Carer standards

What we expect from you and what you can expect from us to ensure everyone gets the care they deserve.

As always, we’re happy to help.
Simply contact us:
carers@elder.org | 0333 150 2350
How to be an Elder-approved carer

Our vision is to reinvent what it means to age, improving quality of life and bringing peace of mind for families.

Quality and person-centred care is at the heart of everything we do. We only approve and recommend carers who we trust to share the same values. You made it this far, which means we believe in you and expect you to deliver the very best care.

We encourage Elder-approved carers to always provide ‘best in class’ care by supporting their clients with daily activities of living. Helping them to maintain control, choice and independence over their own lives, in their own homes.

As an Elder-approved carer, you’re a professional in your own right. In most cases, carers have their own sense of professional pride and a desire to treat their clients with respect and dignity. We believe these standards reflect the behaviours our approved carers would display on a day-to-day basis as part of that professionalism.

We expect Elder approved carers to expertly deliver the standards set forth in this guide by always providing professional, person-centred care.

Be reliable. Show integrity. Be honest and proactive.

Go above and beyond, the Elder way.

We’re here for you, too.
Please ensure we have accurate emergency contact details for you in the event of any incident or issues whilst you are on placement.
What we consider to be great care

We expect all the carers we work with to go above and beyond, the Elder way.

Deliver professional, person-centred care

Encourage independent, active living

Respect boundaries and show flexibility

Be an excellent, proactive communicator

Show companionship and kindness

Be reliable and competent while delivering care

Please be aware that in extreme cases—such as a safeguarding concern—we may need to refer a carer to the DBS, which may result in issues in future employment as a carer.
What we expect from you

We’re your biggest advocate and want to see you shine.

While caring

We expect care recipients, family members and other stakeholders to be treated with the utmost respect and professionalism, which requires:

- Honesty
- Organisation
- Integrity
- Reliability
- Flexibility

While off placement

We encourage carers to keep their profile accurate and to follow the guidelines set forth in these Standards. We also expect carers to have read the terms and conditions prior to their first placement.
Strive to become a Carer of the Month

We love hearing stories from family members that shine light on the care professionals that have gone above and beyond.

Words can rarely describe just how grateful we are to work with such passionate carers, and often these words go unshared. Our ‘Carer of the Month’ initiative helps us recognise carers that have gone that extra mile.

Each month, we’ll invite family members to nominate carers that they feel have been exceptional. We will then carefully select the carer that we believe exceeds our standards and deserves recognition.

As Carer of the Month, your story would be highlighted in our monthly newsletter and you would receive a badge on your profile that would help you shine and secure future placements at ease.
# Table of Contents

**How to be an Elder-approved carer** ........................................... i

**What we consider to be great care** ........................................... ii

**What we expect from you** ....................................................... iii

**Strive to become a Carer of the Month** ................................... iv

**Before you join a placement** ..................................................... 1

- Keeping your DBS updated ...................................................... 3
- Travelling to placements ........................................................ 5
- Always aim to stick with the plan ............................................. 6
- Keeping in touch with Elder .................................................... 7

**Personal care – intimate support that keeps people clean, happy and safe** .... 8

- A professional, person-centred approach .................................. 8
- Washing, grooming ................................................................ 9
- and other personal care ......................................................... 9
- Support with toileting ............................................................ 11
- Nutrition and hydration ......................................................... 12
- Sleep and night time .............................................................. 15
- Help to get about .................................................................. 17
- Medication monitoring ........................................................... 18
Domestic duties – help to make life as happy and comfortable as possible 19

- Activities and companionship 19
- Shopping and household activities 22
- A tidy house 23
- Communication 25
- Taking a break 27
- Taking time off 28
- Handing over to a new carer 30
- What to expect from the family 32

Our Standards:
Recap and Next Steps 33
Before you join a placement

Being a successful carer with us starts before you start caring.

Make your profile shine

Keeping your profile updated is key to finding opportunities on the Elder platform.

Your profile is not only how a family understands your professional background, it’s how they get an idea of who you really are. To get access to the best opportunities, it’s essential that it really shines.

