



advice and support for older age

**Independent  
Age**

## Factsheet

# Support for carers

This factsheet explains what benefits, services and support are available to help carers.

Call FREE on **0800 319 6789** Visit **[www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)**

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Next review date: April 2019

## **About Independent Age**

Whatever happens as we get older, we all want to remain independent and live life on our own terms. That's why, as well as offering regular friendly contact and a strong campaigning voice, Independent Age can provide you and your family with clear, free and impartial advice on the issues that matter: care and support, money and benefits, health and mobility.

A charity founded over 150 years ago, we're independent so you can be.

The information in this factsheet applies to England only.

If you're in Wales, contact Age Cymru (0800 022 3444, [agecymru.org.uk](http://agecymru.org.uk)) for information and advice.

In Scotland, contact Age Scotland (0800 12 44 222, [agescotland.org.uk](http://agescotland.org.uk)).

In Northern Ireland, contact Age NI (0808 808 7575, [ageni.org](http://ageni.org)).

In this factsheet, you'll find reference to our other free publications. You can order them by calling 0800 319 6789, or by visiting [independentage.org/publications](https://independentage.org/publications)

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# 1. Introduction

A carer is someone who helps another person, usually a relative or friend, in their day-to-day life. Throughout this factsheet when we refer to 'carers' we mean carers who are unpaid, rather than those who provide care as their job or through a voluntary organisation.

You may be a carer because you have had to step in to support a spouse or partner, or an older relative or friend, who needs your help so that they can continue living in their own home. You may provide support such as:

- making sure they are washed and dressed
- making sure they have regular healthy meals and enough to drink
- taking them to GP appointments and checking they have taken any medication correctly.

You may find that:

- you need practical support or regular breaks
- you are affected financially. This may be due to the extra costs of being a carer (such as added petrol costs from driving the person you care

for to appointments). Your income may also have dropped if you're unable to carry on working or have had to reduce your working hours since becoming a carer

- you no longer have time to see other friends and family
- you want to feel recognised as a carer and reassured you're doing everything you can
- you need information about what help is available to you
- you feel a mixture of emotions. While caring can be rewarding, it can also leave you feeling inadequate, frustrated, taken for granted, or guilty for feeling upset or resentful about the situation.

It's important to recognise how you're feeling and that it is okay to feel this way. You may be entitled to help and support, and you shouldn't feel worried or unsure about asking for it.

## **How to find out about carer support services**

Your local council has a duty to provide information about support services available for

carers in your area. You may be able to get this information from:

- the council's adult social services department
- the council's website
- a local library
- your GP surgery
- your hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

You can also contact social services and ask for a carer's assessment – all carers have a right to one if they may have a need for support (see chapter 2).

## **Help if you also work**

If you work at the same time as caring for someone, you can ask for flexible working arrangements so that you can fit your employment around your caring responsibilities more easily. You usually have a right to ask once you've been working for your employer for at least 26 weeks. You only have a right to make one request every 12 months, although your employer may agree to further requests. It may

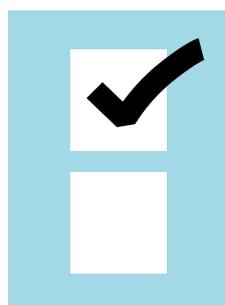
be helpful to request flexible working for a trial period to see how this works for you and your employer.

You may wish to arrange to work from home on particular days each week, or start work later or finish earlier so you can help the person you care for before or after work. Flexible working may also make things easier if you need to take time off work to take the person you care for to a regular hospital appointment.

Your employer has to seriously consider your request for flexible working, although they can refuse a request if they have certain business reasons for doing so. They should put these reasons in writing to you.

You're also allowed a 'reasonable' amount of time off to deal with an unforeseen matter or emergency involving the person you care for. This could be paid or unpaid.

## **To do**



If you're finding it difficult to juggle your caring responsibilities with your job, contact ACAS ([0300 123 1100](tel:03001231100)) or Carers UK ([0808 808 7777](tel:08088087777), [carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org)) for advice.

