

Planning for the future

Your relative's care and support

This factsheet is aimed at people who care for someone else and want to plan their support when they are no longer able to care for them. In this factsheet we call the person you care for your 'relative', but we realise that you may not actually be related to them.

KEY POINTS

- You may not always be able to care for your relative. You may become too unwell, have to move or pass away. A lot of people find it helpful to plan for this in advance.
- You can plan for the future by:
 - discussing it with your relative,
 - asking friends or family if they can help,
 - raising the issue with mental health services,
 - talking to social services, or
 - thinking about supported housing or a care home if your relative needs a lot of support.
- You can ask for a carer's assessment from your local authority if you find it hard to care for your relative.

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1. My caring role

At the moment, you may be helping your relative in many ways. This might include:

- emotional support (being a 'listening ear'),
- help with shopping,
- help with paying bills,
- help getting out and about,
- help with going to appointments,
- reminding them to take medication,
- offering somewhere to live, or
- dealing with money problems.

You may be worried about your relative's care and support needs when you can no longer care for them. This is a common concern for relatives of people with a mental illness.

A helpful first step is to list some of the main things you do for your relative as a carer. This will give you an idea of the kind of support your relative needs.

Once you have this list, you can plan the different things that can help your relative. Or how they could help themselves.

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2. Discussing the future with my relative

Your relative may also have concerns about the future. They may be thinking about what will happen when you cannot support them.

It can be difficult to have this sort of conversation. Your relative may not want to talk about it as they may find it upsetting or overwhelming. They may also find it difficult to cope with change.

We have made some suggestions about starting a discussion below, but how you talk about it will be very personal to you. It depends on your relationship with your relative.

When to bring it up

It may help to set aside some time so that you know you will be able to discuss things fully without interruptions.

If possible, it may help to wait until a time when your relative seems to be well.

Set the scene

You could say that you would like to talk about what will happen when you can't care for them anymore. Perhaps because you will be too unwell.

Current situation

You might feel that you can continue to support them for the time being, or you may need to let them know that you are finding things difficult.

You could ask if there are particular things your relative finds helpful at the moment.

The future

Ask them what support they think they will need in the future. For example, do they feel they could live by themselves or will they need more support?

Next steps

Avoid making promises about what will happen next. Some things may be out of your control. However, you can agree to look into things or to try your best to help your relative get what they want.

Problems

If your relative doesn't realise they are unwell ('lacks insight'), then it may be difficult to discuss some issues. It can also be difficult if your relative does not recognise the support that you give them.

You can still plan without your relative's input. But things will be more difficult because your relative normally has to agree to any options you think will help. You may have a Lasting Power of Attorney for Welfare or a Court of Protection appointed Deputy Order. This gives you the power to legally act on your relative behalf and plan their future care if they lack capacity.

You can find more information about '**Options for dealing with someone else's financial affairs**' at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

3. Friends and family

It is up to other friends and family members how much support and care they feel able to offer your relative. Some may have other commitments such as work, study or their own family. They may also live far away, which will limit the amount of support they can give.

If other people agree to offer support, you could slowly increase their involvement whilst withdrawing the support you offer. This will help make things easier when you can no longer support your relative.

How other people can help

Friends or family members may take over some of the support you offer. To start with, this could just mean getting in touch more often by telephone.

Eventually, a friend or family member may offer to help your relative to go to appointments or take on other aspects of your caring role.

Relationship breakdowns

Sometimes there may have been an argument and your relative will not want to speak to you other members of their family.

In this situation, family therapy or relationship counselling could help. If people in the family are willing to try this, they could try to arrange it through your relative's GP or through an independent relationship counsellor.

The following websites might help you to find a counsellor:

www.relate.org.uk

www.counselling-directory.org.uk

www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk

4. Help from mental health services

You may be in a situation where your relative does not get help or support from mental health services. This may be because:

- as a family, you have always chosen to provide care and support yourselves,
- your relative has refused to work with mental health services, or
- it has not been possible to get help from mental health services for some other reason.

If your relative has not had any help from mental health services, you may wish to discuss this option with them. The best first step is for them to make an appointment with their GP.¹ Social services may also be able to help.

If your relative is already getting help from their care coordinator and mental health services, get in touch with the team and let them know that you are finding it hard to continue in your caring role.² If your relative needs extra support, the team may be able to put this in place.

Your relative can get help from social services. The Care Act 2014 gives local authorities the duty to assess people and help with their needs. This is called a needs assessment. Social services will assess your relative's needs and the care and support they need. The assessment must look at:³

- how your relative's needs affect their wellbeing,
- what your relative wants to do in your day to day life, and
- if social care would help you do what you want to do.

You can find more information about '**Social Care Assessment and Eligibility**' at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

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5. Supporting my relative to make decisions

Advocacy

Sometimes people like having someone to support them when they go to appointments. For your relative, this support might come from you or another friend or relative.

In the future, your relative might be able to get similar help from an advocate. An advocate is independent from health services and can help your relative get their opinions across. These are often called general advocates, or community advocates.