Without an updated and engaging profile, you’ll likely find it difficult to secure a placement. We may also restrict access to our platform if your profile is not accurate or meeting the standards set out in this guide.

Be yourself.

Go above and beyond, the Elder way.
Handing over to a new carer

When leaving a placement, you’re responsible for communicating all relevant and necessary information to the carer that will replace you.

Passing on the correct information
You should consider talking the replacement carer through the following information, as well as anything else you feel is relevant:

Your client – their routines, their likes and dislikes, the things they like to eat, the activities that make them smile.

The household – the facilities, any specialist equipment, the carer’s accommodation, the kitchen, and bathroom.

The local area – the nearest pharmacy, shopping area, park, bus stop, and anywhere else you feel is relevant.

Getting the timing right
Handovers must be completed in person, to allow enough time for conversation and questions. You shouldn’t plan travel until after 2pm on the day they leave, and the incoming carer should plan to arrive by 12.30pm.
As always, it’s important the household is ready for the incoming carer. Once you leave, we ask that you ensure the following are in order, and ready for the incoming carer:

- **Bedroom** – make sure fresh bedding and towels are available for the incoming carer.

- **Kitchen** – clean surfaces, cupboard doors, hob etc.

- **Washing** – ensure all the linens, towels and clothes are clean.

- **Washroom** - clean the bathroom sink, mirror, bath and toilet, with enough toilet paper too!

- **Meals** - stock the fridge to ensure at least one day’s worth of food and supplies are available.

- **Floors** - hoover and mop the floors. would ask that you leave the carer bedroom clean and tidy for the incoming carer as a courtesy to your colleague.
What you can do with your profile
Not only are you able to view and edit your profile, but you can also update your contact information, notification preferences and other details without dialling in.

You can also change your preferences. These help us know what type of placements you’re looking for, so we can match you with the perfect client. We may also be able to offer you e-learning modules which you could add to your profile.

What families look for in a profile
Families prefer profiles that include a friendly photo, a video that showcases not only your experiences, but also your passion for care, and a bio that further explores your hobbies and skills. Make sure you share any documents of your care-related skills or qualifications with us. We can highlight these on your profile, which will give you a real advantage.

It’s really about selling yourself, and making sure you come across as the kind of person you’d like looking after your own mum or dad. So be genuine, really show your personality, and make sure you update your profile regularly.

Get help updating your profile
Not sure where to start with your profile? Don’t worry, we’re to help. If you need our support to make your profile shine, simply contact carers@elder.org. We have a dedicated team who know what our customers look for. They’ll work with you to help you secure your next opportunity.

Let us know when you need to change secure details
Reach out if you ever need to change your name, contact details, and/or nationality. For security, you’re unable to edit these yourself.
Keeping your DBS updated

Your DBS shows us that you can be trusted to provide care
As an Elder-approved Carer, you must have an Enhanced DBS certificate on your account at all times. This helps us understand your records to ensure you’re safe to provide care.

Make sure your DBS doesn’t expire
In order to ensure the safety of our clients, all carers must have a DBS check that is less than two years and six months old. Without a clean and current DBS certificate, you’ll be restricted from our platform and unable to accept placements. We’ll remind you when it’s expiring, but it’s ultimately up to you to keep on top of this, so please don’t wait until the last minute.

Sign up for the Update Service
We recommend that you sign up for the update service, which is an online subscription service that lets you keep your standard and enhanced DBS certificates up-to-date. With your consent, we’ll be able to check your certificate online, rather than having you send anything in. For a small annual fee, your DBS would always be updated. Although many carers value this service, it’s optional and not a requirement in order to be part of the Elder Platform. Please be aware that we are not able to check certificates on the Child Barred List, only the Adult Barred List. This would need to be done within a month of the DBS being initially activated.
We can only check certain DBS
Due to GDPR regulations, we can’t check the update service for a DBS with a ‘Children’s Barred List’ check. If you have a DBS of this kind, you need to get a new DBS to continue taking work on the Elder platform.

