#)

The Disability Resource Centre is pleased to announce a new series of free care skills training workshops and online courses. [See the website](#).

In work support



It is your choice whether to tell your employer about your caring role or not. To find out whether there is a carer's policy or any extra support for carers in your workplace, you could check your contract of employment, staff handbook, Human Resources (HR) policies or letter of appointment.

If there is a carer's policy then what support it offers will depend on your workplace. Examples include:

- Carer's leave (paid or unpaid)
- Time off to accompany the person you are looking after to appointments (paid or unpaid)
- A carers' support group or contact

For further support please contact:

- [Carer UK](#) or call 0808 808 7777 (Monday – Tuesday 10am-4pm)
- [ACAS](#)

Training



There are training courses available that can help develop your personal, IT and employability skills.

Courses at the [The Disability Resource Centre's training page](#) have been developed to help with confidence building and wellbeing. This could include learning how to relax, de-stress and take control in different areas in your life.

Visit [The Disability Resource Centre's training page](#) that provides free training courses for carers.

Volunteering



Anyone can volunteer. It can be very rewarding and is a great way to:

- Meet new people
- Gain new or use existing skills
- Get experience
- Make a big difference to your community

There are lots of easy ways to give your time to help others; from having a cup of tea with an elderly neighbour, to helping out in your local area or making a regular commitment to volunteer with a charity or community group.

Useful links about volunteering

- [Volunteering at The Disability Resource Centre](#)
- [Find a volunteering opportunity on the 'Do IT' website](#)

Disability Equipment



All Local Authorities will offer an Occupational Health Assessment.

Helping people in their home

This might include installing equipment, minor works, or to facilitate major adaptations to help you remain safe and independent in and around your home.

You may decide that you would like to look at various types of equipment independently.

The Disability Resource Centre has a team of Trusted Assessors who can show you the types of equipment available.

This could include help with bathing, toileting, walking or useful gadgets to make life easier in the home. To make an appointment call 01582 470900 or email info@drcbeds.org.uk

A Blue Badge for parking

If you feel the person you are caring for could benefit from a Blue Badge to help with disabled parking they can apply (or you can apply for them as their carer) via their local authority's website.

Who is entitled to a blue badge?

You may be able to get a badge if:

- You have a disability which means you are not able to walk
- You have a disability and have a great difficulty walking from your car to where you want to go
- You have a disability which means that you are likely to come to harm when you are walking
- You have a disability and you are likely to harm someone when you are walking
- Some people are automatically entitled to a blue badges

[See the GOV.UK website for details.](#)

The Blue Badge scheme is run by your local council. You should contact your local council if you want to apply for a badge.

You will have to:

- Fill in a form
- Give them a passport size photo of yourself
- Give them some proof that you are disabled
- Give them some ID – like your passport or driving licence
- You may have to pay some money.

[Carers Central](#) can provide support with applying for a blue badge.

End of life care



End of life care is support for people who are in the last months of their life. The support provided should help the person and their carer express their wishes around the care they would like to receive.

If you are caring for someone who is approaching the end of life, and you want to find out about the care and support available, your first step is to speak to your GP or to call the number your healthcare professionals have given you.

Part of their job is to help you understand which services are available locally. You can ask about all sorts of help. For example, there may be particular night-time services they can tell you about.

[Visit the NHS website for their useful page of information about end of life care.](#)

Information about medications and health conditions



The NHS website provides a reliable A-Z guide of information and advice on health conditions, symptoms, healthy living, medicines and how to get help.

This is for information only and you should always discuss any symptoms with your GP:

- [NHS health conditions page](#)
- [NHS medications page](#)

Peer support and local community groups

It is often difficult to find the time to look after yourself and to find that little bit of 'me time' that is so important for your wellbeing and your 'feel good' factor.

Support groups are very important and can help you feel connected to other people in similar caring roles.

The following groups offer friendly support in Luton:

(subject to coronavirus regulations)

- [Carers Central support group for unpaid carers](#)
- [Luton Asian Carers Service](#)
- [Mind BLMK Carers Support Service](#)
- [YAWN Life](#)
- [CHUMS for young carer's support](#)
- Carers Eating Disorders Association; contact the group leaders by email cedaluton@gmail.com
- Fibromyalgia Group contact the group leader by email teresawilliams.ret@btinternet.com
- Alzheimer's Society by email bedfordshireandluton@alzheimers.org.uk
- Caribbean Carers Support Initiative via email at admin@ccsi.org.uk
- [Woman's Aid Luton](#)
- [Luton All Woman's Centre](#)
- [Stepping Stones](#)

Additional care needs

The Disability Resource Centre provides a wide range of services to help you live independently at home.

A Direct Payment is a way that people can access funds to arrange their own care and can continue to live as independently as possible.

It is a way of empowering people to make their own choices and to have control over the support they receive.

Local authorities and health authorities in England and Wales have a statutory responsibility. They must offer support to people with assessed needs and the option of receiving a Direct Payment (local authorities) or Personal Health Budget (Clinical Commissioning Groups).

