



Beyond Words

empowering people through pictures

Getting Help with Gas

Keri-Michèle Lodge, Nigel Hollins and Sheila Hollins
illustrated by Lucy Bergonzi











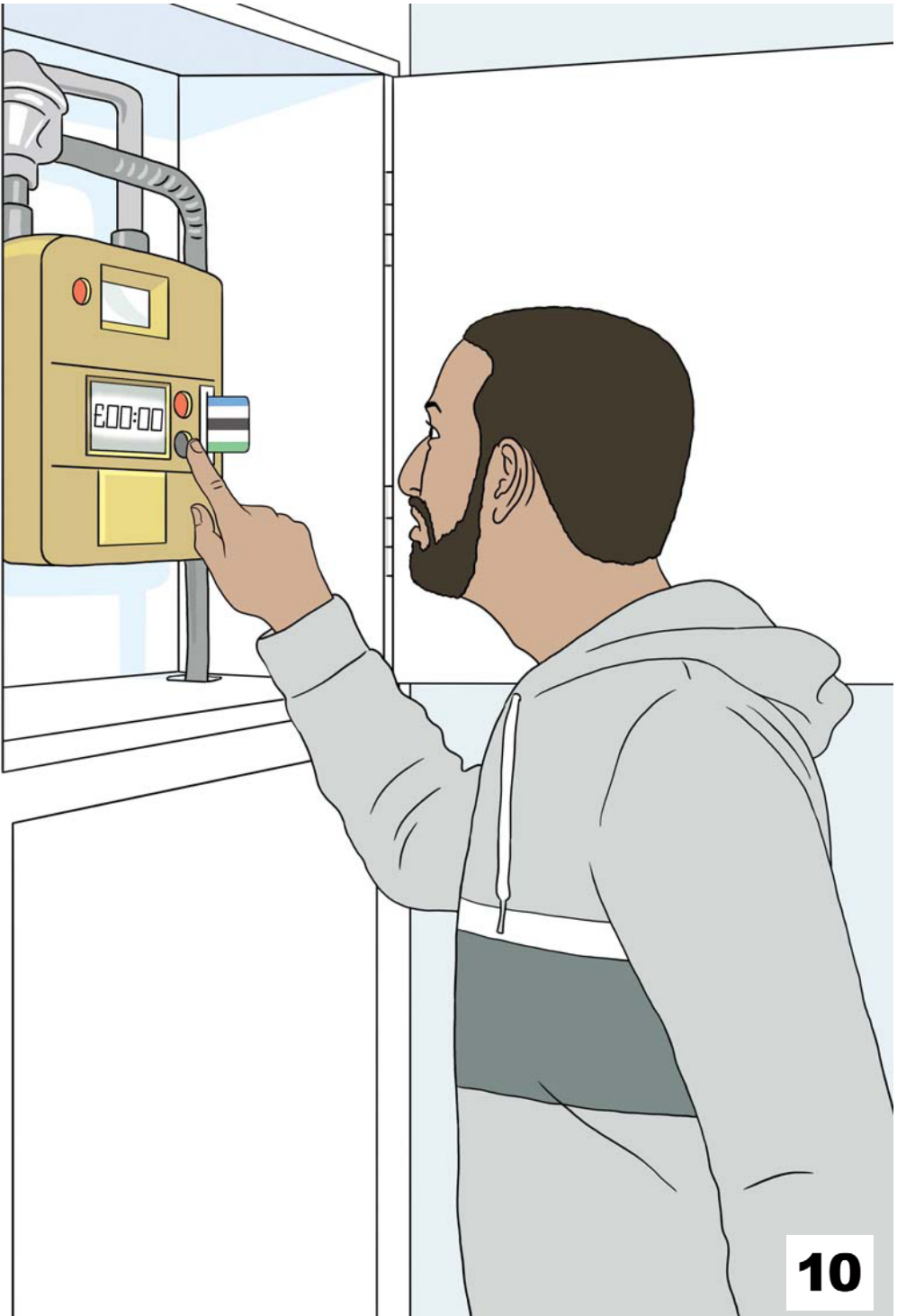








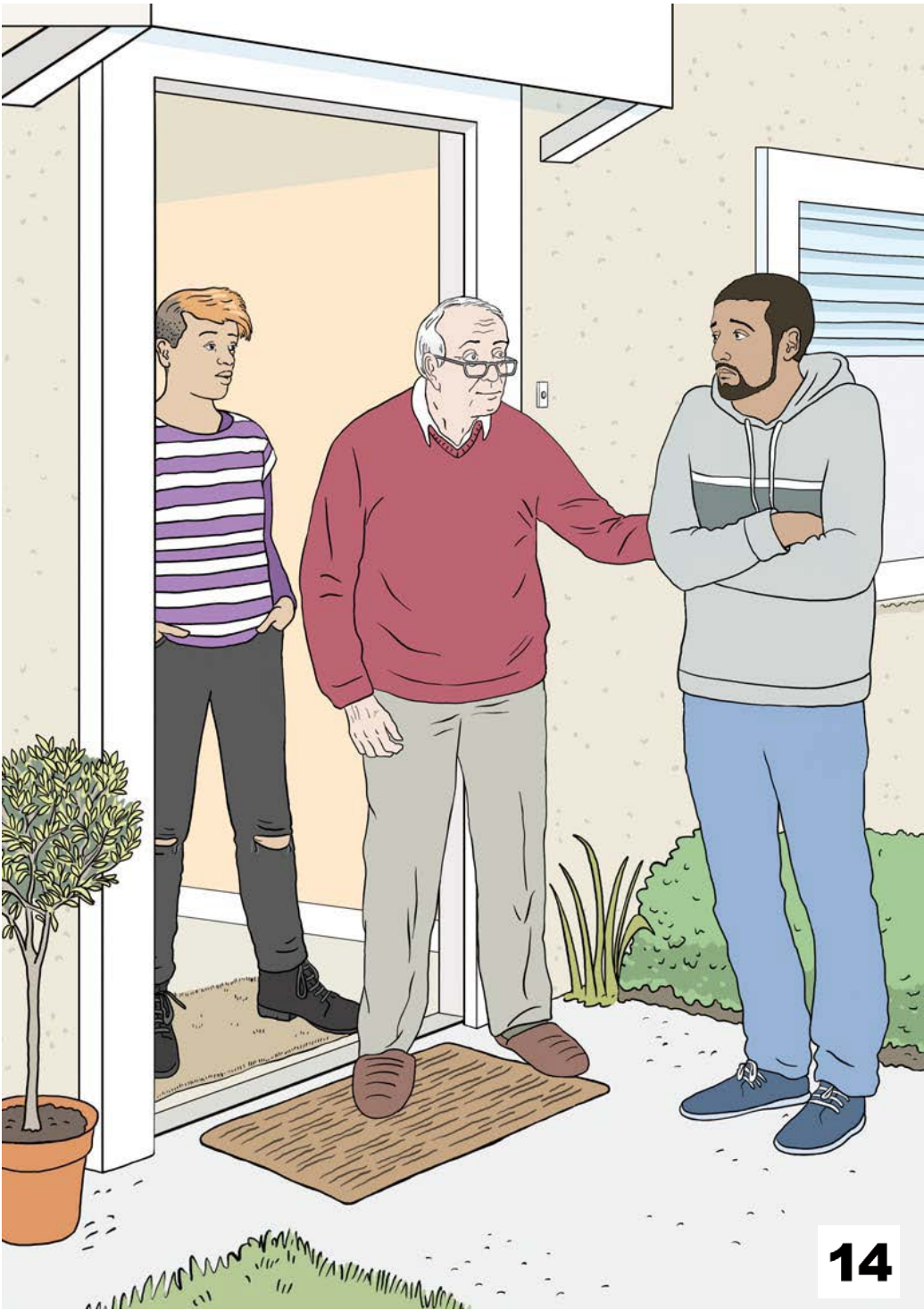




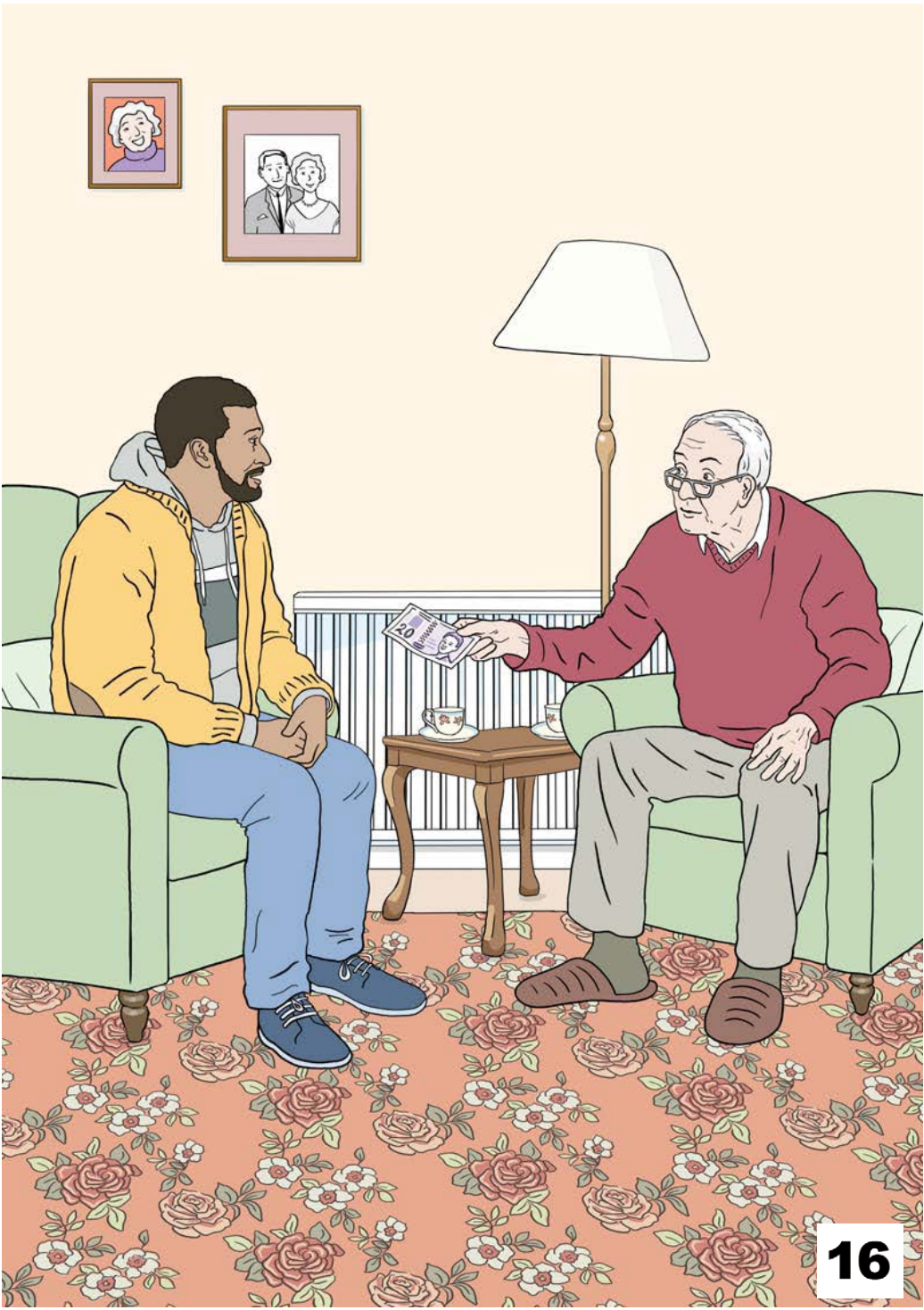