Make sure your records reflect reality
If at any point you expect your record to not reflect reality – if you’ve had a run in with the law, for example – you must let us know. This is critical to ensure the health and safety of our customers.

If you fail to do this, we’d treat it as a very serious breach of the expected standards and this would likely result in you being removed from the Elder Platform.
Travelling to placements

We've made it easy to arrange cost-effective and flexible transport.

We know travel booking can be confusing, costly and time-consuming. Luckily, there is a solution in place to help you with all of your travel worries.

We've partnered with ClickTravel to give you access to a travel booking platform, which includes a variety of benefits such as no booking fees, reduced cancellation fees, live train updates and much more.

We expect you to sort out your travel to and from placements to ensure you arrive and leave on time, in accordance with our handover guidance. The handover should begin at 12:30 and end around 14:00, unless otherwise stated by Elder. It’s up to you whether you use ClickTravel or not, though we recommend their platform.

Benefits of booking through ClickTravel

1. No booking fees
2. Lower cancellation fees
3. Live travel updates
Always aim to stick with the plan

We understand plans change, but when carers drop out of placements, the client’s wellbeing is at risk

Once a placement has been confirmed by the family, it’s essential everything goes according to plan. Please be aware that if the family accepts you as their carer, you’ll be expected to accept the placement and arrive on time.

Not showing up puts people in danger
We trust that our customers are in good hands with you. Not showing up could put our care recipients in danger if we’re unable to find a replacement carer in time. This means you should arrive on time.

If you’re ever unable to attend the placement or arrive on time, we’d like to be notified as soon as possible, ideally before placement sign-off. However, we understand that this is not always possible.

If you drop out, we may have to remove you
Dropping out without good reason and notification will be seen as a serious breach of these standards. We maintain the right to remove carers from our platform that have dropped out after the placement has been signed off, although we will review cases independently to assess whether there was some acceptable explanation.
What happens when carers are removed
Our Quality Assurance team will review all dropouts, and remove access to the platform if a carer is deemed unreliable. Carers that are removed will always be notified of their status, likely via email. If there is an acceptable explanation causing the placement cancellation, we may reinstate onto the platform, but with a warning that any future occurrence would lead to removal.

Falling ill while on a placement
If you fall ill while on a placement, please contact Elder so we can provide guidance and find cover for the care recipient.

Keeping in touch with Elder

We may touch base with you while on placement, so please keep your contact information accurate and keep an eye on your emails and texts.

Remember, we’re here to support you throughout your Elder journey and sometimes seek clarity, request information or simply want to have a chat. We love hearing about the highs and lows, so we welcome you to proactively keep us in the loop.
Personal care – intimate support that keeps people clean, happy and safe

A professional, person-centred approach

Our clients have worked hard all their lives. They deserve to live their own life, on their own terms, in their own home.

You’re here to embrace their reality, bring colour to their lives with your own personal, yet professional twist and encourage them to live fully. Always offer choice and support independence when possible.

Take time to discover the client’s daily routine, and respect their personal boundaries and preferences. It’s essential to build trust and provide personal care in a discreet, dignified way. Involve the client in their care by providing choice and asking how they want to be supported.
Examples of person-centred care

Person-centred care is all about putting your client’s wishes at the centre of what you do. It’s about having a conversation with them and their family to follow their routine. Consider the key parts of daily life that you’d like to have a say over if you were in their position:

- **The time they get up**
- **What they like to eat**
- **The type of personal care tasks you provide**
- **What they want to wear**
- **How they want to be washed**
- **The activities they enjoy doing**

Washing, grooming and other personal care

Support your client with their personal hygiene, dressing and grooming in accordance with their routine. Help them maintain independence wherever possible.

**Assisting with daily hygiene**

You can assist your client as necessary, with bathing, showering, dressing, oral hygiene, shaving, foot care, and by applying lotions and creams.
Assessing skin health
The client’s skin should be kept dry, while still moisturised, and its condition should be assessed daily. To do this, monitor regularly to identify and report any changes such as redness, signs of pressure sores, and skin breakdown to the family and GP, or the client’s district nursing team.

