



Registered Charity no. 1085491

Local offices:  
**01992 586969 – Hertford**  
**01442 253344 – Hemel Hempstead**  
**01462 456660 – Hitchin**

contact@carersinherts.org.uk  
www.carersinherts.org.uk

## **Factsheet G11A Backing You Up - Making a contingency plan with ACS**

### **Why Contingency Plan?**

If you look after a relative or friend who is ill, frail or disabled you may worry about what would happen if you were unable to care for them. How would they cope if you were suddenly taken ill, caught in traffic or even in an accident yourself? Who could be called on to help out – even on a temporary basis? Adult Care Services (ACS) in Hertfordshire have recognised that this is a very real issue for many carers and so, usually as part of a carers assessment, can help you draw up a contingency plan to give reassurance that back up would be there for you in an emergency.

To receive this service you must be:

- Caring for an adult of any age with physical or learning disabilities who is eligible for ACS services (although they do not need to be currently receiving them e.g. because you are providing all the care they need.)
- A 'regular and substantial carer' i.e. caring has a significant impact on your life.

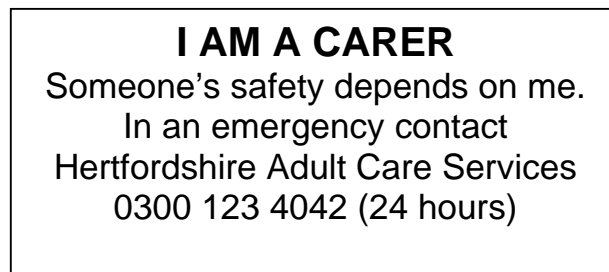
### **What can the plan do?**

The ACS contingency plan will outline cover arrangements needed, if, at short notice, you are unable to provide care. It will be held on their electronic care records so that it can be accessed by ACS staff 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

The plan could include:

- The support available from relatives, friends and neighbours
- Formal services that ACS would need to organise.
- A mixture of the two – some formal services to supplement support from family and friends.

Any friends or relatives who agree to be part of the plan will need to give written consent to their details being held on ACS records. Once this has been arranged and the full plan registered with ACS you will be provided with a 'Carers Card' to carry in your purse or wallet. It looks something like this:



An ID number on the reverse of the card will link with your contingency plan logged on the ACS system and enable it to be put into action in providing short term emergency care cover as agreed with you. This also gives time for a fuller assessment of the situation to be made if it seems that continuing help will be needed.

*The information contained on this sheet is correct at the time of issue.  
Carers in Hertfordshire takes no responsibility for any inaccuracy in facts supplied to them*

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The system is not active until you have received your Carers Card and ACS do ask that you take responsibility to let them know of any changes to the contact details you have provided. *Carers in Hertfordshire* can help with this if you want us to.

**How can I arrange to make a plan?**

Call Adult Care Services on 0300 123 4042 and ask for someone to talk to you about drawing up a carers contingency plan. If you prefer, ring *Carers in Hertfordshire* and we will contact ACS for you.

If you wish you can arrange a contingency plan as part of a carers assessment (see factsheet G3). A carers assessment is an opportunity for you to discuss your caring situation in some detail with a social worker and explore what support and services are available to help. However you do not need to take up other services to have your contingency plan registered with ACS.

**Not eligible for ACS help or don't want to involve them?**

*Carers in Hertfordshire* can help you draw up your own plan with the help of friends and relatives who would be willing to help out. See factsheet 11B for more details.

**Other useful emergency contacts and information:**

***'Out of hours' health and social service help and advice in Hertfordshire can be contacted on the following numbers:***

Adult Care Services	<b>0300 123 4042</b>
Mental Health Services	<b>01438 843322</b>
Children Schools and Families	<b>0300 123 4043</b>
GP out of hours service	<b>03000 33 33 33</b>

The '**Message in a Bottle**' scheme ([www.lions.org.uk](http://www.lions.org.uk)) can also be useful in an emergency. A bottle is available from your GP surgery, pharmacy, health centre or local Lions club. You put vital personal and medical information inside it and keep it in the fridge. Emergency services will know there is a bottle by two labels. One fixed to the inside of the front door and the other to the door of the fridge.

'**Lifeline**' and **Community alarms systems** can be installed in the homes of vulnerable people by your local district council. An emergency button is supplied to be worn on a pendant around the neck or on a wristband so that the person you care for can alert an operator at the other end to a problem situation at home. There is usually a small weekly charge for this service. Contact your local district council for details of the scheme in your area.

**Adult Care Services can arrange for a 'keysafe' to be installed** at the home of the person you care for. This is a secure way of storing a key, accessed by a pincode, so that trusted people who have been given the code can enter without the person having to come to the door to let them in.