## **Carers who are grandparents**

If you're looking after a grandchild on a short or long-term basis, you may be able to receive benefits, such as Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit. This is a complex area. If you're in this situation, get advice from an organisation like Family Rights Group ([0808 801 0366](tel:08088010366), [frg.org.uk](http://frg.org.uk)). They have a factsheet called **Social security support for relatives and friends looking after someone else's child** which you can request from their advice line or download from their website.

## **2. What is a carer's assessment?**

As a carer, you're entitled to a free carer's assessment. A social care professional will talk to you about your situation and what help you might need. The assessment is a chance for you to discuss your caring responsibilities and how they affect you. The council uses the carer's assessment to work out whether you qualify for council support.

### **Who can have a carer's assessment?**

If you provide unpaid care for a friend or family member and it isn't part of your job, you have a right to a carer's assessment. It doesn't matter how much care you provide, whether it's practical or emotional support or what your financial situation is – you are entitled to an assessment.

### **Arranging your carer's assessment**

To arrange an assessment, contact the adult social services department of your local council.

If the person you look after hasn't had a care needs assessment, this can be carried out at the same time. This will work out what care they

need and whether they qualify for council help. Read our factsheet **First steps in getting help with your care needs** to find out more. Even if they're not eligible for any council help, you may still qualify.

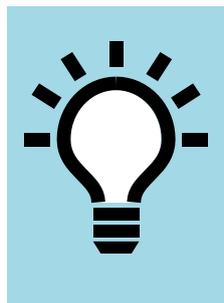
You may prefer to have your assessment carried out separately to the assessment of the person you care for so you can speak more openly. A carer's assessment can be arranged:

- somewhere other than your home
- over the phone
- while the person you care for isn't at home.

The council must offer a self-assessment option. If you're interested in this but it hasn't been offered to you, ask your council's adult social services department about it.

You have a right to a carer's assessment and carer's services to meet your assessed needs even if the person you help isn't getting council support or has refused a care needs assessment or services.

## Good to know



If you live in a different council area to the person you care for, then **their** council is responsible for carrying out your carer's assessment.

## Delays in getting a carer's assessment

Social services should complete an assessment within a reasonable time, but don't have to assess you within a particular timeframe. How long you wait will depend on the urgency of your situation. Ask your local council how long it could take, as they may have their own target deadlines.

If you think you have been waiting too long for an assessment, consider making a complaint to the council using their complaints procedure.

If you urgently need help, for example if the person you care for has become unwell and you can't cope on your own, emergency assessments can be arranged for you both. Tell the council if and why there's any particular urgency when you contact them about an assessment. Social services may also arrange a temporary care package for the person you care for until an assessment can be arranged.

## **If you will need support at your assessment**

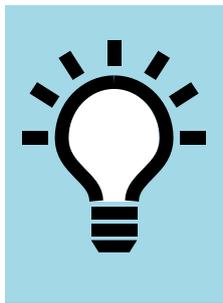
Speak to the council before your assessment if you:

- think you need support to communicate what you want to say at your assessment
- find it difficult to understand and retain information
- might find it difficult to weigh up any information you're given in order to make a decision.

If the council thinks that you have 'substantial' difficulty in doing any of these things and you don't have anyone appropriate to help you, the council must provide you with an independent advocate. This is a trained professional who can help you throughout the carer's assessment and any support planning that may follow.

Even if the council doesn't think you need an independent advocate, you could arrange one yourself if you think you could benefit from this. Ask the council about local advocacy agencies and read our factsheet **Independent advocacy**.

## Good to know



You can ask for other people to be involved in your assessment, for example, a friend or your GP may be able to help explain the impact that caring has on your health or daily life.

If you ask for someone to be involved, the council must involve them in the assessment, either face-to-face or by phoning or writing to them.

### **3. What happens at your carer's assessment?**

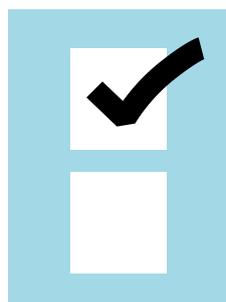
The council must provide you with information in advance to explain what will happen at the assessment. This should include information about the questions you may be asked.