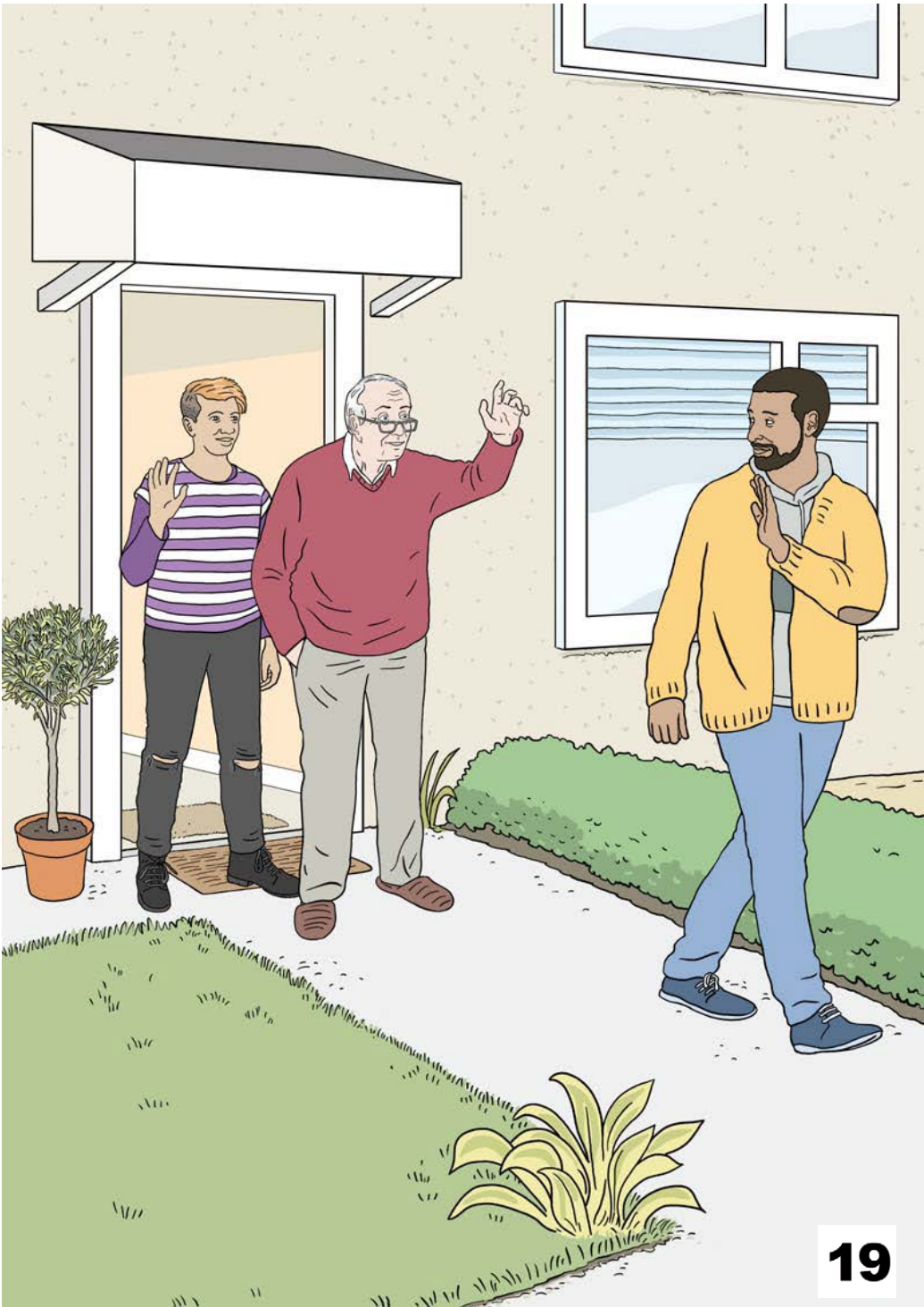










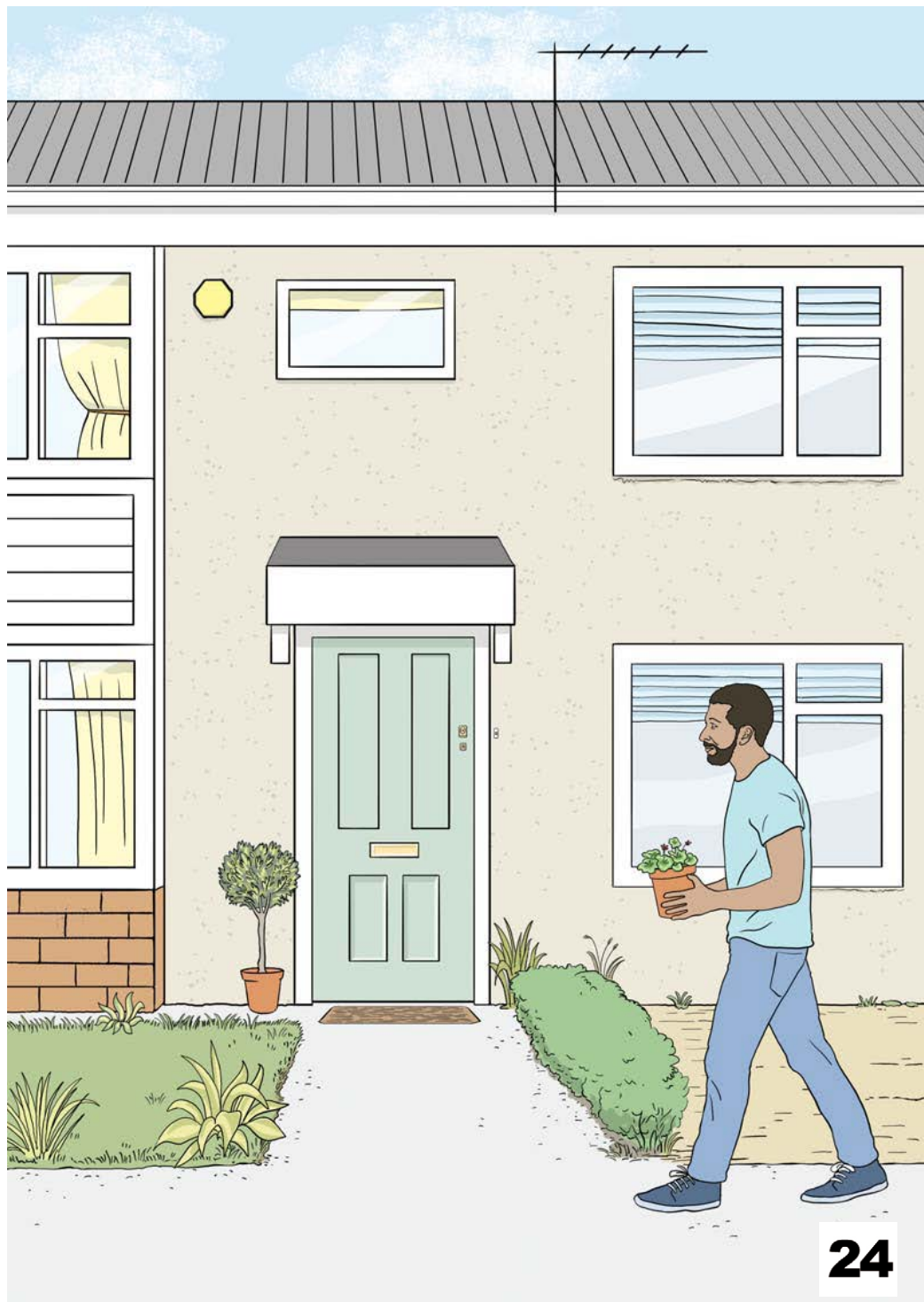




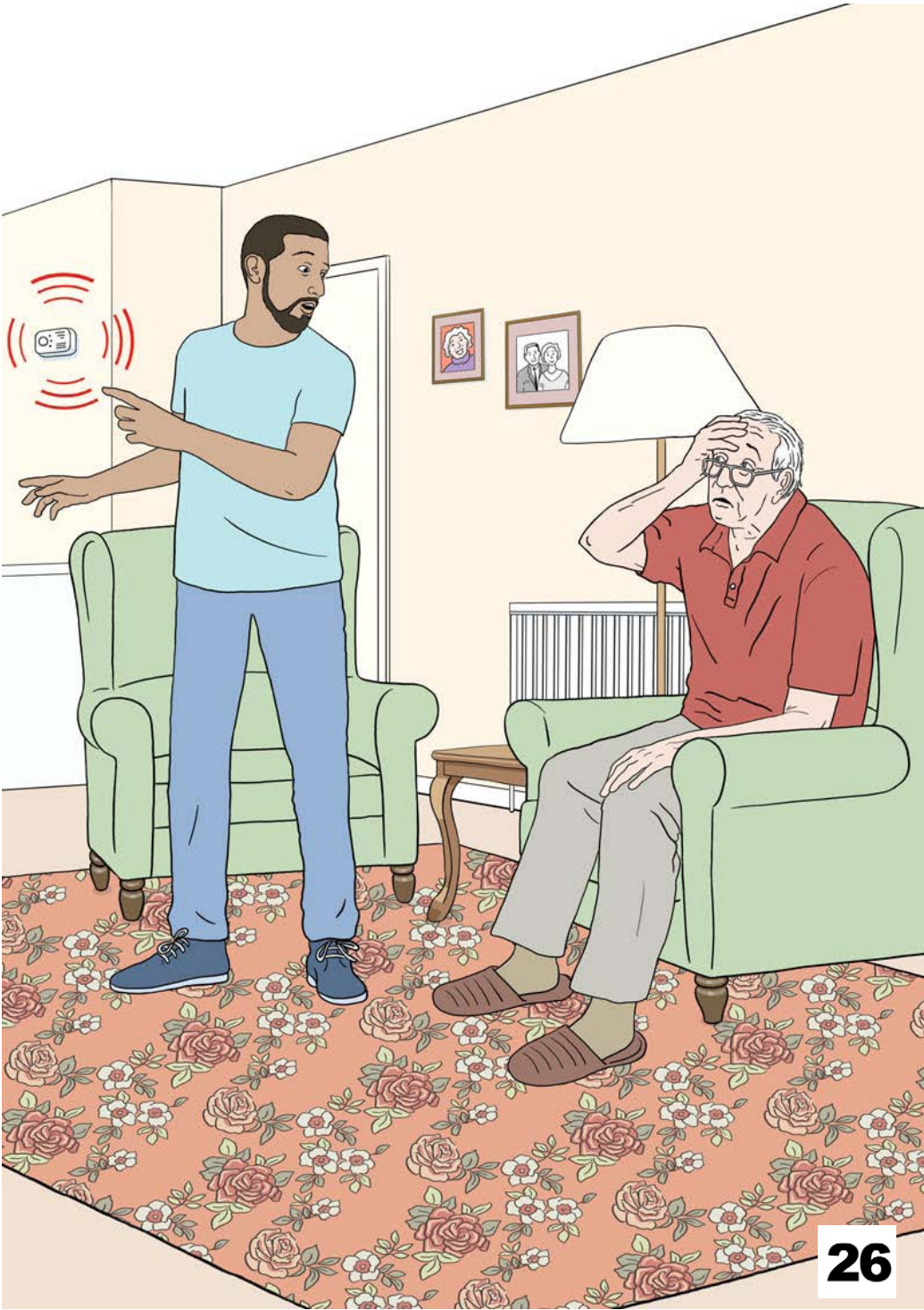