If your placement offers care logs and incident management tracking via the Elder Hub, we invite you to keep track of any changes on a daily basis, directly through the portal... this would help keep the family up-to-speed.
Support with toileting

Help your client with their toileting needs, keeping in mind their normal routine and patterns. Assist them to and from the bathroom and support with commode use when helpful.

Using a commode
Maintain the commode and toileting equipment by cleaning after each use. Keep in mind that Elder advocates the use of commodes and urine bottles both upstairs and downstairs in order to reduce falls and accidents, especially at night.

Supporting a healthy diet
Support healthy elimination by ensuring your client consumes enough fluids and has a healthy diet, rich in fibre to avoid constipation. As you know, dehydration and fluid retention can lead to infections, which is why it’s important to keep your client hydrated.

You should monitor your client’s elimination patterns, raise any concerns and report changes with the relevant health professional, such as the client’s GP, the pharmacy or 111. These changes could include diarrhoea, constipation, or signs of a urinary tract infection, for example.

Handling advanced toileting tasks
Be aware that advanced toileting tasks such as catheter changing, stoma management and suppository administration should not be completed by carers. In most cases, these will need to be completed by district nurses, but it differs from client to client.

Always review the care appraisal prior to your arrival and confirm it’s correct. If not, clarify with the family and let us know immediately.
Nutrition and hydration

Appropriate nutrition and hydration is extremely important when caring for the elderly.

Nutritional deficiencies – for example, vitamin D – have been linked to increased falls, skin problems, changes in behaviour and depression. When caring for your clients, you have the unique opportunity to support their health and wellbeing with a careful and personalised approach.

Foods high in vitamins

- **Vitamin A** – Eggs, milk, carrots, sweet potatoes, and cantaloupe
- **Vitamin B** – brown rice, red meat, poultry, fish, milk, cheese, beans, lentils, sunflower seeds, almonds, broccoli, spinach, citrus fruits, avocados, bananas
- **Vitamin C** – Oranges, strawberries, tomatoes, kiwi, broccoli, and red and green bell peppers
- **Vitamin D** – Oily fish, such as salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel, along with red meat and, fortified foods, such as spreads and breakfast cereals.
- **Vitamin E** – Avocados, nuts, seeds, whole-grain foods, and spinach and other dark leafy greens

Preparing fresh meals

You should aim to prepare fresh meals of choice for your client, according to their preferences. Always ask them about their likes and dislikes and what they would prefer to eat, and adapt your cooking to them. If that’s not possible, strive to offer choices and invite the client to select their preferred option.
If you’re replacing a carer on a placement, always ask the outbound carer about the client’s meal preferences so you can get a head start to understanding what the client likes and dislikes.

**High-fibre food**

- Breakfast cereals such as plain wholewheat biscuits (like Weetabix), plain shredded whole grain (like Shredded wheat), and porridge (such as oats) are also a good source of fibre.
- Wholemeal or granary breads, along with white bread, and wholegrains like wholewheat pasta, bulgur wheat and brown rice are all high in fibre.
- Potatoes with their skins on, which could be served as a baked potato or boiled potatoes.
- Beans, lentils and chickpeas, which could be added to stews, curries and salads.
- Serve vegetables with as many meals as possible, either as a side dish or added to stews or curries.
- Prepare fresh or dried fruit, or offer fruit canned in natural juice (not sugar!) for dessert.
- For snacks, you can offer fresh fruit, vegetable sticks, rye crackers, oatcakes and unsalted nuts or seeds.

**Encouraging regular intervals**
Encourage your care recipient to eat regularly and hydrate – they should aim for six to eight glasses of water a day. If you have access to Care Logs through the Elder Hub, you can track fluctuations in your clients intake there.
Preparing meals suitably
The client must have the ability to keep, chew and swallow food or fluid in the mouth – you should never assist with PEG feeding. If the client is not able to eat unaided, then the carer should aid the client when eating through direct feeding using a spoon or a straw, if needed, and monitor the clients swallowing to prevent choking.