You may want to think about how being a carer affects you, what might help, and whether you want to carry on providing all of the care you have been providing. For example:

- are you getting enough sleep or is it disturbed by your caring role?
- is your health affected? If so, how?
- are you able to go out without worrying about the safety of the person you care for?
- are your other relationships being affected?
- do you need information about what support and benefits are available?
- is your caring role having an impact on your job?

- what equipment is needed by the person you care for to enable you to care for them safely?
- do you need any training, for example in first aid or in moving and handling the person you care for?
- do you want to spend less time in your caring role? For example, you may wish to go back to work or attend a course or just have more time to yourself.

## **To do**



It's helpful to record some of this information in a diary so that you remember to mention it during your assessment.

## **What happens at the assessment?**

A carer's assessment must look at:

- whether you're willing or able to continue providing the same level of care
- anything you can't do because of your caring responsibilities (known as 'outcomes')

- whether you wish to be able to work, study, attend a training course or take part in particular leisure activities
- the impact that caring has on your wellbeing

The council must give you a copy of your assessment.

### **Do you qualify for support?**

There is a national threshold which is used to work out whether or not you qualify for council support. You will qualify for support if your carer's assessment shows that the answer to all three of the following questions is 'yes':

- Do you need support because you are caring for another adult who needs your help?
- Is your physical or mental health at risk or are there one or more other 'outcomes' that you are unable to achieve (see below)?
- Is this having or is it likely to have a significant impact on your wellbeing?

## **Carer's outcomes**

You will be eligible for help if you are unable to achieve one of the following outcomes and this is having a significant impact on your wellbeing.

The outcomes are:

- looking after anyone else you care for, including your children
- keeping your home clean and safe
- having nutritious meals
- having opportunities to meet other people and enough contact with friends and family
- working, volunteering, learning or carrying out any training that you would like to
- finding time to use local services, such as the gym
- spending time doing things you enjoy.

The assessor must look at all of these outcomes and treat each one as equally important.

You'll be seen as being unable to achieve these outcomes if:

- you can't do them without help, or
- doing them without help would cause you a lot of pain, distress or anxiety, or puts you or other people's safety at risk.

The assessment must take into account that the amount of care you provide and the impact on you might vary. Your need for support may need to be considered over a period of time.

### **What does 'a significant impact on your wellbeing' mean?**

To get council support, it's not enough to show that you need support and you are unable to do certain things because of your caring role. You must also show that this has a significant impact on your wellbeing.

Wellbeing covers a lot of different areas, including:

- your personal relationships
- your physical and mental health
- your safety
- your financial wellbeing (such as whether you could be claiming any benefits)

- your housing situation
- your control over your daily life
- your dignity.

If your caring role could have a big effect on at least one of the areas of wellbeing mentioned above, then this could be considered a 'significant impact'. Or, if your role has a small effect on several of these areas of wellbeing, this could add up to a significant impact overall.

Using this as a basis, councils have to make their own judgment on whether your caring role has a significant impact on your wellbeing. When they are making this decision, they should take into account what is most important to you.

### **An example: Jane**

Jane struggles to find time to exercise because she cares for both of her parents. She really enjoys swimming, and this also greatly eases the pain she suffers in her joints. For Jane, not having the time to exercise could be seen as having a significant impact on her physical wellbeing as well as her emotional wellbeing. This may not be the

case for someone in very good health, or who did not enjoy exercising.

## **If you don't qualify for support**

If you don't qualify for support from the council, the council must write to you to explain why you don't qualify.

They must also provide advice about what can be done to meet or reduce your needs and to stop you developing new support needs in the future.

Having all of this information to hand should make it easier if you decide you want to challenge the council's decision or make a complaint. See our factsheet **Complaints about care and health services** for more information.

## 4. What support services can be provided for carers?

If you qualify for help, the council might provide care and support to the person you care for or provide you with support directly. This will be discussed with you, and with the person you care for if necessary.

There are no restrictions on the type of support that can be provided, as long as it meets your assessed needs. It could include:

- practical help with things like housework or gardening
- advice about benefits
- leisure activities such as gym membership
- training to feel more confident in your caring role (such as moving and handling training)
- emotional support from other carers (such as attending a local carers group)
- breaks from caring.

