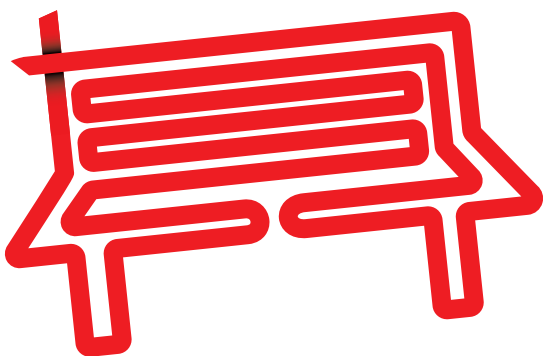


Taking a break



Caring for someone can be a full-time job so breaks are vital to your own wellbeing and quality of life.

This factsheet outlines the different types of breaks that are available, how to get alternative care, and how to plan and fund your break. It also includes a list of organisations that provide breaks or can help you organise a break.

This factsheet applies to people living in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. If there are differences between the nations these are highlighted.

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Why breaks are important

Caring for someone can be a full time job so breaks are vital to your own wellbeing and quality of life.

When was the last time you gave yourself a break? When did you last have an evening out, go for a swim, try something new, take a holiday? When did you last have a chance to do all the things you would like to do, but can't do while you are caring – everyday things such as meeting up with friends, visiting family or simply catching up with some sleep?

Taking a break also means that the person you are looking after may be able to enjoy new experiences, have a change of scene and routine and mix with other people.

Different sorts of breaks

There are different ways in which you may take a break as a carer. Only you will know what type of break is best for you. You may need an hour each week, a day here and there, a week or two for a holiday, or a combination of all of these.

Think about the kind of break that you need as a carer and what kind of service the person you are looking after needs.

Some carers may choose to go on holiday with the person they are looking after or to go away alone – but a short break or holiday may not always involve going away. Some carers enjoy a short break from caring, which involves the person they are looking after going on holiday and the carer staying at home.

What are the options?

There are different options for getting support for the person you are looking after while you are taking a break.

Getting help from the social services / social work department

- England and Wales: your local council will have a social services department that can arrange services to help support you
- Scotland: your local council will have a social work department that can arrange services to help support you
- Northern Ireland: your local Health and Social Care Trust will have a social services department that can arrange services to help support you

In order to get these services, you and the person you are looking after will need to have your needs assessed. See pages 5-8 for more information.

Arranging care yourself

You may wish to make your own private arrangements, such as:

- employing a paid care worker (directly or through an agency) to care for the person you are looking after in their own home
- paying for short-term residential care
- arranging a holiday for the person you are looking after

See pages 8-10 to find out more about arranging care yourself, or pages 14-17 to view our directory of organisations which can help.

Support from friends and family

Some carers may be able to ask friends or family members to take over caring for the person they are looking after in order to go on a short break or holiday.

Sometimes this may mean that friends or family visit the person being cared for to provide care while the carer is away. Alternatively, it may mean that the person being looked after goes to stay with friends or family for an extended period.

Organisations that can help

There are many useful organisations that can help you get a break.

They may provide break services for carers or the person being looked after, or provide information to help you to decide what alternative care services to use.

Your local council/trust or carers' centre (or Carers NI if you are in Northern Ireland) should have information about local charities and organisations. See page 14 onwards to view our directory of organisations.

Getting help through the social services / social work department

Social services /social work departments can arrange alternative care for the person you are looking after so that you can take a break from caring. This is usually called **respite care**.

To get respite care you and the person you are looking after would need to get assessments from the social services / social work department.

There are different assessments for you and the person you are looking after - see pages 6-7 for further details.



For more information about assessments, see Carers UK's range of factsheets:

- Assessments and the Care Act (*England*)
- Assessments: A guide to getting an assessment in Wales from April 2016 (*Wales*)
- Assessments: your guide to getting help (*Scotland*)
- Assessments: your guide to getting help (*Northern Ireland*)

All our factsheets can be downloaded for free at carersuk.org/factsheets

If you are a carer you can order a free printed copy by contacting the Carers UK Adviceline or the Carers Wales, Carers Scotland or Carers NI office – see back page for details.