Some benefits of a Direct Payment or Personal Health Budget include:

- You can manage your own care
- You can hire your own Personal Assistant (PA) to support you with your needs
- You can take control of your care funds and any payments due
- You can use the funds to purchase equipment to meet your needs
- You can use the funds to access training
- You can continue to live independently within your own home
- You have control over your life and make your own choices

[Read all about the services that The Disability Resource Centre provides on their Direct Payments page](#)

Useful local contacts

LUTON Adult and Social Care	out of hours support	03003 008 123
Luton Food Bank	emergency number	01582 452356
Caribbean Carers Initiative		admin@ccsi.org.uk
Homelessness	out of office hours	0800 1014 7333
Women's Aid Refuge	office hours	01582 391856
Luton and Dunstable A&E		08451 270127
NHS Direct for advice for minor illness		0845 4647
Highway Services at Luton Council		0844 8476648
Luton Wellbeing Services		01582 393130
Luton Citizens Advice		0344 245 1285
Luton Borough Council		01582 546000
Out of hours:		0300 300 8089
Luton Police - non-emergencies		101
Luton Police - emergencies		999
Hate crime or incidents		101
Central Bedfordshire; Emergency Carers Helpline		0300 300 8036
Homelessness	Office Hours	0300 300 43 70
	Out of Hours	0300 300 8098
Children and Young Persons Services		0300 300 8588
Dunstable Foodbank		07874200056
Dunstable Citizens Advice		01582 670003
Bedfordshire Wellbeing Services		01234 880400
Health Watch Luton		01582 817060
Resolutions		0800 054 6603

National Contacts

Samaritans	24 hour support	08457 909090
NHS Direct		0845 4647
Shelter Homeless support		0808 800 444
SANE for anyone affected by mental illness		0845 767 8000
National Domestic Helpline		0808 2000 247
Gingerbread	(Single parent support)	0207 4285400
Citizens Advice		03444 111 44
Men's Advice Line	Domestic abuse	0808 8010327
Alcoholic Anonymous	Free national helpline	0800 917765
Carers UK	Carers National Helpline	020 7378 4999

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers

Q - Can I work and claim Carer's Allowance?

You can work whilst in receipt of Carer's Allowance but you take home pay must not be over £128 per week and you still have to provide at least 35 hours care for the person you are claiming carers allowance for.

Q - Can I attend college full time if I am claiming carers allowance?

You are permitted to attend college or a course for up to 16 hours per week, as long as you still provide at least 35 hours care to the person you are receiving Carer's Allowance for.

Q - What is a Carer's Assessment?

A carer's assessment is a chance for you to talk about your needs as a carer and the possible ways in which you can receive support. We can help you to arrange an assessment. There is no charge for an assessment. [See the Luton Council website for details.](#)

Q - Can I have a break from caring?

[Luton council may be able to help you to take some time out from your caring responsibilities](#) by providing help for the person you care for – either in their own home, in day centres, or in a care home. They call this type of respite care “carer's breaks”. It can also be valuable for the person receiving the care, as it is a change of routine and a chance for them to meet new people.

Carer's breaks are for your benefit and wellbeing. But it is very important that the care provided is suitable for the person you care for, and that they agree to this service.

Types of carer's breaks:

- Respite day care
- Sitting service
- Carers' short break

You will need to have a Carer's Assessment to see what type of carer's break is suitable for you and the person you are caring for.

Carers Central can support you to obtain a carer's break from Luton Borough Council and provide a better understanding around the process and procedure.

Q - Do you support young carers?

Carers Central provides support to carers over the age of 18, who live or care for someone within Luton.

Please see the [Luton Council website regarding supporting young carers.](#)

Q - What is an emergency plan?

An emergency plan is a plan you set out for the care of an adult or a child in case of emergencies. It makes provisions for occasions when you are unable to fulfil your caring role, and it sets out the practical arrangements for short-term, unplanned periods.

Having a plan in place can stop an emergency becoming a crisis. Emergency planning is important to all carers. It gives everyone involved peace of mind that help will be available at all times.

Emergency planning toolkit: Carers Central can help you create an emergency plan. By answering 'Who, What, Why, Where and When', you will be able to plan for any unforeseen circumstances.

Each carer's emergency plan is different and can be developed over a period of time; you should involve all relevant family, friends and professionals in this process.

Q - Am I entitled to a blue badge?

You may be able to get a badge if:

- You have a disability which means you are not able to walk
- You have a disability and have a great difficulty walking from your car to where you want to go
- You have a disability which means that you are likely to come to harm when you are walking
- You have a disability and you are likely to harm someone when you are walking
- Some people are automatically entitled to a blue badges

[See the GOV.UK website for details.](#)

The Blue Badge scheme is run by your local council. You should contact your local council if you want to apply for a badge.

You will have to:

- Fill in a form
- Give them a passport size photo of yourself
- Give them some proof that you are disabled
- Give them some ID – like your passport or driving licence
- You may have to pay some money.

[Carers Central](#) can provide support with applying for a blue badge.

.Q - Do I have to live with the person to be their unpaid carer?

You do not have to live in the same house or even the same town, support can be given in many ways including physical and emotional support.