

## Dealing with Emergencies in the Home:

- Have you ever had to deal with an emergency as a Carer?
- Did you handle it calmly or did you panic?

### John's Story:



*John's wife Joan, had fallen and was unable to get up. It was 1 am and Joan was unable to tell John what the matter was. Joan was moaning so John knew there was something up.*

*There was no one else in the house.*

- *What would you do if you were John?*

### My situation:

If the person you care for has an emergency or crisis, there may be a number of options available to you.

- What would you do if you were in John's position?

(Remember the details of what is wrong with Joan are not important here, the point is that John is on his own with this emergency)

Take some time to think about this and then read below:



For each suggestion decide whether

- It's helpful ✓
- Not helpful ✕
- Not sure ?

Indicate	Aspect
	1. Keep calm – think clearly and be decisive. If John seems panicky or anxious, it could make Joan more anxious as well, especially if she doesn't fully understand what's happening
	2. Keep talking to Joan, let her know exactly what's happening. Even if she can't talk, or is confused, a familiar voice speaking calmly will reassure her.
	3. Shout for help until someone comes.
	4. Try and move her into a comfortable position and prop her head up.
	5. Keep her warm. Find a blanket or duvet to put over her, keeping it well clear of her nose and mouth.
	6. Give her a hot sweet drink while waiting for help, in case she's suffering from shock.
	7. Go and fetch a neighbour, or phone a relative or friend immediately.
	8. Call an ambulance.

**What did you write?**

Helpful ✓ 1, 2, 5, 8

Not helpful ✕ 3, 4, 6

Not sure ? 7



3 ✕	Shouting may frighten Joan or make her panic – in the middle of the night it may well not be heard
4 ✕	It's not a good idea to move someone, especially if you don't know how or where they're injured. This could cause more damage for example a fracture or spinal/head injury.
6 ✕	Keep her warm with plenty of blankets in case of shock. Don't give a hot drink. Someone in shock may lose consciousness and a drink could cause them to choke or vomit.
7 ?	It's unwise to leave Joan alone, unless there's no phone in the house. If alone in this situation it is best to call an ambulance.

### Being Prepared:

If the person you care for depends on you to organise their care, it's a good idea to plan ahead in case of an emergency. What type of planning you do will depend on the type of needs that the person you care for has.

Here are some things that you may want to consider. Tick ✓ if useful

	Do a first aid course so you know what to do in case of emergencies such as a fall or injury, breathing difficulties, heart attack or stroke.
	Know where to get information about medical emergencies.
	Get informed about the medical condition of the person you care for, its symptoms and treatments and plan what you'll do for specific emergencies or crisis that could arise from the condition.
	Talk to your doctor or another health care professional if you'd like advice about any aspect of managing a particular condition.
	Add here – a list of organisations that offer information and advice on specific conditions.

## Fire:

The best way to protect yourself from fire is to fit smoke alarms. It's always good to plan how you'd escape from a fire, but it's particularly important to have a plan if you care for someone with a disability.

Your local Fire and Rescue Service may offer a free home fire safety visit. Their purpose is to:

1. Identify and be aware of the potential fire risks within your home
2. Know what to do to reduce or prevent these risks
3. Put together an escape plan in case a fire does break out
4. Ensure you have working smoke alarms

Moving a heavy person out of a burning building is an extreme situation, but many carers move and lift the person they care for on a daily basis. If you require a personal lifting and handling assessment or training on safe techniques when moving the cared for, then please do contact your own Carers Organisation, they are here to help.

## Adult Social Care Cumbria Carers Emergency Card:



The Cumbria Carers Emergency Card scheme is designed to give reassurance in the form of an Emergency Plan covering a 72-hour (3 day) period.

The Emergency Plan, which you would agree when you join the scheme, would come into action if something like an accident or sudden illness meant you were unable to look after the person you care for.

In Cumbria the scheme is administered by your Carers Organisation. You are provided with a card that shows the phone number for the response centre, your name and a unique reference number. You then keep the card with you and people will know you are a carer in the event of an emergency - even if you are unable to communicate this yourself. It is about the size of a credit card and so is easily carried in a purse or wallet. Carrying an emergency card means that, in an emergency, the person you care for won't be left without the support they need.

We advise all carers to have a plan to cover a 72 hour (3 day) period in case of an emergency. Your Carers Organisation can help you to write this. The plan will have details of what needs to happen to make sure the person you care for is looked after. This would be things like:

- Details of the name and address and any other contact details of the person you look after
- Who you and the person you look after would like to be contacted in an emergency – this might include friends, family or professionals who could take your place helping the person you look after
- Details of any medication the person you look after is taking
- Details of any ongoing treatment they need.

As part of the Emergency Plan you will be asked to give the contact details of one or two people who would be willing to take your place in an emergency. Someone from your Carers Organisation will complete and finalise the plan with you but it is your responsibility to ensure that the people you name are happy to help out if an emergency happens.

A copy of the plan will be sent to anyone you have nominated and any other relevant people so they can see what the arrangements are.

### **Lions Message in a Bottle:**

This is a simple and effective way to keep essential personal and medical details readily available where they can be found in an emergency – the fridge!

These FREE Message in a Bottle kits which are available from Age UK and have been distributed by Lions Clubs British Isles & Ireland are used by people with conditions such as diabetes, allergies, disabilities and life-threatening illnesses.

Paramedics, police, fire-fighters and social services support this life-saving initiative and know to look in the fridge when they see the Lions Message in a Bottle sticker.