Carer's assessment

Most carers can request a carer's assessment from the social services / social work department of the person they are looking after.

Your carer's assessment should consider:

- your caring role and how it affects your life and wellbeing
- your health – physical, mental and emotional issues
- your feelings and choices about caring
- work, study, training, leisure
- relationships, social activities and your goals
- housing
- planning for emergencies

If the social services / social work department decide they will offer you support following your carer's assessment, it may be agreed that the best way to help you as a carer is by providing support directly to you, by providing services to the person you are looking after, or a combination of both.

▶▶ **Note:** In England, carer's assessments are only available to adults caring for adults - see below if you are looking after a child under 18.

Assessment for the person you are looking after (if they are an adult aged 18+)

Following your carer's assessment, the person you are looking after will then need to be assessed for the alternative care (called respite care) that they will need to allow you to take a break.

Respite care is provided as a service to the person you are looking after.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland this means that the person you are looking after will be financially assessed to determine whether (and if so how much) they would need to contribute towards the cost of this.

In Scotland if the respite care is an outcome of the assessment for the person you are looking after (which is normally the case) then the

person you are looking after will be financially assessed to determine whether (and if so how much) they would need to contribute towards the cost of this. However if the respite care is an outcome of a carer's assessment (which the local council has the power to do) the local council cannot charge for the respite care.

Assessments if you are looking after a child under 18, or if you are a carer under 18

If you are caring for a child under 18 you should be able to get an assessment for the whole family.

If you don't feel this assessment has taken your needs as a carer into account you can request a separate assessment for yourself.

If you are a carer under 18 you should be able to get an assessment for yourself as a young carer.

▶▶ **Note:** If you have already had any of these assessments, but you need more support, ask the social services / social work department to carry out a reassessment.

▶▶ **Note:** If the social services / social work department does not decide to provide help, or not enough help, then you can make a complaint about this – contact the Carers UK Adviceline for further information on making a complaint (see final page for contact details). You could also explore the other options for getting a break such as finding care yourself, using friends and family or trying to find an organisation which could help.

Types of respite care

Respite care can be provided through:

- ▶ Residential or nursing care – where the person you are looking after goes for a short stay in a residential or nursing home.
- ▶ Day-sitting service – where someone will come into your home to allow you a break to have time for yourself.
- ▶ Night-sitting service – where someone will come into your

home to allow you to have a proper night's sleep.

- Day care – where the person you are looking after goes to a day centre or takes part in activities away from home allowing you a break from caring.
- Holidays – help and support for when you want to go on holiday by yourself or with the person you care for.
- Direct payments – cash payments from the social services / social work department. A person with a disability or ill health can be paid a direct payment following an assessment so that they can arrange and pay for their own care and support services . They can therefore receive a direct payment to pay for the alternative care they will need while their carer takes a break. You can find out more about direct payments at carersuk.org/direct-payments

Paying for respite care

The social services / social work department of the person you are looking after may charge them for any respite care services provided (although not in Scotland if the respite care is arranged through a carer's assessment).

They may also charge you for any carer's services they provide to you (although carers cannot be charged for support in Scotland and it is not common practice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

If they do charge, they must follow guidelines about how income/ capital is taken into account – you should be told about this when the assessments are carried out.

Arranging care yourself

You or the person you are looking after may decide to recruit a paid care worker or to use an agency. You might also decide to arrange a short stay in residential care or a holiday for the person you are looking after.

Recruiting help yourself

If you are thinking about employing a paid care worker directly, then it is important that you realise that you will be taking on the

responsibilities of an employer. Some of the things you will need to do as an employer are:

- check out your employees' references
- pay statutory sick pay if an employee is ill as well as maternity, paternity and adoption pay
- ensure that your employee's tax and National Insurance are paid correctly
- check that your employee has the right to work in the UK
- take out insurance to cover any accidents an employee might have in your home
- ensure that you comply with your auto enrolment pension duties

You should also be familiar with law on disciplinary and grievance procedures, redundancy procedures and health & safety requirements.

All of this may sound very complicated, but there is help available to guide you through and it is a good idea to get advice before you start.

See page 17 to find organisations that can help you make informed decisions about employing a paid care worker.

