Looking after family or friends after they leave hospital?

This leaflet lists useful advice for family and friends of people needing ongoing care or support with day-to-day life. Support may be in the home or remotely (e.g. by phone), and might include:

- **Emotional support** like helping someone manage anxiety or mental health
- **Housework** like cooking, cleaning or other chores
- **Personal support** like help moving around, washing, eating or getting dressed
- **Assistance with getting essential items** like medicine or food, or
- **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 have 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.** Carers UK website https://www.carersuk.org/
   - ➢ **If you are employed, talk to your employer** about managing work whilst caring**.** You may be able to arrange flexible working and many employers offer other ways of making things easier.
   - ➢ **If you are 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. Carers Trust website https://carers.org/
   - ➢ **Check what your council or local authority can offer**. Find their websites using the online postcode tool at www.gov.uk/find-local-council. Services may change during the pandemic.
   - ➢ **Get specialist advice about caring** from condition-related organisations like Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, MIND and others. Many offer support for carers too.

2. **Look after your health as well as the person you support:** It's 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. 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 https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/ 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 what care the person needs and what others should do if you can't continue providing care for any reason. It's important that others can easily find your plan and quickly understand what needs to be done if you aren't there. Carers UK have advice on their website on how to make your plan.

4. **Read the Government guidance for unpaid carers:** For more detailed advice on caring for friends or family during coronavirus search for '**unpaid care coronavirus gov.uk**' online.

5. **Register for extra support from NHS volunteers:** Carers as well as those they care for can get a range of help including with shopping and other support by calling **0808 196 3646.**