Advance Statements

If your relative is worried that they won't be able to make decisions for themselves, they can write down what they would like to happen in the future. This is called an advance statement.⁴

An advance statement can cover:

- treatment for mental illness, and
- practical matters like who will pay bills or look after pets.

Putting together an advance statement could give you and your relative some reassurance about the future.

You can find more information about:

- Advocacy
- Advance Statements

at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

Trusts and Wills

You can make a will or trust if you want to leave money or possessions to your relative.

A will lets you decide who will get your money and possessions when you die.

The money or possessions you give to your relative could be managed through a discretionary trust. A discretionary trust means that your relative does not get their inheritance paid to them when you die. Instead, the money will pass to other people, called 'trustees'. You can choose who you would like to be a trustee, and it is important to choose someone you think is reliable. The trustees will decide whether or not to give your relative money. You might give them instructions explaining when your relative should be given money. But the trustees can decide not to.

Rethink Mental Illness has set up Rethink Trust Corporation (RTC). RTC can be a trustee if you set up a trust. This means that RTC can make decisions about whether or not your relative will get paid from the trust. It is not a charity and it has to charge fees in order to cover expenses.

If you would like more information about Rethink Trust Corporation and how to set up a trust with them please contact us at:

Telephone: 0300 222 5702

Address: Rethink Trust Corporation Enquiries, FREEPOST RSYC-ZCJT-RSRC, First Floor Castlemill, Burnt Tree, Tipton, DY4 7UF

Email: RTC@rethink.org

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6. Can I get support?

If you start finding it more difficult to care for your relative, you can get support⁵. You could:

- talk to friends and family,
- talk to your own doctor,
- ask for a carer's assessment from your local authority, or
- join a support group for carers, friends and family.

You can find more about:

- Supporting Someone with a Mental Illness
- Carer's Assessment and Support Planning

at www.rethink.org. Or call our General Enquiries team on 0121 522 7007 and ask them to send you a copy of our factsheet.

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7. Planning future care

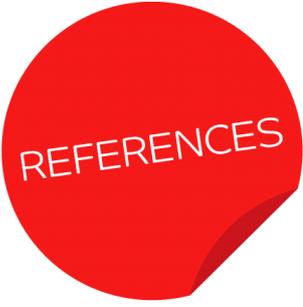
You can use this quick plan to think about your relative's needs and how you can meet them. We've filled in a copy to give you some ideas. There is a blank one on the next page.

1. Care my relative needs	2. Options	3. Actions to take
Somewhere to live	Live with friends Live with relatives Find a flat (private or council) Supported housing or residential care	Ask my relative where they would like to live when I can't house them. Find out whether it is possible for them to live where they want to. If things get worse, contact social services to assess housing needs
Help getting to NHS appointments – My relative can't drive	Bus pass Friend or family member takes my relative	Check whether my relative can get a free bus pass Ask a family member whether they can help my relative go to appointments
Reminder to take medication	Family member gives reminders face or by phone Arrange a regular reminder on my relative's mobile Ask my relative's doctor or care coordinator for ideas Supported housing	Get in contact with my relative's care coordinator Ask my relative's sister, Joan, whether she can text my relative to remind him Ask my relative's friends to check on him to make sure he stays well



Planning Future Care – My Plan

1. Care my relative needs	2. Options	3. Actions to take



REFERENCES

¹ NHS Choices. *GP Appointments and bookings*.

www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/doctors/Pages/gp-appointments.aspx (accessed 30 September 2016).

² Department of Health. *Refocusing the Care Programme Approach: Policy and Positive Practice Guidance*. London: Department of Health; 2008.

³ s9, Care Act 2014, c.23.

⁴ British Medical Association. *Advance decisions and proxy decision-making in medical treatment and research*. London: British Medical Association; 2007. Page 5.

⁵ s10, Care Act 2014, c23.

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This factsheet is available
in large print.

Rethink Mental Illness Advice Service

Phone 0300 5000 927
Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 4pm
(excluding bank holidays)

Email advice@rethink.org

Did this help?

We'd love to know if this information helped you.

Drop us a line at: feedback@rethink.org

or write to us at Rethink Mental Illness:

RAIS
PO Box 17106
Birmingham B9 9LL

or call us on 0300 5000 927.

We're open 9:30am to 4pm
Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)



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quality of life for everyone
affected by severe mental illness.

For further information
on Rethink Mental Illness
Phone 0121 522 7007
Email info@rethink.org



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Need more help?

Go to www.rethink.org for information on symptoms, treatments, money and benefits and your rights.

Don't have access to the web?

Call us on 0121 522 7007. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and we will send you the information you need in the post.

Need to talk to an adviser?

If you need practical advice, call us on 0300 5000 927 between 9:30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Our specialist advisers can help you with queries like how to apply for benefits, get access to care or make a complaint.

Can you help us to keep going?

We can only help people because of donations from people like you. If you can donate please go to www.rethink.org/donate or call 0121 522 7007 to make a gift. We are very grateful for all our donors' generous support.