Using an agency

Before you start approaching agencies, you should be clear about the kind of care you are looking for and when you need it. Check that they deal with private clients like yourself and that they are able to provide the kind of care that you need.

Although using an agency is usually more expensive than recruiting a paid care worker yourself, it can make managing care easier because the agency will:

- take care of the paperwork (eg Disclosure and Barring Service checks)
- deal with an employee's tax and National Insurance
- check references
- provide a back-up if an employee is ill or unsatisfactory
- deal with auto enrolment pension duties

Short-term residential care or a holiday for the person you are looking after

If you are going to arrange short-term residential care the social services / social work department might be able to help you decide which service to use, and there are organisations which can also help you decide which service to use.

In England you can contact the Care Quality Commission. In Wales you can contact the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. In Scotland you can contact the Care Inspectorate. In Northern Ireland you can contact the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority. See page 17 for contact details.

If you are going to arrange a holiday there might be an organisation or charity which could help to arrange and/or fund this. See page 14 for a list of organisations and their contact details.

Planning your break

Being a carer means that you have to think about the needs of the person you are looking after while you are away. Good planning will ensure you can relax and have peace of mind to make the most of your break.

This is our checklist to help you plan for your break:

- Make sure that anyone who is providing alternative care has all the information they need to care for the person you are looking after. This may be something as straightforward as what they like to eat, and when their mealtimes are, to more complex information about the medicines they need to take.
- It is important to leave a list of contacts. These should include the doctor's number and the numbers of any other medical/ social care professionals involved in the care of the person you are looking after, those of nearby family members and friends, and your own number, in case of emergencies.
- If you have an emergency plan then make sure you go through the details of this with the people who will be providing alternative care.
- Residential care homes and nursing homes can provide you with short-term care for the person you look after. It is a good idea, if you can manage it, to visit the care or nursing home

beforehand, so that you can see what it is like, make sure that you are happy with it and reassure yourself that it will be able to properly care for the person you look after.

- If the person you look after needs specialist medical or nursing help while you're away, you should speak to their GP.

Help with the cost of a break

If you want to go on holiday, either alone or with the person you are looking after, there may be some help you could get towards the cost.

You could bring up the need for financial help during your carer's assessment to see if there is any help the social services / social work department can give.

You could see if there are any local grants or schemes to help carers with the cost of a holiday. Your social services / social work department or a local carer's centre should be able to let you know if there is anything locally which might help with the cost.

You could have a look through the list of organisations on pages 14 to 16 to see if any of these might be able to help with the cost.

How a break might affect your benefits

Payment of benefits can sometimes be affected if you take a break or you or the person you are looking after goes into hospital or residential care.

Taking a break

You can have up to a total of 4 weeks break in any 26 week period and be paid Carer's Allowance during these breaks. The breaks can be for any reason.

You must have been providing 35 hours or more of care a week for at least 22 of the past 26 weeks. Up to 8 weeks of a stay in hospital (for either you or the cared for) can be included in the 22 weeks.

The person you have been looking after must have been in receipt of the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), either rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), or Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance for that period.

Going into hospital

You can continue to get Carer's Allowance for up to 12 weeks in any 26 week period if you or the person you are looking after has to go into hospital. 12 weeks is the maximum, so if you have had breaks in caring for other reasons Carer's Allowance may stop sooner.

You must have been providing 35 hours or more of care a week for at least 22 of the past 26 weeks. Up to 8 weeks of a stay in hospital (for either you or the cared for) can be included in the 22 weeks.

The person you have been looking after must have been in receipt of the middle or higher rate of the care component of DLA, either rate of the daily living component of PIP, or Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance for that period.

In practice, if you are caring for an adult aged 18+, you will only be able to get Carer's Allowance for 28 days if it is the person you are caring for who is in hospital. This is because to get Carer's Allowance the person you are looking after must continue to receive DLA, PIP, Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance, and this will stop after they have been in hospital for 28 days (if they were 18+ when they went into hospital).

From 29th June (England, Wales & Scotland) and from 6th July 2016 (in Northern Ireland) if you are looking after a child who was under 18 when they went into hospital then their DLA or PIP can continue to be paid for the whole time they are there.

