

Looking after friends or family when they leave hospital

Here is useful advice for family and friends of people needing continuing care or support with everyday life. This information is drawn from government advice and could be helpful for people with dementia and their families who support them.

Help and support can take place in their home or by phone or online such as using Zoom or Skype. The support can include:

- emotional support like helping someone manage anxiety or other mental health difficulties
- housework like cooking, cleaning, or other chores
- personal support like help moving around, washing, eating, or getting dressed
- help to get essential items like medicine or food
- help to manage money, paid care or other services

What to consider if you are looking after someone

1. Get help from others with caring and everyday tasks

- Try not to do everything yourself. Speak to friends and family about what support the person needs and what others can do to help. Can they share any tasks?
- Go to the Carers UK and Carers Trust websites for [information about support available](#). Carers UK also has an online forum where you can speak to other carers, and a free helpline, open Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm on 0808 808 777.
- If you're employed, talk to your employer about managing work while caring. You may be able to arrange flexible working and many employers offer [other](#) ways of making things easier.

- If you are in a 'support bubble' involving someone living with dementia you can still visit them after the 14 September 2020 even if there are more than six people involved.
- If you're at school, college or university, let them know you are caring for someone so they can help you manage your studies. [Carers Trust](#) has lots of helpful advice for young people looking after family members or friends.
- Check what your council or local authority can offer. Find their websites using the [online postcode tool](#). Services may change during the pandemic.
- Get specialist advice about caring from condition-related organisations like Alzheimer's Society, Dementia UK, Age UK, MIND and others. Many offer support for carers.
- Have a look on the Race Equality Foundation website which has information for family and friends caring for people with dementia translated into [different languages](#)
- You could contact local black and minority ethnic organisations working with people with dementia or older people.
- Remember that face to face support groups for people affected by dementia (including family carers) are still permitted after the 14 September 2020, even if they involve more than six people. You may be able to find a support group in your area through one of the organisations mentioned above.

2. Look after your health as well as the person you support

It is important to look after yourself to stay healthy and avoid burning out. Eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep and try to make time each day for physical activity. Perhaps you can do things to look after your health with the person you are caring for. Have a look at the [Helping Someone Living with Dementia to Stay Well leaflet](#)

Taking time for yourself to exercise or take a few breaths can relieve stress and help you manage each day. Check the [NHS 'Every Mind Matters' website](#) for more tips. If your own health or the health of the person you support gets worse, with coronavirus or another illness, talk to your GP or call NHS 111.

3. Think ahead to make care manageable if things change

Write down in a plan what care the person needs and what other people should do if you can't continue providing care for any reason. It is important that other people can easily find your plan and quickly understand what needs to be done if you aren't there. [Carers UK](#) has advice on their website on how to make your plan.

4. Guidance for unpaid carers

The Government guidance has detailed advice on [caring for friends or family during coronavirus](#) is on GOV.UK.

You might also find it useful to look at [information and resources](#) to better support black and minority ethnic people with dementia and their families

5. Other sources of information

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Connect support line 0333 150 3456 The Silver Line 0800 4 70 80 90 For NHS health advice call 111 (or visit www.111.nhs.uk)

If you are online, you can also access lots more useful information from reliable websites:

- Alzheimer's Society www.alzheimers.org.uk Age UK www.ageuk.org.uk / Age Cymru www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru The NHS www.nhs.uk
- The BBC www.bbc.co.uk The Government www.gov.uk / www.gov.wales
- Public Health England www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england
- Your local council <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>
- Race Equality Foundation www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/blog/better-support-for-bame-people-living-with-dementia Covid Mutual Aid UK www.covidmutualaid.org