## **Charges for support services**

You may be charged for support services – you'll be given a financial assessment to work out what you can afford to pay based on your income and savings. However, councils are advised not to charge carers for support provided to them, in recognition of the valuable role that carers play in society.

The council must not charge you for care and support provided to the person you care for. You can only be charged for support directly provided to you. For example, if the person you care for agrees to have replacement care to give you a break, you should not pay for this. The person you care for may be charged for these services. The amount that they may have to pay is worked out when they have a financial assessment. Read our factsheet **Getting a financial assessment for care at home** to find out more.

## **Your support plan and personal budget**

If you qualify for support and the council is paying for some or all of it, the council must prepare a support plan with you to show how your needs are going to be met. If you're paying for all of your support yourself, you can still ask

the council to help you arrange it, but they may charge you for this.

The council must tell you how much money it thinks is needed to meet these needs. This includes the amount the council is paying and any charges you may have to pay yourself. The total amount is called your personal budget.

The council must explain how your personal budget amount was worked out, and it must be enough to meet your support needs.

If your support will be provided through a service to the person you care for (such as replacement care to give you a break from caring), this should be included in the personal budget of the person you care for, not yours. The only exception is where the person you care for isn't eligible for care and support themselves.

The council must involve you in deciding how your personal budget is spent. For example, if your support plan says you need support to take part in activities you enjoy, you should have a say in what you use that money for.

You may choose to receive all or part of your personal budget in the form of money (a direct payment) which you use to make your own

arrangements to meet your needs. This can give you more choice and control.

You can't use your direct payment to buy services to meet the needs of the person you care for. The money must only be used to meet your own needs.

You must be given copies of your personal budget and your support plan – ask if you don't get them.

For more information, see our factsheet **Social care: ways to use your personal budget.**

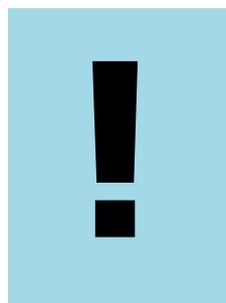
### **What can you do if you're not happy?**

Often problems can be sorted by talking to the social worker or their manager. But if this doesn't work, you have other options.

There are two main ways of trying to resolve disagreements:

- making a complaint
- using a solicitor to pursue a legal case.

## Remember



There is a time limit for using each of these procedures. It's important not to miss it. It may be best to consider making a complaint or taking legal action at the same time as trying to sort things out with your social worker, so you don't miss the deadlines.

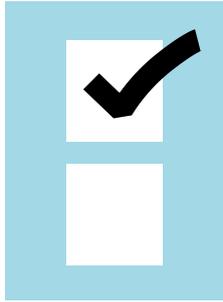
You must make your complaint within 12 months of the problem occurring or of you becoming aware of it, although it's usually better to start the complaint as soon as possible.

If you decide to pursue a legal case, the time limit is much shorter. If it becomes necessary to start court proceedings, you're likely to need a judicial review. Judicial review proceedings must be started promptly within three months of the date when there were first grounds for a legal challenge.

It's sometimes possible to pursue a late complaint or a late legal challenge.

More information, including about how the time limits work, can be found in our factsheet [Complaints about care and health services](#).

## To do...



If you want specialist legal advice, you will need to find a solicitor who specialises in community care law. Read our factsheet **Complaints about care and health services** to find out

more.

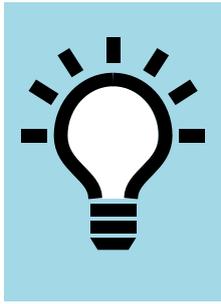
## **5. What happens if the person I care for goes into hospital?**

If the person you care for is admitted to hospital, find out which member of the hospital staff is responsible for organising discharge. Make sure they know you're a carer and that they will need to liaise with you.

If the person you care for already gets support from social services, or is going to need some support, and the hospital thinks it wouldn't be safe to discharge them until care and support is in place, the hospital staff must also tell the council what the discharge date will be.

The person you care for may be able to get care services free of charge for up to six weeks after they're discharged. This support is called intermediate care or reablement and aims to enable an adult to maintain or regain the ability to live independently in their own home.