Stays in hospital/residential care that are separated by 28 days or less are added together when deciding whether DLA, PIP or Attendance Allowance should stop (called the 'linking rules'). Although from 29th June 2016 (England, Wales & Scotland) and from 6th July 2016 (Northern Ireland) only stays in hospital for those who were 18+ when they went into hospital count towards these linking rules.

Going into care

The DLA care component, the PIP daily living component, and Attendance Allowance will stop after 28 days in residential care if the social services / social work department have arranged the placement and help with the costs. Stays in residential care/hospital that are separated by 28 days or less are added together when deciding whether DLA, PIP or Attendance Allowance should stop (called the 'linking rules'). Although from 29th June 2016 (England, Wales & Scotland) and from 6th July 2016 (Northern Ireland) only stays in hospital for those who were 18+ when they went into

hospital count towards these linking rules.

Your Carer's Allowance will stop once the DLA, PIP, or Attendance Allowance of the person you are looking after stops. However, if you have also had breaks from caring for other reasons your Carer's Allowance may stop sooner.

Always let the Carer's Allowance Unit know if you take a break or you or the person you are looking after go into hospital or residential care.

If your Carer's Allowance stops due to a break in care there might be ways you can protect your National Insurance contribution record during the break. For more information contact the Carers UK Adviceline - see final page for contact details.

You should also let the DLA / PIP / Attendance Allowance Unit know about any time spent in hospital or a care home.

Other benefits can also be affected by a stay in residential or hospital care. For more information contact the Carers UK Adviceline – see final page for contact details.

Going abroad

DLA, PIP and Attendance Allowance can sometimes continue for up to 26 weeks of a temporary stay abroad. You can continue to get Carer's Allowance whilst you are abroad if you meet any of the following conditions:

- You go abroad with the person you look after, and s/he continues to receive their qualifying disability benefit, and the purpose of your trip is to look after them. In this case, Carer's Allowance can be paid for up to 26 weeks.
- In any other circumstances, Carer's Allowance can be paid for up to 4 weeks.

Income Support/Pension Credit can continue to be paid for up to 4 or 8 weeks if you go abroad for on a temporary basis. To check this and eligibility for other benefits when you go abroad, seek advice from your local advice centre or Carers UK's Adviceline – see final page for contact details.

Getting a benefit check

You may be entitled to benefits that you are not claiming and which might help to pay for extra care. Ask your local advice centre or Carers UK's Adviceline to do a complete benefits check for you – see final page for contact details.

Directory of useful organisations

Unless otherwise specified the organisations cover England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Getting help to arrange a break

3H Fund provides subsidised group holidays in and around the UK for people with disabilities. You may also be able to apply for a grant to help towards the cost of a holiday. **w:** www.3hfund.org.uk | **t:** 01892 860 207
e: info@3hfund.org.uk

The Calvert Trust offers outdoor adventure activities in the countryside for disabled people, their families and friends. The trust runs three purpose-built centres with full-board or self-catering accommodation around the UK offering a range of sports and recreational activities.
w: www.calvert-trust.org.uk | **t:** 01598 763 221 (Exmoor), 01434 250232 (Kielder), 017687 72255 (Lake District)

Caravan Able is a caravan and camping club for disabled people and their carers. **w:** www.ablecaravanandcampingclub.co.uk

NI
only

Centre for Independent Living provides information and advice on getting direct payments, using personal budgets and employing carers and personal assistants. **w:** www.cilbelfast.org | **t:** 028 9064 8546 | **e:** info@cilni.org

ENG
only

Children's County Holiday Fund provides holidays for young carers aged 7-11 years and disadvantaged children and young people. This is mainly for children in London and the surrounding areas.
w: www.cCHF-allaboutkids.org.uk/welcome.htm | **t:** 01273 847770

Diabetes UK Support Holidays is a scheme aimed at children aged 7 to 18 years old with diabetes. Holidays are low cost and a bursary can be offered to families who cannot afford the travel costs to the UK holiday site.
w: www.diabetes.org.uk (search for young people's holidays)
t: 020 7424 1000 (ask for the Care Events team)