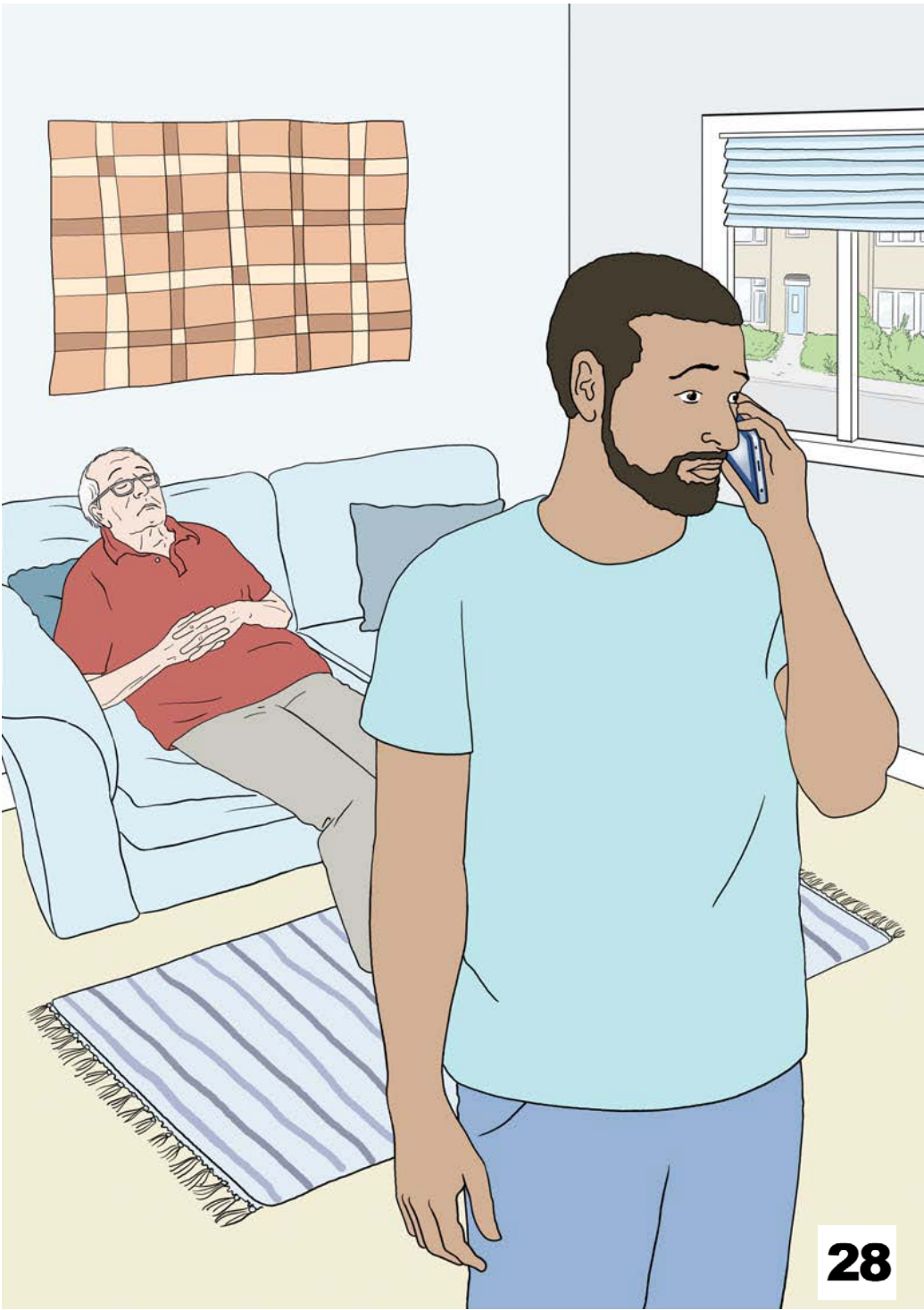










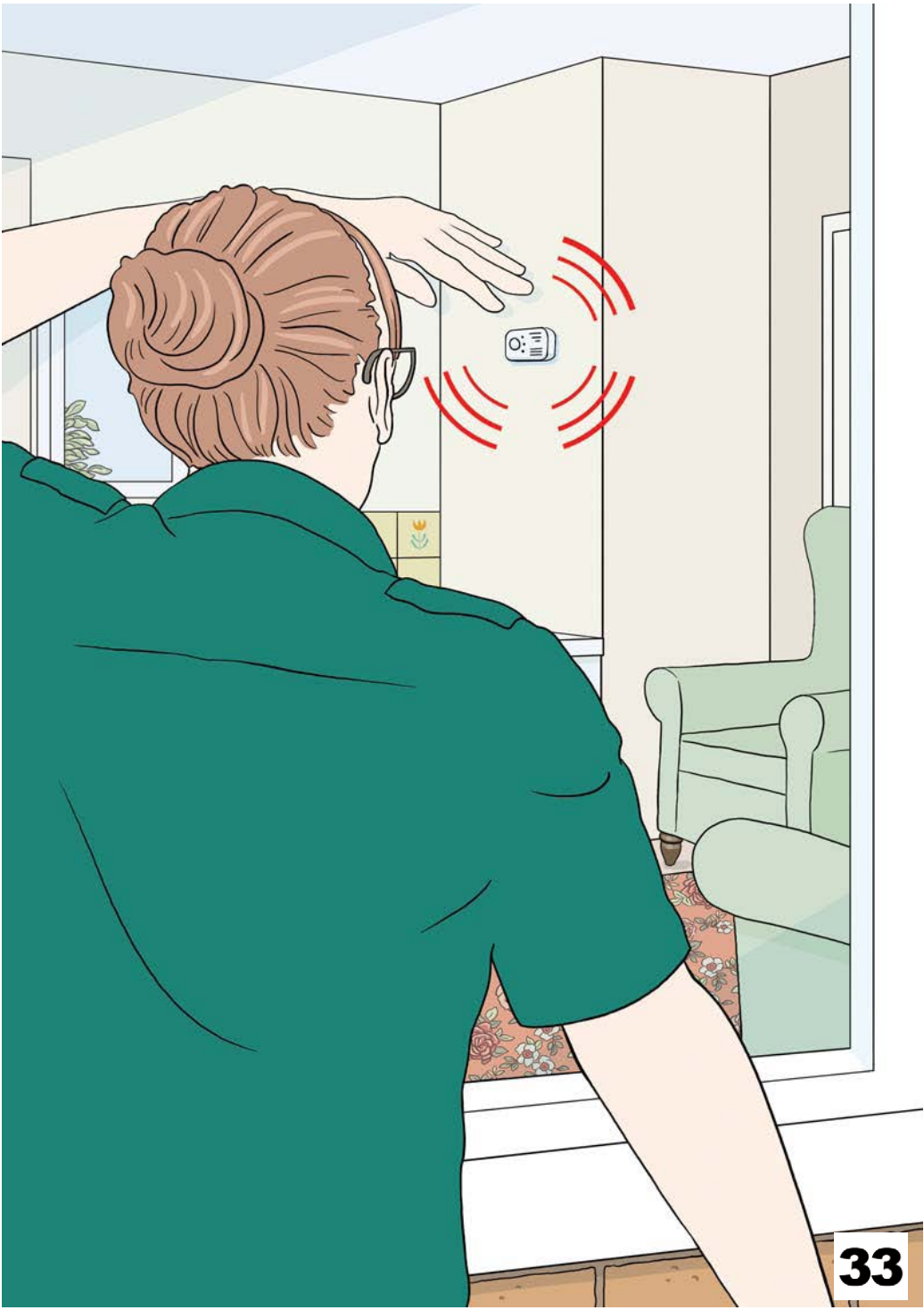


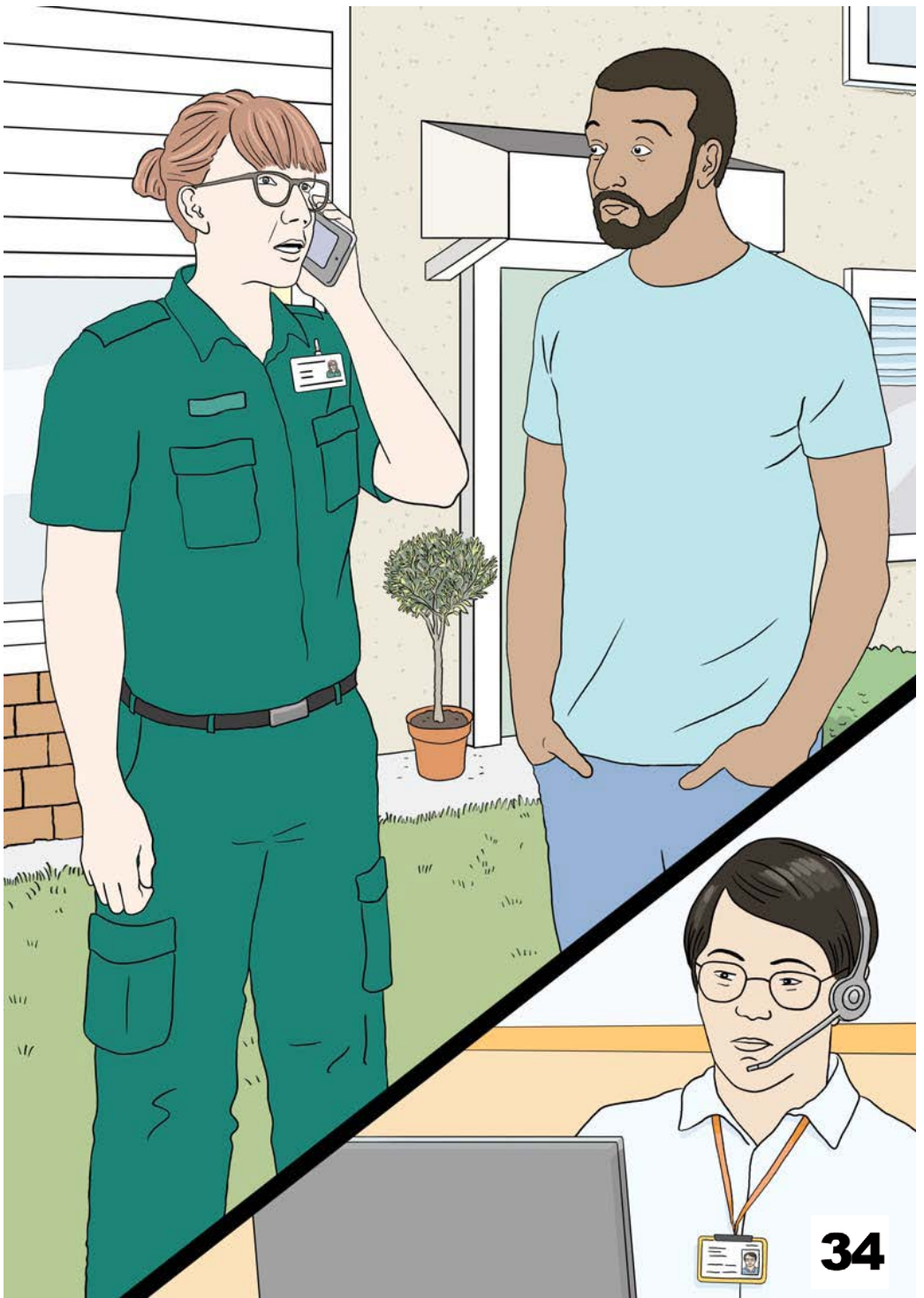






























Getting Help with Gas

**Keri-Michèle Lodge, Nigel Hollins and
Sheila Hollins**

illustrated by Lucy Bergonzi

Beyond Words

Leatherhead

How to read this book

You can read this book on your own, with another person or in a group. It is not necessary to be able to read or to speak any words at all.