## Good to know



Any equipment, or minor adaptations up to the value of £1,000, that they have been assessed as needing by social services, must be provided free.

See our factsheet **Hospital stays** for more information.

## Carer's Allowance in hospital

If you get Carer's Allowance (see chapter 7), this could be affected if you or the person you care for go into hospital. Make sure you contact the Carer's Allowance Unit ([0800 731 0297](tel:08007310297)) to tell them about any change in your situation.

## 6. Making an emergency plan

As a carer, you need to know that replacement care would be put in place quickly in an emergency. It is vital that someone could step in if you became ill or were admitted to hospital.

If the person you care for receives care and support from the local council, they must have a care and support plan. If they have changing needs, then their care plan should cover how these will be met. For example, it should say how an increase in their care needs would be met if you were unable to manage, and list the help and support that would be put in place quickly if their needs changed suddenly or if there was an emergency.

The care plan should also indicate the arrangements for dealing with an emergency, for example if you weren't available because of a sudden illness. If the person you care for doesn't have a care plan, you can create an emergency plan by writing down:

- the name, address and other contact details of the person you care for

- who you would like to be contacted in an emergency
- any medication the person you care for is taking
- any ongoing care or health treatment they need.

You may be able to arrange emergency help from friends and family.

In some areas there are carer's emergency card schemes. You can register and get help to draw up an emergency plan. You will receive a card with the scheme's telephone number and a unique identification number. If you're unable to provide care, you or someone with you can call the number and an operator will put your emergency plan into place. Ask your local council or a local carer's organisation if there is a scheme in your area.

## 7. Financial support for carers

If you're caring for someone, you may be entitled to claim financial help through Carer's Allowance.

### **Carer's Allowance**

Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for carers. It is worth £64.60 a week). You might qualify if you:

- care for someone for 35 hours or more a week, and
- the person you care for receives one of the following qualifying benefits:
  - Attendance Allowance
  - the middle or higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance
  - the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment any rate
  - Armed Forces Independence Payment
  - Constant Attendance Allowance of £69.90 or more a week paid with industrial injuries, war or service pension.

You won't qualify for Carer's Allowance if you:

- have earnings over £120 a week (after certain deductions). Money you get from personal and workplace pensions doesn't count as earnings.
- are in full-time education.
- don't meet the residency criteria or are subject to immigration control

If you're already getting more than the rate of Carer's Allowance – £64.60 a week – from certain other benefits including the State Pension, you won't get paid Carer's Allowance as well. Instead, if you apply you'll be told you have an 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance. This is called the overlapping benefit rule. For a full list of overlapping benefits, see our factsheet **Carer's Allowance**. Even if you're getting one of these benefits, it's still worth applying for Carer's Allowance – see 'What is an underlying entitlement?' below.

If you're getting less than £64.60 a week from any of the overlapping benefits, Carer's Allowance can top up your income to that amount. However, these benefits tend to pay more than Carer's Allowance, so this won't usually apply.

## **What is an underlying entitlement?**

This means you meet all the qualifying conditions for Carer's Allowance, but you can't be paid it because of another benefit you receive. An underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance can be valuable as the government will now accept you are a carer – you might find you're eligible for extra money with other benefits you receive, or that you now qualify for benefits which you couldn't get before.

## **Carer Premium or Carer Addition**

If you get Carer's Allowance or have an underlying entitlement to it, you may qualify for a Carer Addition in Pension Credit (known as Carer Premium in Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support if you're under State Pension age, or Carer Element if you're claiming Universal Credit).

Means-tested benefits, such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support are designed to support you by giving you enough money to live on. The Carer Addition/Premium increases the amount the government says you need to live on by £36 a week (£156.45 a month if you're claiming Universal Credit). This means

you could get a higher rate of these benefits, or that you could become eligible for them for the first time.

## **How Carer's Allowance affects other benefits**

Carer's Allowance may increase your entitlement to benefits or enable you to claim them for the first time, but it could also reduce some of the benefits that the person you care for receives. Call us to arrange to speak to an adviser ([0800 319 6789](tel:08003196789)).