Concerned about how they’re eating?
If you ever have concerns around eating, you should immediately communicate this to the family and Elder. If thickeners or dietary supplements are used, an appropriate specialist (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy professional) must be involved.

Cooking for your client
You’re not expected to cook for the household or provide meals for the whole family, unless this is specified to you prior to accepting the placement or agreed while on placement. You should clean all utensils and the area after eating and preparing food to ensure cleanliness and prevent spread of infection.
Sleep and night time

Always support the client with their night time routine, and help maintain their usual patterns.

Ensuring safety and consistency
Encourage the client to have a regular bedtime, as a healthy routine leads to a restful night. Preparing the environment can be helpful, such as making the bed or space to sleep, adjusting the temperature, and securing the home by locking windows, closing doors and turning off electronics.

Preparing for a good night’s sleep
Before bedtime, assist the client with changing into night time clothes, ensuring that all necessary items are accessible – such as a urine bottle, commode next to their bed, and a glass of water on the bedside table. Prompt the client to take their nightly medication as applicable, but do not administer.
Help your care recipient into bed as required and ensure they are comfortable by helping them position themselves well to prevent falls and ensure comfort throughout the night. Some clients might need reassurance and your help to fall asleep. Playing light music, having their favourite blanket and sitting by their side may help them relax and feel restful.

**Assisting during the night**
You should be prepared to assist with disturbances up to three times per night for around 15 minutes on average. However, we recommend that steps are taken to minimise the client getting out of bed during the night, such as ensuring the commode is available to ensure safety.

**Getting enough rest yourself**
If disturbances are frequent, other arrangements will need to be made between you, the family and Elder. You should always feel that you’re well rested enough to be able to provide the care needed. It’s fine to build in additional breaks for yourself the following day as compensatory rest if you have had to offer overnight support.
Help to get about

Support your client with moving safely around the house for all day-to-day activities.

Moving your client safely
This can include the use of specialist equipment, such as hoists and walking aids, if specified on the placement. You should familiarise yourself with the equipment and contact the manufacturer if unsure how to use it properly.

You need to ensure correct and safe moving and handling techniques, as not following correct procedures can lead to injuries and is not safe for you or the client. Remember, you must not manually lift the client at any point.

Dealing with reduced mobility
If your client’s mobility is reduced, they should be assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT). The OT can advise on safely transferring the client and helping them move around.

You might need to use a wheelchair to help them access the community. If it’s an electric wheelchair, always make sure the batteries are fully charged before leaving the house. This will prevent inconveniences while out, bringing peace of mind for both you and your client.

Helping someone who’s bedbound
If your client spends most of their time in bed, we encourage you to assist them with changing positions to ensure comfort and prevent pressure sores. We encourage you to connect with the community nurses to explore whether or not a pressure relieving mattress or aid should be used.
Medication monitoring

You should collect the client’s prescriptions and prompt medication taking by setting reminders and sharing instructions to take pills.

Prompting use of medication
You should never directly administer prescription medication and as such, you’re not expected to fill out a MAR chart. You can, however, request a MAR chart from the client’s pharmacy to help the client keep track of their medication, but this is simply to make life easier for you.

Reporting any concerns
You need to monitor medication taking and report any concerns immediately – such as an adverse reaction to medication or a missed dose – to the GP and Elder. As always, in case of an emergency, please dial 999 immediately.

Do not hesitate to reach out to the family or Elder if you have concerns around taking medications. We’re here to help you in every way we can.
Domestic duties – help to make life as happy and comfortable as possible

Activities and companionship

It’s important for you to understand what your client likes and dislikes, what their interests are and what hobbies they would like your support with.

Understanding what they enjoy
This will help them remain independent, healthy and happy for as long as possible. When planning activities, we encourage you to speak with the family about the client to better understand what they enjoy.

Forming a bond
We suggest you spend time with the person being cared for as often as desired, to help keep them actively engaged and well. It’s easy to bond and form a close relationship with your client when living with them, but it’s always important to keep professional boundaries and respect the client’s privacy.

