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Factsheet – Caring from a distance.

Providing support to someone who does not live with you can present challenges. Even if the person only lives a few miles away it may not be easy to 'pop-in' and some situations may be difficult for you to manage.

Our advice team has put together some tips and suggestions to help you deal with some of the issues you may face as a 'distance carer'. The information below focuses on services based in Hertfordshire. If the person you support lives in a different area, we recommend you get in touch with the local carer centre as they will have knowledge of local support. You can find details of all carer centres in the UK on the Carers UK website: [Support where you live](#)

PLEASE NOTE THAT FOR MOST OF THE SERVICES LISTED HERE THERE IS A CHARGE

Create a local support network

- Next time you visit, try to speak to trusted neighbours or local friends. Make sure they know how to get in touch with you if they have any concerns.
- With the permission of the person, their GP could name you as their '[proxy](#)' so they can discuss their healthcare with you, allow you to order medication and make appointments.
- Some pharmacies offer free delivery for prescriptions
- The [Jointly app for carers](#) developed by Carers UK can help you coordinate the person's care with those involved in their support. Hertfordshire County Council funds the cost of the app for its residents. Use code #EFC1542 to access the App for free.
- For people with dementia at risk of going missing you may want to consider filling in a [Hertbert Protocol form with the Police](#) in advance. Technology, such as trackers on phones, can also help.
- Register the person with [The Priority Services Register \(PSR\)](#). This is a free support service for vulnerable people when there is an interruption in electricity, gas or water supply.
- For peace of mind having someone popping in regularly can be helpful. Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS) provides [Pop-in Visits](#)
- Keep a file with key contacts and local services that may be useful (dentists, health professionals...)

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- Both Android phones and iPhones have a feature known as **"ICE" or "In case of emergency."** It will let you add a list of **emergency contacts** to your phone. You can also add **medical information**. This information can be accessed by emergency services if you are unable to tell them about your medical history or contacts. The Stroke Association has some good guidance on how to set up the [ICE](#) feature.

Organise the home:

- If the person you support takes medication and lives on their own, they could benefit from using the [Message in a Bottle](#) scheme.
- Contact the local fire service to request a home fire safety check (do not call 999 for this).
- Shopping delivery from supermarket can be organised. Meal deliveries are also an option, to ensure the person has a healthy hot meal regularly. In Hertfordshire, [Health & Independent Living Support \(HILS\)](#) provide 'meals on wheels'.
- Organise a cleaning service from a trusted source. In Hertfordshire, Age UK offers [Help in the Home](#).
- On your next visit check for trip hazards, broken furniture, unsafe appliances.
- Vulnerable people living on their own can be the target of scams and crime. Age UK has some good advice to avoid becoming the victim of scams: [Scams advice – How to spot and avoid scams](#)

Adaptations in the home

If the person you care for is now less mobile, they may benefit from having some equipment and adaptations made to their home:

- Some equipment and aids can be bought directly from high street shops, for example Boots or Argos.
- For mobility aids, the person with support needs may benefit from an assessment from the GP who will be able to assess mobility needs and advise on options.
- If the person has needs that are a bit more complex, an assessment from the local authority could be useful. Assessments in Hertfordshire can be requested here on the Hertfordshire County Council website: [Adult care – how to get care and support from us](#)
- Some home adaptations can be funded by the local authority through A Disability Facility Grant: [Disabled Facilities Grants: Overview](#)

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Consider Using Assistive Technology

'Assistive technology' refers to equipment that is designed to help people with physical or cognitive disabilities carry out daily activities more easily. There is a wide range of products available to help the person live more independently; reduce the risk of falls, accidents and injuries; and relieve families of some of their worries.

- Electronic pill organiser or a smart device like Alexa can prompt people to remember to take medication.
- A camera doorbell can help keep the person safe by showing who is at the door.
- Smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and heat detectors can be fitted to keep the person safe.
- Sensors placed around the home can help spot changes in daily routines. For Hertfordshire, there is more information on the County Council's website:

[Technology to help you in your home](#)

Taking the time to look after yourself

Caring from a distance can trigger a number of feelings. You may feel guilty you cannot be there; worried about the person safety; you may be juggling or being torn between many responsibilities like family and work. You may be experiencing stress, lack of concentration, sleeplessness and anxiety. It is important to try to make time for you. Our advisors can talk to you about ways to look after yourself whilst caring for someone.

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