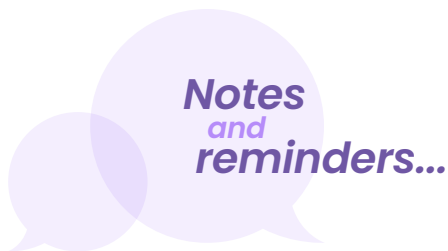




You may have noticed changes in your parents or older relatives – after a fall, a medical diagnosis, or the loss of a spouse. It can be worrying to think about the future, especially with pressures on the NHS, struggling care services and concerns about funding at the forefront of your mind.

Prepare to Care is our practical checklist designed to ease that pressure on you and your family. Use it to identify areas where your parents might need extra support, learn how to start important conversations about later life and find out what steps to take next to help keep them safe, independent and happy at home.

Some of these questions may feel intrusive and you might be met with resistance. Take your time. Encouraging open conversations now can help prevent bigger problems occurring later down the line.



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1

Spotting the signs

Are things starting to slip at home? Look out for changes in daily life and check off anything they need help with:

- Life at home: is post piling up, laundry left undone, or the house less tidy than usual?
Food and meals: is there fresh food in the fridge? Are meals being eaten regularly?
Appearance: do they seem less groomed, or are they paying less attention to clothes and hygiene?
Bills and money: are reminders piling up? Has their spending suddenly changed?
Daily routines: are buttons, shoes, jars, or locks more difficult than they used to be? Are they avoiding the stairs?
Medication: are tablets being taken as prescribed? Any missed GP appointments or repeat prescriptions?
Driving: are you worried about their safety on the road? It could be time to have that discussion.
Social connections: are they still seeing friends, chatting to neighbours, or doing hobbies they enjoy?
Home safety: is the house too cold? Are your parents showing signs of accidents, such as burns from the iron or a hot pan? Is the garden in need of some work?
Memory concerns: is it more than forgetfulness? If you're worried about dementia, try to arrange an appointment with the GP to get a diagnosis.

2

Having the care conversations

There are three important conversations all families should have. These can take time, but will help shape the future. Ask your parents these questions to kick-start care planning:

Where do you want to live when you get older?

Stay at home, downsize, move in with family, or consider a care home.

If you need care, what sort of care would you like or accept?

Home care, live-in care, or a care home. Perhaps you or siblings are expected to step in.

How will this be financed?

Through savings, selling the home, taking out an annuity or equity release mortgage – or perhaps care will be funded by the state.

3 Booking medical appointments and care assessments

- Book a GP appointment**
An essential first step to start involving yourself in your parent's care if there are health or memory concerns. You will need an agreement to gain access to your parent's medical records, which will need to be kept up to date.
- Request a care needs assessment**
The GP should suggest this. You can also request and complete one on your local authority website to determine what your parent's care needs are and how it may be paid for. There may be a wait for a care assessment so get started as soon as you can.

4 Making the home safe

Practical changes can support independence and reduce the risk of falls or injury, so take time to tick these tasks off the list:

- Clear clutter, improve lighting and add grab rails or stairlifts.
- Encourage your parent to have a personal alarm pendant or watch.
- Explore useful tech: motion sensors, heat detectors, video doorbells and medication reminders.

5 Putting the important paperwork in place

Encourage your parents to get key documents in place:

Lasting power of attorney (LPA): for making health, welfare and financial decisions when they have lost the mental capacity to do so themselves.

Writing a will: especially if your parents are self-funding their care.

Advance decision or living will: to record wishes about medical treatment, should they lose the ability to speak for themselves.

6 Getting everyone organised

Being prepared reduces stress if an emergency happens, so make sure you are ready for any eventuality:

- Keep an up-to-date list of medications (one on your phone, one on their fridge or somewhere visible).
- Know where important documents and passwords are kept.
- Collect key contacts (GP, neighbours, cleaner, relatives), especially if you live far away.
- Have a "what if" plan so you know how to look after the house (including pets) in an emergency.
- Support for carers – whether that's you, a parent or relative it's so important not to forget the person who becomes the carer.
- Arrange spare keys or a keysafe.
- Involve siblings and relatives so you're not carrying the load alone.

Notes and reminders...

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Further Help

You'll find more detail on all of these points, plus additional resources and local support information on our website: agespace.org

- Join our **newsletter** for updates, offers and discounts.
- Connect with others in our **Caring for Elderly Parents UK** Facebook group.
- Follow us on **Instagram** and **Facebook** for more tips and resources.

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