Can you accept gifts from your client?
We strongly advise that you do not accept any gifts from the client and let Elder know when offered, especially if people don’t have the mental capacity to know what they’re giving away.
Planning activities
All activities must consider the ability and wishes of the client. You should identify opportunities to help the client relax, by encouraging the client to engage with activities that restore peace of mind.

Always aim to help your client feel comfortable. You could do this by playing their favourite music and encouraging their desire to sing – hopefully along with them.

Idea for activities
The activities you do with your client will always depend on their physical and mental capacity. But here are some ideas:

- Board games and jigsaws
- Quizzes, crosswords and brain games
- Gardening and flower arranging
- Walks around the local park
- Looking through photo albums
- Making a scrapbook
- Seated exercises and stretches
- Planning the week’s meals

Supporting worship
You aren’t expected to participate directly in the clients religious practices (unless you wish to do so), but you should support them in getting to their place of worship and accompanying them if welcomed.

Your client might want to be visited by a chaplain if they’re not able to visit their place of worship, so you should support their wishes by making reasonable accommodations.
Going to community activities
You can travel with clients to day centres, tea mornings and other community interactions in the clients neighbourhoods, if the family agrees in advance.

You should prepare your client before they go out, and bring all appropriate items to meet their needs while away – this could include medications, wipes, toileting supplies, etc).

Be ready to assist with transport to any activities, such as using public or private transportation, driving (if agreed prior to the placement) or walking.

Planning the diary
As a carer, you play a vital role in supporting your client in planning the week ahead. Making sure there’s always something to look forward to helps everyone stay happier.

But you should also always assist clients to keep on top of more practical dates in the diary such as medical appointments, events and family gatherings.
Shopping and household activities

You may be expected to shop for food and other necessary household items at the request of the client.

Doing the shopping
To best prepare, you should compose a shopping list beforehand. This will depend on what is needed at the property, and items that will meet the preferences of the client. This includes purchasing and transporting items.

Remember, grocery shopping can be done online and delivered directly to the home of the client. Always complete responsible money transactions as agreed by the family.

Budgeting with the family
We always recommend families provide a prepaid card and guidance if you're required to do this. You can expect a weekly food budget to do the shopping, or in some cases, a separate arrangement that could also include a personal weekly food budget. We recommend to families that your personal food budget should be around £30 per week.
Counting the pennies
You should always keep receipts for every transaction and agree the budget with the family, asking for guidance when necessary. You should not engage in other cash transactions, or enter into other financial arrangements with the family.

Keeping proof of purchases
If you’re given a budget by the family to pay for shopping or other items, it’s very important to keep all your receipts. If there are ever concerns or confusion around money, you can easily show a complete history of your spending and clear any concerns with the receipts.

Please understand that you should not purchase items for your own benefit from the budget that’s been allocated to you. If in doubt, please call Elder to discuss finances. As always, we’re here for you.

A tidy house

You’re expected to maintain a clean environment to ensure the client’s safety and wellbeing.

Ensuring a safe environment
This includes light cleaning and tidying around your care duties, to keep the house hazard free and pleasant to live in. As you know, older adults are more susceptible to bacterial infections, so it’s important that you clean the living area every day with water and detergent to ensure good infection control.

Doing the laundry
You should also aim to keep on top of laundry to meet the needs of the client and yourself. This includes regular washing of linens, towels and clothes. You’re not required to do the washing of other members of the household unless this has been explicitly agreed prior to starting the placement.
Getting help with deep cleaning
Although you’re expected to keep the home clean, we encourage families to use professional cleaning services for deep cleaning. If you ever feel that the home or care environment does not match the care appraisal, please speak with the family and let us know so we can help.

What’s the difference between regular and deep cleaning?

**Regular cleaning** maintains a good level of cleanliness around the house, such as hoovering and mopping the floors, cleaning the bathroom sink, mirror, bath and toilet, tidying up, and cleaning the kitchen surfaces, cupboard doors, hob etc. to ensure the home environment is both clean and comfortable.

