

**PRESS RELEASE:**



**THE CARE CONVERSATION STARTER**

**[www.agespace.org](http://www.agespace.org)**

Elderly care advice site - Age Space is urging the county to #preparetocare with a new campaign to encourage and support families take control of their elderly parents and relatives care sooner rather than later.

Launching their #preparetocare campaign, Founder Annabel James explains:

*“Elderly care has certainly come into sharp focus recently and sadly there is so much big picture stuff that needs to be addressed with Adult Social Care, funding and the Care Home system - it makes change feel so far away. #preparetocare is about enabling families to have those difficult care conversations and plan ahead, so that when the unexpected happens, whether that be a sudden change in health or a national pandemic, they can make the best decisions for their elderly relatives. There are five key conversations below that we want the nation to start having with their parents....”*

**1) MEDICAL HISTORY**

In an emergency it is vital to know what medication your parents are taking. Have a list on your phone detailing allergies, previous surgery, chronic conditions and current medication, especially if your parent is on blood thinners like Warfarin. This information is only recorded at the GP surgery, and is not accessible out of hours.

Print out the list and pin it to the ‘fridge in case you are not available during an emergency. Paramedics will have easy access to all the necessary information and will be able to make an informed decision.

**2) CARE OPTIONS**

There will come a point when your parents will need more help to live independently at home. Rather than wait for that day to arrive (trust us, they will need help long before they ask for it) you should have an open discussion about what care options are available. Depending on their medical needs, the three main options will be: 1) Moving in with you 2) Care in the home from a professional care provider or 3) Moving into a care home. All are costly, can be intrusive and will involve change.

Chatting through these options in advance will help you to prepare financially and mentally for when that day comes.

### **3) MONEY**

This is a tricky one as many older people are suspicious of sharing their financial information. For example, in many households the finances are controlled by the husband, leaving mum vulnerable. It is worth chatting about joint accounts and powers of attorney to avoid both parents being left at a loss.

Funding elderly care and later life can be complex and expensive, between £600 and £1600 per week depending on the type of care required and medical needs. A local authority care assessment will determine the care and support needed and how it may or may not be funded.

In England and Wales, if your parents have over £23,500 then they will be funding their own care either at home or in a care home. If cash and assets are between £14,000 and £23,500 the State and local authority will part-fund some care: less than £14,000 and all care funding will be provided by the local authority although this will be subject to their own weekly budget cap.

It is an incredibly unpredictable environment – you don't know how long care will be needed and when those care needs might change. If you've already discussed the type of care your parents would be open to, we advise planning ahead and researching affordable local care options.

### **4) LEGAL STUFF**

Check that your parents have written a will and that you know where the latest copy is. Discuss drawing up a Power of Attorney and an Advance Directive well in advance of potential need. Create a folder containing all important information such as Bank account details, National Insurance number, Passports, Driving Licence and vehicle ownership papers, Birth and marriage certificates and Insurance details including private health insurance. Log important numbers into your phone.

Passwords - this can be a legal minefield regarding agreements with providers and data protection. At the very least it is worth knowing the main login details and password to a computer as well as any details of online accounts and what is stored where on the computer (such as photographs.)

### **5) GET SMART**

None of us want to 'spy' on our families so the prospect of monitors and call centres can be, quite literally, alarming. However, used in the right way at the right time such technology can play a vital role in keeping your parents safe and you in the loop. We encourage families to research and discuss Telecare options such as alarms, sensors, trackers and monitoring. Smart home technology and everybody's friend Alexa can also help your parents to stay independent at home.

Age Space has seen a huge surge in enquiries as people are left confused about caring for relatives in the current climate, fearful of making the wrong decisions and anxious about breaking the law. The site has a dedicated Coronavirus section, a Facebook support group and ASK IRIS for families worried about caring for elderly relatives. Visit [agespace.org](https://www.agespace.org)

**-Ends-**

If you would like more information/interviews on all or any of the above conversations contact Director of Marketing Helen Burgess – [helen.burgess@agepspace.org](mailto:helen.burgess@agepspace.org) and 07881523032

**Notes to editors:**

- 1) 7 million British adults aged 45 + currently care for elderly parents or relatives, set to increase by 20% in the next 15 years. (Age UK. 2017)
- 2) Alongside the national site there are 11 localised sites in Norfolk, Sussex, Dorset, Merseyside and Cheshire, Suffolk, Kent, Hampshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Surrey.
- 3) Annabel James Biography: Annabel co-founded Age Space in 2016 as a result of her own experiences with her ageing parents. Previously she ran a consultancy combining expertise gained during a 30-year career in corporate social responsibility, charity fundraising and development. Annabel held senior roles including Director of Charities for Capital Radio Group (now Global Radio) and Head of Corporate fundraising at the NSPCC. She spent a number of years advising companies on their strategy for community engagement and CSR. Her favourite role was Head of Communications for youth development charity Raleigh International which included stints in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Annabel has an MSc in Philanthropy and Social Investment from the Cass Business School. She lives in West London and is an enthusiastic but not very fast rower.