Disability Aid Trust pays towards the cost of a holiday care assistant for young people and adults with a physical disability (who are aged 17 and older) if they are unable to go on holiday without one.
w: www.disabilityaidtrust.org.uk/index.html | **t:** 0800 028 0647
e: secretary@disabilityaidtrust.org.uk

Disabled Holiday Directory is an online directory of organisations and venues, around the UK and abroad, which cater for children and adults with disabilities. **w:** www.disabledholidaydirectory.co.uk | **t:** 01457 833 444

Family Fund provides grants towards the cost of holidays and other services for families on a low income who are caring for a child with a severe disability. **w:** www.familyfund.org.uk | **t:** 01904 621 115
e: info@familyfund.org.uk

Family Holiday Association provides breaks at holiday sites, or grants to help with the cost of a holiday, to low income families in need of a holiday away from home. Grants are given to families who have not been on holiday for the past four years. The family must have at least one child of 3 years of age or over. **w:** www.fhaonline.org.uk | **t:** 020 3117 0650
e: info@FamilyHolidayAssociation.org.uk

Help the Hospices provides a hospice information service with a directory of local hospices around the UK which offer short or longer term breaks for people with a terminal illness. **w:** www.helpthehospices.org.uk
t: 020 7520 8200 | **e:** info@hospiceuk.org

Holidays for All is an umbrella website for various specialist tour companies and disability charities. **w:** www.holidaysforall.org | **t:** 0845 1249971

Holiday Homes Trust provides self-catering caravan accommodation for families, groups, and their carers. They cater for people with a disability or illness and low or single-income families.
w: www.holidayhomestrust.org **t:** 020 8433 7290 | 020 8433 7291

Leonard Cheshire Disability provides a range of practical support services for people with disabilities and their families and carers. They run carers' breaks, residential respite care and short break services to allow carers to have either a short break or a longer holiday. **w:** www.lcdisability.org
t: 020 3242 0200 (England) | 0131 346 9040 (Scotland)
01633 263 807 (Wales) | 028 9024 6247 (Northern Ireland)

Livability Holidays offers a wide range of accessible hotel and self-catering holidays in the UK, located by popular seaside venues.
w: www.livability.org.uk | **t:** 020 7452 2000

Options Holidays runs escorted group holidays for adults with learning difficulties. Holidays take place throughout the year around the UK, Mediterranean and other overseas destinations.

w: www.optionsholidays.co.uk | **t:** 01285 740 491

e: office@optionsholidays.co.uk

ENG
only

Phab England promotes the integration of people with and without physical disabilities. They run a variety of residential projects and holidays.

w: www.phab.org.uk | **t:** 020 8667 9443 | **e:** info@phab.org.uk

RADAR is part of Disability Rights UK and publishes a guide called *Holidays in the British Isles*, listing more than 1,500 places to stay in the UK and Ireland. The RADAR National Keys Scheme also provides special keys for registered disabled people to access locked public toilets around the UK. The guide can be ordered at <https://crm.disabilityrightsuk.org/catalog/4>

Saga Respite for Carers Trust can provide free holidays for carers. To qualify you must be over 50, have been caring for over a year and not taken a significant holiday away from your caring responsibilities for over a year.

w: www.saga.co.uk/saga-charitable-foundation/saga-respite-for-carers-trust.aspx | **t:** 01303 774421 | **e:** carerstrust@saga.co.uk

SCO
only

Shared Care Scotland has a range of services including information and a directory of break services.

w: www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/ | **t:** 01383 622462 | **e:** office@sharedcarescotland.com

Tourism for all provides holiday and travel information for people with disabilities and their carers.

w: www.tourismforall.org.uk | **t:** 0845 124 9971

e: info@tourismforall.org.uk

Traveleyes offers group holidays for blind, visually impaired and sighted people to a wide range of holiday destinations around Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Americas. **w:** www.traveleyes-international.com

t: 0113 887 4275

Turn2us is an independent charity that can help you to find sources of financial support based on your particular needs and circumstances.

w: www.turn2us.org.uk | **t:** 0808 802 2000

Revitalise has holiday centres for people with disabilities and their carers. You may also be able to apply for a grant to help towards the cost of a holiday.

w: www.revitalise.org.uk | **t:** 0303 303 0145 | **e:** bookings@revitalise.org.uk