**Deep cleaning** covers areas which aren’t traditionally covered by a regular clean such as cleaning behind kitchen appliances like the washing machine and oven, under the sink, inside the oven, inside of window frames, inside and outside of all windows. It would also include scale removal from all bathroom tiles, kitchen tiles, taps, shower heads etc.
Understanding how to use appliances
Upon arrival, you should be shown how to use and maintain personal and household possessions (this could include white goods and appliances, for example) and to find out whom to contact if any of these possessions should stop working. This may occur during the handover process or by the family.

Communication

Communication is critical to ensure the right care is being delivered and everyone is happy.

Staying in touch with family
We recommend you share regular updates with the client’s family on any changes in care needs and events that occur either out of the norm or simply worth sharing. In case of an emergency or change in the care appraisal, we expect you to notify the family members first (after emergency services), then Elder.
Sharing the moments of joy
If you’re having a special moment, such as a day out, a special meal, or a celebration, why not send a photo to the family? It can be stressful when a loved one is receiving care so it’s nice to show them the happy moments.

Letting us know if the care appraisal isn’t right
You’ll be provided with a care appraisal in advance of starting any placement. Upon arrival and throughout your time on the placement, if you notice that the care appraisal is not up to date for some reason, please send us an email at carers@elder.org outlining any changes and updates so that we can ask the customer to update the care appraisal.

Keeping the care appraisal updated
You should always review the care appraisal with the outgoing carer during the handover to ensure accuracy. If the care appraisal is not accurate, please inform the family and Elder.

You should make the family and Elder aware if there are any differences between the reality of care needs and the care appraisal for the placement, so that this can be updated and sorted accordingly.
Taking a break

Caring can be tough. It’s essential you give yourself some down time to rest and recharge during your placement.

Splitting up your breaks
You’re responsible for managing your own time during the day, while always ensuring the client’s needs are met. When planning the day, you should build in some breaks for yourself.

We recommend breaks of around two hours in total over the working day, which are split into several breaks. This is in addition to your own time in the evening and night-time.

Planning breaks with the family
You should always arrange breaks around the needs of your client. Unless specified otherwise in the care appraisal, client’s should never be left unattended, as this could potentially be dangerous.

You should agree the time of your break with the client or their family to ensure you get adequate rest. We ask that you be flexible and take your breaks around the client’s routine.

Raising concerns about breaks
Any issues with taking adequate breaks should be discussed with the client’s family. We also request that you report this to Elder as soon as possible. You should never leave your client alone while on placement unless specified in the care appraisal. Not only would this be dangerous for the care recipient, but you could be liable for neglect.
Taking time off

Continuity of care matters. It helps to ensure that clients are receiving care that meets their needs, with consistency and familiarity.

Caring is tough work, and your rest is important. You should take regular time off, so that you can care for yourself too. Whether you’re a primary or respite carer, during this period away, a replacement carer will take over.

Giving us plenty of notice
In order to ensure a safe handover, we request that you provide us with a minimum of two weeks’ notice before booking a long-term break. This will allow us enough time to secure another carer for the handover. You can coordinate respite breaks by notifying Elder.

Communicating with the family
Ideally respite breaks will be planned out in advance, in agreement with your client and their family – for example, when the placement starts. We know it’s not always possible. But the more time everyone has to plan, the smoother the handover will be and, ultimately, the happier and safer your client will be.
Through collaboration between primary and respite carers, we can work together to deliver the best care experience for those who need it most.

Whether you prefer being a primary or respite carer, here’s what it means for you on the Elder platform:

**Primary care:****
As a primary carer providing continuous, ongoing care, you’ll be better placed to build strong relationships with clients. Over time, you’ll become familiar with a client’s personal preferences and gain confidence delivering their unique care needs. We’ll always ask that your upcoming breaks are scheduled so that we can sort out care while you’re away. If you ever need to deviate from the schedule, please let us know well in advance.

**Respite care:****
As a respite carer, you’ll help to ensure clients receive the continuity of care they deserve whilst a primary carer is away. Though you may spend less time with clients, you’ll still be building strong relationships when returning to cover scheduled breaks. We’ll also want you to schedule your return well in advance, so we can help offer continuity of care for the client.
Reacting to a fall
In the event of a fall, we recommend that you do not physically intervene as this can cause further injury. Instead, assess the injury and put the client in a recovery position if feasible. Then call an emergency service – even if all appears to be fine.