## **How to claim Carer's Allowance**

You can download a claim form or claim online at [gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim](https://gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim).

Alternatively, you can phone the Carer's Allowance Unit on [0800 731 0297](tel:08007310297) to ask for a claim form. If you're already claiming a State Pension, there is a different, shorter form to fill in. You will automatically get a Class 1 National Insurance credit each week you receive Carer's Allowance if you're below State Pension age.

If you need help filling in the form, your local Age UK ([0800 169 65 65](tel:08001696565), [ageuk.org.uk](https://ageuk.org.uk)) or

Citizens Advice ([03444 111 444](tel:03444111444), [citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)) may be able to help.

For more information, see our factsheet **Carer's Allowance**.

## **Carer's Credit**

Carer's Credit is a National Insurance credit that helps to fill gaps in your National Insurance contribution record if you are under State Pension age. This helps you to build your entitlement to benefits like the State Pension.

To be eligible you must care for one or more disabled people for at least 20 hours a week. They must either receive one of the qualifying disability benefits listed above, or a health or social care professional must sign a 'Care Certificate' to show they have a certain level of care needs.

If you're not receiving Carer's Allowance, you'll need to fill in a claim form for Carer's Credit. Visit [gov.uk/carers-credit/how-to-claim](http://gov.uk/carers-credit/how-to-claim) to download a form or request one by calling the Carer's Allowance Unit on [0800 731 0297](tel:08007310297).

## 8. Emotional support for carers

Being a carer can be emotionally demanding. It's important to remember to look after yourself, both for your own sake and so that you are well enough to continue any caring duties.

While caring for someone can bring satisfaction, you may also experience stress, worry, anger, frustration, guilt and other negative emotions. You might also find that you become more isolated as your caring duties take over.

### Get support

It's a good idea to talk to someone about your situation and how you're feeling. This could be a friend, family member, GP or other health professional, or someone else who is a carer.

It can be helpful to talk to people in the same situation as you. Carers UK has an online forum ([carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/carersuk-forum](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/carersuk-forum)) and also lists local support groups ([carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/local-support](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/local-support)). Carers Trust also has an online forum and virtual coffee morning where carers can chat or get advice

([space.carers.org](http://space.carers.org)). You can ask your council about other support groups in your area.

The challenges of caring could make you more vulnerable to mental health problems. If you're feeling low, order a copy of our **Dealing with depression** guide for advice on how to cope or call Samaritans ([116 123](tel:116123)) to talk about what's troubling you.

## **Look after yourself**

Make sure you take care of yourself, by eating healthily, exercising and getting enough rest. If your caring responsibilities are making it hard for you to do this, discuss this in your carer's assessment – see chapter 2.

## **Make time for yourself**

Allow yourself time to see friends and family and do things you enjoy. Try to make this part of your routine. If it's difficult to fit this round your caring duties, you should discuss this in your carer's assessment – see chapter 3. The assessment must look at whether you have opportunities to meet other people and have enough contact with friends and family. You

might also want to consider organising respite care – see chapter 9.

Our guide **If you're feeling lonely** may also have some helpful suggestions.

## **Relationships**

You may find that the dynamics of your relationships change when you become a carer. Caring can put a strain on the relationship between you and the person you look after, and both of you may need support with this. It can also affect your relationships with other people around you, such as family members. If you think you need some support, you could consider talking to a specialist relationship counsellor from Relate ([0800 100 1234](tel:08001001234), [relate.org.uk](http://relate.org.uk)).

## 9. Arranging a break from caring

You're entitled to decide how much (if any) care you wish to provide. If the person you care for is eligible for help from the council, the council must meet their eligible needs if you're not willing or able to do so. You don't have to show that you're unable to provide the care your partner, friend or relative needs. Ask for a care needs assessment for the person you care for (see chapter 2).

If you want to take a break from caring – either regularly to allow yourself a rest or perhaps for a one-off longer period while you go on holiday, consider asking your local council to help. You can do this even if the person you care for doesn't get any help from them. If they have eligible needs for help, then the council will have to arrange for replacement care while you take your break. The council will assess the cared-for person's financial circumstances to work out what they will have to pay.