Getting care yourself

England

The **Care Quality Commission** – which is the health and social care regulator for England – has an online directory of registered independent care services. It also provides an independent quality rating to help you decide which service to use. **w:** www.cqc.org.uk | **t:** 03000 616 161

The **United Kingdom Homecare Association** is a professional association of home care providers. It has a ‘Homecare Agency Finder’ directory of home care organisations, many of which provide short term care. See also their guide on ‘Choosing Care in Your Own Home’.

w: www.ukhca.co.uk | **t:** 020 8661 8188 | **e:** helpline@ukhca.co.uk

Wales

The **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales** – which is responsible for inspecting social care and social services in Wales – has an online directory of registered care services. It also has inspection reports to help you decide which service to use. **w:** cssiw.org.uk | **t:** 0300 7900 126

Scotland

The **Care Inspectorate** – which regulates and inspects care services in Scotland – has an online directory of registered care services. It also has inspection reports to help you decide which services to use.

w: www.careinspectorate.com/index.php | **t:** 0345 600 9527

Northern Ireland

The **Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority** – which is the independent health and social care regulator for Northern Ireland – has an online directory of registered care services. It also has inspection reports to help you decide which services to use.

w: www.rqia.org.uk/home/index.cfm | **t:** 028 9051 7500

Benefit helplines

Attendance Allowance

England, Wales & Scotland

t: 0345 605 6055 (textphone: 0345 604 5312)

Northern Ireland

t: 028 9090 6178 (textphone: 028 9031 1092)

Benefit Enquiry Line

Northern Ireland

t: 0800 220 674 (textphone: 028 9031 1092)

Carer's Allowance Unit

England, Wales & Scotland

t: 0345 608 4321 (textphone: 0345 604 5312)

Northern Ireland

t: 028 9090 6186 (textphone: 028 9031 1092)

w: www.gov.uk/carers-allowance

Disability Living Allowance

England, Wales & Scotland:

- *If you were born on or before 8 April 1948:*

t: 0345 605 6055 (textphone: 0345 604 5312)

- *If you were born after 8 April 1948:*

t: 0345 712 3456 (textphone: 0345 722 4433)

Northern Ireland

t: 028 9090 6182 (textphone: 028 9031 1092)

For Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance:

Jobcentre Plus

England, Wales & Scotland:

New claims **t:** 0800 055 6688 (textphone: 0800 023 4888)

Existing claims **t:** 0345 608 8545 (textphone: 0345 608 8551)

Social Security or Jobs & Benefits Office

Northern Ireland: The address can be found in the phone book under Government – Social Security Agency.

Pension Credit

England, Wales & Scotland

t: 0800 99 1234 (textphone: 0800 169 0133)

Northern Ireland

New claims t: 0808 100 6165 (textphone: 0808 100 1165)

Help line t: 0300 123 3014 (textphone: 0808 100 1165)

Personal Independence Payment

England, Wales & Scotland:

New claims t: 0800 917 2222 (textphone: 0800 917 7777)

Enquiry line t: 0345 850 3322 (textphone: 0345 601 6677)

Tax Credits

England, Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland:

t: 0345 300 3900 (textphone: 0345 300 3909)

This factsheet is designed to provide helpful information and advice. It is not an authoritative statement of the law. We work to ensure that our factsheets are accurate and up to date, but information about benefits and community care is subject to change over time. We would recommend contacting the Carers UK Adviceline or visiting our website for the latest information.

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Carers UK Adviceline

For expert information and advice about caring.



0808 808 7777

(open Monday to Friday,
10am-4pm)



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20 Great Dover Street
London SE1 4LX

020 7378 4999
info@carersuk.org

Carers Wales

029 2081 1370
info@carerswales.org

Carers Scotland

0141 445 3070
info@carerscotland.org

Carers Northern Ireland

028 9043 9843
info@carersni.org

Carers UK makes life better for carers.

Caring will affect us all at some point in our lives.

With your help, we can be there for the 6,000 people who start looking after someone each day.

We're the UK's only national membership charity for carers. We're both a support network and a movement for change.

Visit us at our website to join us, help us or access more resources:

carersuk.org

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