If the client does not agree for the ambulance to be called, contact the non-emergency service on 111 for advice. Always keep the family and Elder informed.

Contacting the GP
If at any point during your placement, the client appears unwell or you notice changes in their behaviour and normal routine, or suspect an infection, call their GP for advice and communicate your concerns with the family.

We strongly advise that you put together an emergency contact list at the start of your placement for any potential crisis.
What to expect from the family

We always ask families to check the appliances in the house prior to accepting new carers in order to ensure everything is working properly.

Arriving to everything working
The shower, washing machine and cooker should be in full working order. If there are any security cameras operating on the property, you should be made aware of these beforehand.

Staying in private space
You should always have access to a comfortable, clean and private room, with some storage for clothes and personal possessions, and fresh sheets and towels for when you first arrive.

You should only care for your client

Please be aware that Elder approved carers are not expected to provide care for other members of the family aside from the primary client(s).

Elder-approved carers should not arrange or supervise care for others, so if in doubt, please contact us and we’ll help sort it. We hope you’ll take our recommendations to heart.
We’re your biggest advocates and want to see you shine. While caring, we expect you to treat your care recipients, their family members and other stakeholders with the utmost respect and professionalism. This means you’ll be honest, organised, committed and flexible in your approach. We ask that families extend the same values towards you. While off placement, we encourage you to keep your profile accurate and to follow the guidelines set forth in these Standards.

As a self-employed live-in carer, you may be faced with a number of challenges related to entering a person’s home, providing care, or getting along with the care recipient and their family. We’re available to provide clarity if there are issues around the standards you’re uncertain about. It’s important that you let us know if issues arise while on a placement as we may be able to assist in resolving the matter.
We can all make mistakes from time to time. If you have mistakenly done something which you think may not meet these standards, then it’s important you tell us about it as soon as possible. If we’re reviewing a potential breach, we would take into account in deciding how serious that is whether you have flagged the issue to us from the start. Whereas if an incident came to light and you had not flagged it, that may well make it more serious. Dealing with issues promptly and transparently from the start will increase the chances it can be resolved in an acceptable way.

In some events, a family may contact Elder to lodge a complaint. We will do our best to investigate the validity of these on a case by case basis and communicate them to you. We would expect you to co-operate in any investigation if requested.

As Elder-approved carers should always maintain professional standards, we recommend that you avoid consuming alcohol and other drugs whilst on placement. It is also recommended that you do not have visitors whilst on placement, unless agreed upon with the client. We recommend that you notify Elder beforehand.

Where we have any concerns about these standards not being met, we may review a carer’s performance - both on and off placements - by convening a Carer Quality panel to monitor, review and discuss any issues and incidents. This panel will advise on any suggested actions to help ensure that all Elder-approved carers meet the minimum standards, and where necessary improve their behaviours.
Due to the nature of live-in care, we may restrict your access to our platform during this review process. Please note that Elder has the right to remove you from using the Elder platform at any time.

You may be removed from a placement at any time where the client requests this. Where any complaint has been lodged against you, we would ordinarily expect the placement to be ended immediately (although we would always check this with the client).

If your placement is terminated, you should leave promptly and professionally when requested, typically when another carer arrives on site. You would normally be able to gather your personal belongings from your room and if appropriate say your goodbyes to the client, but you must never criticise the client or argue your case with them even if the termination is at their request. You must be professional and put their care needs first, even if there is provocation.

As always, we recommend that you familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions located on the Elder Hub and be transparent with us. We’ll do our best to offer the same level of transparency throughout your journey with us.

We expect you to have read the terms and conditions prior to your first placement. You can always refer back - these documents exist in order to help you succeed!
We look forward to supporting you throughout your journey as an Elder-approved carer.

Have questions? No worries! If there’s anything you don’t understand or you’re unsure about, drop us an email or reach us by phone and we’ll happily help:

carers@elder.org | 0333 150 2350