There is one exception when the council doesn't have to arrange support. If the person you care for is assessed as having enough money to pay for their own replacement care, and this is to be

provided in a care home, the council doesn't have to arrange that care unless the person doesn't have sufficient mental capacity to do so themselves and no-one can do it on their behalf.

Respite care in a care home is not the only way of providing a carer with a break. There are different options available:

### **Care services at home**

Home care agencies employ carers to visit people and provide care in their own home. For more information on choosing home care, see our guide **Getting help at home**.

### **Day care centres**

These centres allow the person you're caring for to socialise with others as well as giving you a break. Ask your local council about services in your area.

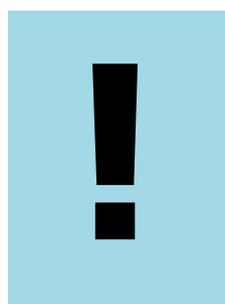
### **Care homes**

Some care homes offer respite care. Contact local care homes to see if they have places available for this.

## Funding replacement care

This can be expensive, particularly if it is provided in a care home, so find out if you or the person you care for is eligible for help from the council (see above). If not, help may be available from charities – read our factsheet **Extra help with essential costs if you're on a low income** to find out more.

## Remember



If you receive Carer's Allowance, you should tell the Carer's Allowance Unit that you are taking a break.

You should tell the Carer's Allowance Unit ([0800 731 0297](tel:08007310297), [gov.uk/carers-allowance-report-change](https://gov.uk/carers-allowance-report-change)) if your circumstances have changed in any way that's likely to affect your benefit. For example, if:

- your income changes
- you stop being a carer
- you take a break from caring.

## 10. When your caring role comes to an end

There may come a time when your caring role ends, perhaps because the person you care for moves in to a care home or because they have died. Whatever the reason, you may have mixed emotions: grief, loneliness, or guilt at feeling relieved that you can have time to yourself. Organisations such as Carers UK ([0808 808 7777](tel:08088087777), [carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org)) can offer practical and emotional support. Carers UK also has a 'former carers' section on its online forum where you can chat to others.

### **If the person moves into a care home**

If the person you care for is moving into a care home, consider the location of the care home so you are able to visit. Our guide **How to find the right care home** can help you choose one. If you still want to be involved in caring for them, speak to the care home staff about how you can work together. Find out if there's a group for relatives and carers you can attend. You can talk about your feelings about the changes you're going through. Contact the Residents and

Relatives Association ([020 7359 8136](tel:02073598136), [relres.org](http://relres.org)) for further information and support.

## **If the person has died**

If the person you cared for has died, you may find yourself feeling alone and isolated, especially if your caring role meant you lost touch with friends. It may help to talk to other people who knew the person you cared for so you can support each other and talk about them. Read our free guide **Coping with bereavement** to find out about looking after yourself. Specialist bereavement organisations such as Cruse ([0808 808 1677](tel:08088081677), [cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk)) can offer advice, counselling and the details of local bereavement groups.

You should tell the Carer's Allowance Unit ([0800 731 0297](tel:08007310297), [gov.uk/carers-allowance-report-change](http://gov.uk/carers-allowance-report-change)) if your circumstances have changed in any way that's likely to affect your benefit.

## **Opportunities to use your caring skills**

You may want to continue to use your skills and experience as a carer. Contact local charities such as Independent Age ([020 7605 4200](tel:02076054200),

[independentage.org](http://independentage.org)) about volunteering as a befriender to support lonely or isolated people.

## 11. Carers' support organisations

For more information on respite care, financial help and general support for carers, contact the following carers' organisations:

- Carers UK ([0808 808 7777](tel:08088087777), [carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org)) provides an advice service for carers and may be able to put you in touch with local support groups
- Carers Trust ([0300 772 9600](tel:03007729600), [carers.org](http://carers.org)) provides information, home care and local support services for carers
- Carers Direct ([0300 123 1053](tel:03001231053), [nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://nhs.uk/carersdirect)) is a comprehensive national information service for carers.

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## **Thank you**

Independent Age would like to thank those who shared their experiences as this information was being developed, and those who reviewed the information for us.

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