Start at the beginning and encourage the reader to turn the pages themselves. Everyone can tell the story they see in their own way – with words, signs, facial expressions or whatever works for them. Whether you are reading the book with one person or with a group, encourage them to tell the story in their own words. You will discover what each person thinks is happening, what they already know and how they feel. You may think something different is happening in the pictures yourself, but that doesn't matter. Their interpretation tells you about their life experience.

Some people will follow the story without any problems. If a picture is more difficult, it can help to prompt with open questions, gradually going deeper into the meaning, for example:

- I wonder who that is?
- I wonder what is happening?
- What is he or she doing now?
- I wonder how he or she is feeling?
- Have you felt like that? Has it happened to you/ your friend/ your family?

You don't have to read the whole story in one sitting. Allow people time to follow the pictures at their own pace. Stay longer with any pictures they are drawn to.

What this book is about

In this story you will meet two different households who live next door to each other and journey with them as they encounter home safety issues. First, both families deal with an unfamiliar person coming to the door. We see that he is a scammer and thief. The two households work together to solve the problems that occur after he steals from one of them. The neighbours are becoming friends. They help keep each other safe, with one of them helping the other when there is a carbon monoxide leak in his home that makes him poorly. We see that with our family, friends and community, we can all support each other to live safely.

Who this book is for

Everyone will learn something from the stories in this book. This includes people who live independently or in supported living, people who live with family or in residential care, as well as carers, supporters, friends, and family.

Readers may have had personal experience of people claiming to be from a utility company coming to the door and trying to come inside. Or they may have had to contact their energy supplier for help, for example when something has gone wrong with their gas supply. It can be difficult to know who to trust or what to do in an emergency.

This book will help start conversations about staying safe in the home.

Readers will understand more and be better able to communicate about problems that arise and become more aware of potential hazards at home.

The Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free service to support those with additional communication, access or safety needs. The PSR helps utility companies, like energy suppliers, gas, electricity and water networks to ensure its customers receive the help they need in everyday matters. They can also help when there are interruptions to the customers' supply.

When someone signs up for the Priority Services Register, it shares their information with the company they pay their energy bills to, and the other utilities companies that work in their area for services like electricity, water and gas. Companies are signed up to the PSR Promise and follow privacy laws to make sure personal information is secure and not used for marketing.

Special support for people signed up to the Priority Services Register includes:

- Support and information during a power or gas supply interruption. A person can contact the network operators in the UK 24 hours a day and get priority updates during a power cut. If the power needs to be turned off for maintenance, the companies will let them know before it happens.
- Joining the PSR allows a person to set a password that can be used when electricity or gas companies call on the phone or knock at the door, helping someone to be confident they are not being scammed.
- The person can nominate a carer, family member or friend for their utility companies to contact on their behalf.
- Communications can be tailored to a person's needs, including large print, Braille, textphone, audio, or a language other than English.
- If gas supply is interrupted for a prolonged period and a person is on mains gas, emergency electrical heating and cooking appliances may be provided.
- Connection to local emergency services. The energy companies will work with local authorities, emergency services and agencies like the British Red Cross to provide extra support.
- If the person uses medical equipment or aids which use electricity or water, being signed up to the Priority Services Register helps keep them prioritised in an emergency. Portable generators or bottled water can be delivered when necessary.
- Where eligible, the person may be able to receive an

annual free gas safety check to test their gas supply and appliances are safe to use.

A person can sign up if they:

- Use medical equipment that needs electricity or water
- Are deaf or hard of hearing
- Have a disability, including a learning disability or autism
- Need documents translated into another format or language
- Live with children under five
- Have a chronic illness
- Are of pensionable age
- Are blind or partially sighted
- Have anxiety, depression or any mental health condition
- Have loss or impairment of smell
- Temporarily need extra support

Join the Priority Services Register by visiting its website at **www.thepsr.co.uk** and entering your post code. This will then redirect you to your energy supplier where you can sign up for the PSR.

How to stay safe from scams

Scams are different ways that criminals try to take money or personal information from a person. They might tell someone they are from a company like an energy supplier, or tell them they have won a competition or prize. Or they might try to frighten or worry a person with false information. Scams are against the law and should be reported to the police.

There are lots of different types of scams. While our book is about a person who comes to the door and pretends to be from a gas company, scams can also happen over the telephone, through the post, on the internet, or through text messages.

Try to keep yourself safe from scams by only giving your personal information to people you know or who you can prove they are who they say they are.

A good way is to check their ID badge (identification) or ask someone else check it for you. If a person does not want you to check or starts to get impatient, that can be a sign they are a scammer.

If you think someone on your doorstep is trying to scam you, call the police on 101. If the scammer is still there and you are worried, call 999.

Call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506

Never let anyone into your home unless you know who they are, or they have shown you or your supporter their identification and you have checked it.

If you are worried you have been scammed or that someone has tried to scam you, call Action Fraud on 0300 1232040.

Visit our resources section to find more resources, including Easy Read resources, on how to avoid being scammed.

What is carbon monoxide poisoning?

Carbon monoxide is a gas that can make you ill.

Carbon monoxide comes from burning gas, wood, oil or coal. In the home, carbon monoxide can come from things used for cooking or for heating, like gas boilers and cookers, paraffin heaters and coal fires, if they are not working properly.

Carbon monoxide does not smell. It does not have a colour or a taste. It can be hard to know if it is around you.

Carbon monoxide can make you feel dizzy, sick, weak or confused. It can give you a headache and make you short of breath. Being outside in fresh air can make you feel better.

If you think you or someone you know has carbon monoxide poisoning, you should:

- open the windows and doors,
- turn off anything that might be making carbon monoxide such as a cooker or heater,
- go outside into the fresh air,
- get medical help by ringing 999. The affected person may need to go to hospital to have their carbon monoxide levels checked. They may also need treatment with oxygen through a face mask. With early treatment, most people with mild symptoms get completely better.

It is important to ring the National Gas helpline on 0800 111 999.

You should not go back into the affected building until the carbon monoxide has gone.

Carbon monoxide alarms may look different in different houses. Some are placed on the wall or ceiling, while others

may sit on a shelf. Some might be rectangular while others are circles. Here are some examples of carbon monoxide alarms:





Useful resources

Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free, UK-wide service which provides extra advice and support to people about their utilities. Being on the PSR entitles a person to much more support during problems with energy supply or outages, as well as more inclusive communications. A person on the PSR can also nominate a friend, carer or family member to talk to energy and water companies on their behalf. www.thepsr.co.uk

Mencap has produced easy read information about the Priority Services Register that is available here: www.mencap.org.uk/easyread/priority-services-register

Friends Against Scams

Friends Against Scams is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand. They have Easy Read leaflets about scams available on their website.

www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/easyread

London Fire Brigade Fire Safety Leaflet

The London Fire Brigade have produced an easy read guide to fire safety in the home, including what to watch out for with Carbon Monoxide poisoning. You can find the leaflet on their website. www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/5434/fsith-easy-read-lfb-101120-final.pdf

Cadent Gas: What to Expect When an Engineer Comes to Visit

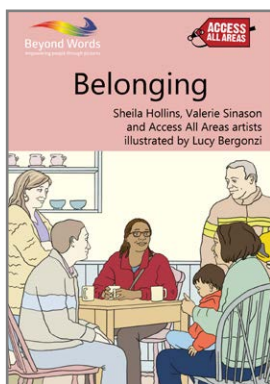
Cadent is the UK's largest gas distribution network, bringing gas to over 11 million homes and businesses. Its engineers enter the homes of thousands of people every day. Many

may be put in a vulnerable situation if their gas supply fails. Many require additional support that its frontline workers are trained to spot and offer help through Cadent's partners and services.

Cadent understands that standardised literature is not suitable for all its customers. By partnering with organisations like Beyond Words, it can ensure that customers with extra communication, access or safety needs can equally understand and access services – keeping them safe, warm and connected in their homes. It has produced a video available on YouTube about what to expect when an engineer comes to visit, available at this link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mawhKacU_XE

More stories to enjoy

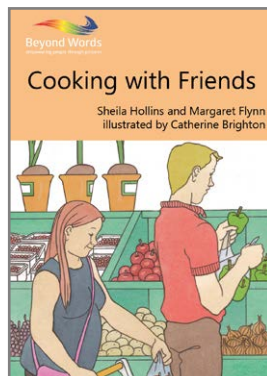


Belonging

Kali is lonely but helps Stefan during an emergency. She makes friends and starts to feel like she belongs.

Cooking with Friends

Choosing, cooking and eating food can be fun as well as being healthy and safe.



Ginger is a Hero

Mary doesn't get on with her neighbour. But when Mrs Hill has a fall, Mary and Ginger the cat help to save her life.

Find these, and our other titles, here:

www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk

Authors and Artist

Keri-Michèle Lodge is a Consultant in Learning Disability Psychiatry at Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Before becoming a doctor, she worked as a community support assistant, supporting adults with a learning disability to live in their own homes. She is also a sibling carer.

Nigel Hollins is the Co-Founder of Beyond Words and the original inspiration for our books. He has lived on his own, with support, for many years and shared his experiences for the creation of this book. Nigel has previously co-authored and advised on many different Beyond Words titles, including *The Drama Group* and *Peter's New Home*.

Sheila Hollins is the Founder, Lead Editor and Executive Chair of Beyond Words, and a family carer. She is Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry of Disability at St George's, University of London, and is a Member of the House of Lords. She is a past President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

Lucy Bergonzi has worked as a muralist, theatre designer, community artist and art tutor. For many years she worked in the voluntary and community sector, with wide experience of supporting people with learning disabilities. She is the illustrator of several titles for Books Beyond Words, including *Belonging*, *Choosing My First Job*, *Beating the Virus* and *Love in Lockdown*. Lucy's website is:
www.lucybergonzi.co.uk

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the generous support and advice of everyone who has helped us bring this book to life. Special thanks to the organisations, groups and people who trialled this book: Proactive community members including Emma Jane, Michael, Leanne and Robert, facilitated by Helen Guest, Co-Production Manager at Active Prospects; Gravesend Book Club including Andy, Tony, James, Jamie, Manbir, Kashmira, Peter, Adrian, Lucy and Ricky; Dartford Book Club; other members of Kent Book Clubs including Julie, Sue and Marc; KeyRing Bexleyheath; and Sarah Cookson.

Our illustrator Lucy is grateful to her models Chris, Des, Luke, Rosie and Steve for their help when she was creating the pictures for *Getting Help with Gas*.

We'd like to extend a huge thank you to the funder of this book, Cadent.

Beyond Words: publications and elearning

Books Beyond Words are stories for anyone who finds pictures easier than words. There are more than 80 word-free (therefore non-language dependent) stories in the Books Beyond Words series, all co-created with our readership.

- A complete list of all Beyond Words publications, including printed books, ebooks and free downloads, can be found on our website: **www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk**
- Elearning modules about using Books Beyond Words will also be useful for some people. You can find out more about elearning and how to subscribe on our website: **www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/elearning**
- Books Beyond Words are used in many different environments, including health care settings, schools and colleges and community book clubs. Various resource packages are available for professionals wishing to incorporate the stories into their practice, particularly those supporting children and young people in teaching and education settings. See our website or contact us for more information: **admin@booksbeyondwords.co.uk**
- Our BWStoryApp is a fast and convenient way to access over 1,800 pictures and 400 short stories taken from the Beyond Words series. Visit **www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/bw-story-app**
- Video clips showing our books being read are also on our website and YouTube channel: **www.youtube.com/booksbeyondwords**

First published in the UK 2024 by Books Beyond Words.

Text & illustrations © Books Beyond Words, 2024.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, or by any means, without the prior permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 978-1-78458-188-6

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed by Royal British Legion Industries, Leatherhead.

Books Beyond Words is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1183942).

Further information about the Books Beyond Words series can be obtained from Beyond Words' website: www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk.