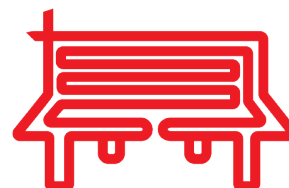


# Taking a break



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This factsheet offers lots of tips and suggestions to help you take a break from caring. Exploring the various options available, we also provide guidance on how to plan and fund your break. At the end, there is a list of organisations that can help you plan a break.

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## Why breaks are so important

Caring can be very rewarding, but it can also be relentless and exhausting so breaks are vital for your sense of wellbeing and quality of life.

We all know that finding time to catch up with friends or family or to simply rest can make all the difference to how you feel. It's easy to neglect your needs though, when you are focusing on those of another.

After a break, many people feel recharged and rejuvenated. This can create a more positive outlook making it easier to cope with challenging circumstances. The person, or those, you care for could also benefit from enjoying new experiences, a change of scene and routine, and meeting other people.

## Different sorts of breaks

You might choose to go on holiday with the person you are looking after, or you might prefer to go away alone – but a short break or holiday may not always involve going away. Some people enjoy simply taking some time out from caring, where the person they are looking after goes on holiday while they stay at home. See our online pages to read more about these options: [carersuk.org/breaks](https://carersuk.org/breaks).

## Tips from carers

Understandably, not everyone is able to go away on a trip. You may find it helpful to watch our film series to hear a few carers talking about the different ways they've been able to take a break from caring even whilst staying at home. They also explain how they have overcome some of the hurdles to taking a break, from emotional barriers to practical issues: [carersuk.org/break](https://carersuk.org/break). Our online forum '[Carers Connect](#)' can also be a helpful way to share tips with other carers.

## What are my options?

First of all, think about the kind of break that you need and what kind of support or service the person you are looking after needs. You could start

by requesting help from the relevant 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 or health and social care partnership will have a social work service that can arrange help to support you. Your local carers' centre may also have grants called *Time to Live* to help with breaks too (see page 4).
- *Northern Ireland:* your local Health and Social Care Trust will have a social services department that can arrange services to help support you.

To see if you are eligible to receive support from these services, you and the person(s) you are looking after will need to have your needs assessed. See pages 4-7 for more information. It might be helpful to prepare with this [caring diary](#). Find other tips and ideas in our [toolkit for support](#).

## 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 at home
- paying for short-term residential care
- arranging a holiday for the person you are looking after.

See pages 7-9 to find out more about arranging care yourself, or pages 15-19 to view our directory of organisations for further information.

## Support from friends and family

Sometimes, friends or family members may be willing to step in to take on your caring responsibilities so that you can go on a short break or holiday. This might involve them staying over for a visit, while you go away, or the person(s) you look after may go to stay with them for an extended period.

## Organisations that can help

There are many useful organisations that can help you to organise a break. They may provide break services for carers or the person being looked after, or information to help you decide which alternative care services to use. Your local council or carers' centre should have information about local charities and organisations. Our [local directory](#) might be a helpful starting point and others are listed at the end of this factsheet.

You can find details of your local council here: [gov.uk/find-local-council](http://gov.uk/find-local-council).

Or in Northern Ireland you can contact your local trust:

[nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/health-and-social-care-trusts](http://nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/health-and-social-care-trusts). In Scotland, most carers' centres have a grant fund for short breaks called [Time to Live](#).

Shared Care Scotland provides information on available support including funding advice and a directory of short breaks by location: [Short break providers | Shared Care Scotland](#). There are also opportunities for breaks donated by businesses through a scheme called [Respitality](#), which is available through many carers' centres.

## Getting help through social services / the social work department

Social services or social work departments may be able to arrange (or fund through a direct payment) alternative care for the person you are looking after so that you can take a break from caring. This is often referred to as a short break or respite care. It may be possible to arrange respite care by having assessments, which are carried out by the relevant department of social services.

There are different assessments for you and the person you are looking after – see pages 5-6 for further details. One option that can be recommended after have an assessment are 'direct payments'. Find out more about 'direct payments' at: [carersuk.org/directpayments](http://carersuk.org/directpayments) or you may prefer to explore other options of funding a break.

**Note:** To find out more about assessments, see our online pages and factsheets:

- Assessments to help you as a carer: [carersuk.org/carersassessment](http://carersuk.org/carersassessment)
- Assessment for those you care for: [carersuk.org/needs-assessment/](http://carersuk.org/needs-assessment/).

## Arranging a carer's assessment

You can request a carer's assessment from the social services or social work department of the person you are looking after (or your own if you live in Wales). This applies to adult carers. In Scotland, it is referred to as an Adult Carer Support Plan or a Young Carer Statement for young carers and in Wales it is called a Carer's Needs Assessment. The term 'carer's assessment' is used throughout this factsheet for ease of reading. This 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 and leisure
- relationships, social activities and your goals
- housing
- planning for emergencies.

If the social services department decide that you are eligible for formal support following your carer's assessment, they may be able to provide direct support to you or services to the person you are looking after to give you a break. For more details, see: [carersuk.org/carersassessment](https://carersuk.org/carersassessment).

## 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 respite care is provided as a service for the person you are looking after (as opposed to something to support you in your caring role), 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 an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement or provided to support you to have a break from caring, 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 who is under 18, you can request a parent carer's assessment for yourself and a 'Children's Act' or 'Child in Need' assessment for the child (terms for these may differ by nation). You can ask for the two to be combined and carried out by the same assessor.

Alternatively, you can also request separate assessments for yourself and the child/ children you care for if this is preferable.

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 relevant social services department to carry out a reassessment. For more information about carers' assessments, go to [carersuk.org/assessments](https://www.carersuk.org/assessments) and find out more about assessments for the person you care for here: [carersuk.org/needs-assessment](https://www.carersuk.org/needs-assessment).

## Types of respite care

Respite care and short breaks can be provided through:

- **Residential or nursing care** – where the person you are looking after goes for a short stay in a residential setting or a nursing/care 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 for the alternative care they will need while their carer takes a break. To find out more, see: [carersuk.org/direct-payments](https://carersuk.org/direct-payments).
- **Social and leisure activities** – to give you some time out for your own wellbeing.

## 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 provided to give a carer a break from caring).

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 an assessment is carried out and be provided with a copy of their charging policy.

## 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. You may be able to do this through a direct payment or individual budget – or choose to fund it yourself. In Scotland, guidance may also allow you to use

a direct payment to employ a close family member to look after the person you care for to take a break.

This is subject to a discussion on the needs of the person you can for and how best to meet them. This would be similar to employing a care worker as described below. Contact your social work department/social worker to discuss.

## 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.
- For more details about employing professionals to help, see our website guidance:

[Finding care agencies and care workers | Carers UK.](#)

## Recruiting help yourself

If you are thinking about employing a paid care worker directly, it is important to realise that you will be taking on the responsibilities of an employer. Here are some examples of what you would need to do:

- 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 would also need to be familiar with law on disciplinary and grievance procedures, redundancy procedures and health and safety requirements.

All of this may sound complicated, but there is help available to guide you through and it is a good idea to get advice before you start. See pages 18-19 to find organisations that can help you make informed decisions about employing a paid care worker.

For more details about employing a care professional directly, see:

[carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/employing-a-care-worker-directly/](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/employing-a-care-worker-directly/).

## Short-term residential care

To arrange short-term residential care, the social services or social work department is a good place to start. They can provide information about available services and organisations in your area to help you decide which to use.

Other useful sources of information:

England – [Care Quality Commission](#)

Scotland – [The Care Inspectorate](#). You can also contact [Shared Care Scotland](#), as they provide information on a wide range of organisations and services providing short breaks.

Wales – [Care Inspectorate Wales](#)

Northern Ireland – [The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority](#)

See pages 18-19 for contact details.

## Planning your break

Some organisations can provide short breaks that are tailored for those with caring needs and others can help with funding – see pages 15-19 for a list of options with their contact details.

It can take some time and preparation to think through all of someone's needs and how you will ensure they are comfortable while you are away. Good planning in advance can help you to relax and make the most of your break. We've produced some tips to help:

- Make sure that anyone who is providing alternative care has all the information they need to care for the person you're 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. See [Creating a contingency plan | Carers UK](#).
- 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. The Jointly app could help with this: [carersuk.org/jointly](https://carersuk.org/jointly).
- If you have an emergency plan, make sure you go through the details of this with the people who will be providing alternative care. We have a guide that can help with this: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-help-in-an-emergency/](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-help-in-an-emergency/).

- Residential care homes and nursing homes can provide you with short-term care for the person you look after. If possible, it is a good idea to visit the care or nursing home beforehand. You can see what it is like, ask questions and find out how suitable it is. See our [online guidance about residential care](#).
- If the person you look after needs specialist medical or nursing help while you're away, you should speak to their GP.
- If you are going away with the person(s) you care for, check catering and accessibility arrangements well in advance, and make a list of all their needs.



This toolkit for support can help: [Toolkit for support | Carers UK](#)

## 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 you can receive from your local authority or trust.

You could see if there are any [local grants or schemes](#) to help carers with the cost of a holiday. One example is the grant fund for short breaks called 'Time to Live' in Scotland (see page 4). Your local authority or trust (in Northern Ireland) or a local carers' centre should be able to let you know if there is anything available locally that might help with the cost. Our directory of local support organisations for carers may be useful. This can be found at: [carersuk.org/local-support](http://carersuk.org/local-support) and there are also some helpful organisations listed at the end of this factsheet.

## 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

Carer's Allowance (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Carer Support Payment (CSP) (in Scotland) can be paid during temporary breaks in care. You can have up to a total of four weeks' break in any 26-week period and be paid Carer's Allowance (or CSP) during these breaks. The breaks can be for any reason. To qualify, you must have been providing 35 hours or more of care a week for at least 22 of the past 26 weeks. Up to eight weeks of a stay in hospital (for either you or the person you look after) can be included in the 22 weeks.

The person you have been looking after must have been receiving the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Child Disability Payment (CDP), either rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Adult Disability Payment (ADP), Attendance Allowance, Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP), or Constant Attendance Allowance for that period.

## Going into hospital

You can continue to get Carer's Allowance (or CSP) for up to 12 weeks in any 26-week period if you or the person you are looking after has to go into hospital.

You must have been providing 35 hours or more of care a week for at least 22 of the past 26 weeks. Up to eight weeks of a stay in hospital (for either you or the person you look after) can be included in the 22 weeks. The person you have been looking after must have been receiving the middle or higher rate of the care component of DLA or CDP, either rate of the daily living component of PIP or ADP, Attendance Allowance, PADP, or Constant Attendance Allowance for that period.

The maximum is 12 weeks so if you have had breaks in caring for other reasons, Carer's Allowance (or CSP) may stop sooner.

In practice, if you are caring for an adult aged 18+, you will usually only be able to get Carer's Allowance (or CSP) for 28 days if the person you are caring for is in hospital. This is because to get Carer's Allowance (or CSP), the person you are looking after must continue to receive the middle or higher rate of the care component of DLA, CDP, the daily living component of PIP or ADP, Attendance Allowance, PADP, or Constant Attendance

Allowance, and this will stop after they have been in hospital for 28 days (unless they are meeting the entire cost of the stay themselves).

**If you are looking after a child** who was under 18 when they went into hospital, their DLA, CDP 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 the assessor decides whether certain disability benefits should stop (this may be referred to as the 'linking rules'). If you are admitted to hospital (or the person you care for is), let the relevant benefit office(s) know.

## Going into care

If the social services / social work department have arranged the placement and help with the costs, the DLA/CDP care component, the PIP/ ADP daily living component, and Attendance Allowance will stop after 28 days in residential care. Stays in residential care/hospital that are separated by 28 days or less are added together when a decision is made as to whether the care and daily living parts of DLA/CDP and PIP/ADP or Attendance Allowance/ PADP should stop.

Your Carer's Allowance (or CSP) will stop once the care and daily living parts of DLA/CDP and PIP/ADP, or Attendance Allowance of the person you are looking after stop. However, if you have also had breaks from caring for other reasons, your Carer's Allowance (or CSP) may stop sooner.

Always let the relevant benefit office(s) know if you plan to take a break. For example, you need to let them know if the person you're looking after has to stay in hospital or residential care, or if you go into hospital.

If your Carer's Allowance (CSP) stops due to a break in care you may be able to claim Carer's Credit to protect your National Insurance contribution record during the break. You can find out more about Carer's Credit at [carersuk.org/carerscredit](https://www.carersuk.org/carerscredit).

You should also let the relevant disability benefit office know about any time spent in a care home. Other benefits can also be affected by a stay in

residential or hospital care. For more information, seek advice from your local advice centre, which you can search for at [advicelocal.uk](https://www.advicelocal.uk).

## Going abroad

Certain disability benefits (DLA, CDP, PIP, ADP, Attendance Allowance and PADP) can sometimes continue for up to 26 weeks of a temporary stay abroad. The person you care for can continue to receive these for the first 13 weeks (or the first 26 weeks if they are away in connection with medical treatment).

You can continue to claim Carer's Allowance (or CSP) whilst you are abroad, but the duration will depend on the circumstances:

- A Carer's Allowance claim can continue to be paid if you go abroad temporarily to care for someone, as long as the person you care for continues to receive their qualifying disability benefit.
- CSP can continue if you go abroad with the person you look after, and they continue to receive their qualifying disability benefit. The stay must be solely in connection with medical treatment for an illness or disability that began before the person you care for left the [Common Travel Area](#). In these circumstances, CSP can be paid for up to 26 weeks.
- CSP can continue to be paid for 13 weeks if the person you care for continues to receive their qualifying disability benefit and you are abroad in order to care for them.
- In any other circumstances, Carer's Allowance or CSP can be paid for up to four weeks. If you are not accompanied by the person who you are caring for, you must satisfy the rules for taking a break from caring. See page 12.

Other benefits have different rules about payment during temporary absences so if you are going abroad, you will need to check how your benefits might be affected and keep the awarding body fully updated. You can seek advice from your local advice centre or search for one here: [advicelocal.uk](https://www.advicelocal.uk).

## Getting a benefits check

You may be missing out on some benefits that might help to pay for extra care. You can arrange a benefits check by contacting our Carers UK Helpline team by emailing: [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org). They will need to ask you a number of questions about your current circumstances to help.

You may be able to access face-to-face benefits help from a local advice centre such as your local Citizens Advice, Age UK, carers' organisation or disability charity. Search for local advice centres at [advice.local.uk](http://advice.local.uk).

## Directory of useful organisations

Unless otherwise specified, these organisations cover England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. You may also find our local directory of carers' organisations a useful source of reference:

[carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/local-support](http://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/local-support).

## Getting help to arrange a break

**3H Fund** provides subsidised group holidays in and around the UK for disabled people. You may also be able to apply for a grant to help towards the cost of a holiday.

**w:** [the3hfoundation.org.uk](http://the3hfoundation.org.uk) | **t:** 01892 860 207 |

**e:** [info@the3hfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@the3hfoundation.org.uk)

**AccessAble** brings together accessibility feedback from lots of venues across the UK including shops, pubs, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, railway stations and hotels.

**w:** [accessable.co.uk](http://accessable.co.uk) **e:** [hello@AccessAble.co.uk](mailto:hello@AccessAble.co.uk)

**Amser (in Wales):** Funded until 2029, the Welsh Government Short Breaks Scheme (Amser) supports unpaid carers of all ages in Wales to take a break from their caring role. Eligible carers can access funding to cover overnight breaks, days out, group activities or micro grants.

**w:** [shortbreaksscheme.wales](http://shortbreaksscheme.wales)

**The Calvert Trust** offers outdoor adventure activities in the countryside for disabled people, their families and friends. They also provide care

packages to enable the carer to go separately on holiday while providing care for the person who's cared for or a couples or family holiday can be arranged with the support of their care team. 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.

**Devon** **w:** <https://calvertdevon.org.uk/> **t:** 01598 763 221

**e:** [hello@calvertdevon.org.uk](mailto:hello@calvertdevon.org.uk)

**Kielder** **w:** <https://www.calvertkielder.org.uk/> **t:** 01434 250232

**e:** [enquiries@calvert-kielder.com](mailto:enquiries@calvert-kielder.com)

**Lake District** **w:** <https://calvertlakes.org.uk/> **t:** 017687 72255

**e:** [enquiries@calvertlakes.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@calvertlakes.org.uk)

**Caring Breaks** (Northern Ireland only) provides regular short respite breaks for the family carers of adults with a learning disability.

**w:** [caringbreaks.com](http://caringbreaks.com) | **t:** 028 9070 9118 | **e:** [info@caringbreaks.com](mailto:info@caringbreaks.com)

**Centre for Independent Living** (Northern Ireland only) provides information and advice on getting direct payments, using personal budgets and employing carers and personal assistants.

**w:** [cilni.org](http://cilni.org) | **t:** 028 9064 8546 | **e:** [enquiries@cilni.org](mailto:enquiries@cilni.org)

**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:** [familyfund.org.uk](http://familyfund.org.uk) | **t:** 01904 550 055 | **e:** [info@familyfund.org.uk](mailto:info@familyfund.org.uk)

**Family Fund "Take a Break"** (Scotland only) provides grants for short breaks for the carers of disabled children, young people (up to aged 20) and their families in Scotland.

**w:** [takeabreakscotland.org.uk](http://takeabreakscotland.org.uk) | **t:** 01904 571 093

**e:** [info@takeabreakscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@takeabreakscotland.org.uk)

**Family Holiday Charity** provides breaks at holiday sites or grants, to help with the cost of a holiday, to families on a low income 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 under the age of 18.

**w:** [familyholidaycharity.org.uk](http://familyholidaycharity.org.uk) | **t:** 020 3117 0650

**e:** [hello@familyholidaycharity.org.uk](mailto:hello@familyholidaycharity.org.uk)

**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:** [holidayhomestrust.info](http://holidayhomestrust.info) | **t:** 020 8433 7290 | 020 8433 7291

**e:** [holiday.homes.trust@scouts.org.uk](mailto:holiday.homes.trust@scouts.org.uk)

**Hospice UK** provides an information service with a directory of local hospices offering short or long-term breaks for people with a terminal illness. **w:** [hospiceuk.org](http://hospiceuk.org) | **t:** 020 7520 8200 | **form:** [hospiceuk.org/get-in-touch](http://hospiceuk.org/get-in-touch)

### **Kidney Care UK**

They offer advice about UK breaks, international travel, medical travel insurance and Kidney Care UK holiday grants.

**w:** [kidneycareuk.org/kidney-disease-information/living-with-kidney-disease/travelling-with-ckd/](http://kidneycareuk.org/kidney-disease-information/living-with-kidney-disease/travelling-with-ckd/)

**t:** 0808 801 00 00 **e:** [support@kidneycareuk.org](mailto:support@kidneycareuk.org)

**Leonard Cheshire Disability** provides a range of practical support services for people with disabilities and their families and carers. They provide information about respite care and short break services to allow carers to have either a short break or a longer holiday.

**Form:** <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/get-support/living/respite-care>

**Masonic Charitable Foundation** offers grants for the costs of respite care for Masonic family carers who provide vital support for a loved one. Their grants can support short-term residential care breaks, or care in an individual's own home or day centre.

**w:** [mcf.org.uk/get-support/](http://mcf.org.uk/get-support/) **t:** 020 3146 3333

**Options Supported 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:** [optionsholidays.co.uk](http://optionsholidays.co.uk) | **t:** 01285 740 491

**form:** [optionsholidays.co.uk/contact-us](http://optionsholidays.co.uk/contact-us)

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

**w:** [phab.org.uk](http://phab.org.uk) | **t:** 020 8667 9443 | **form:** <https://phab.org.uk/contact-us/>

**Scope** offers tips and support on travel options for disabled people.

**w:** [scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/holiday-tips/](https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/holiday-tips/) | **t:** 0808 800 3333

**Shared Care Scotland** offers a range of services in Scotland including information and a directory of break services. They can also share details about the 'Respite' scheme in your area.

**w:** [sharedcarescotland.org.uk](https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk) | **t:** 01383 622462

**form:** <https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/contact/>

**Shared Lives Plus** is a charity that supports around 150 schemes across the UK where carers are matched to adults who need support. They can support someone in the day, provide breaks for other carers or provide longer-term support.

**w:** [www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk](https://www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk) | **t:** 0151 227 3499

**e:** [info@sharedlivesplus.org.uk](mailto:info@sharedlivesplus.org.uk)

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

**w:** [tourismforall.org.uk](https://tourismforall.org.uk)

**form:** [tourismforall.co.uk/trade/about-us/contact-us](https://tourismforall.co.uk/trade/about-us/contact-us)

**Traveleyes** offers group holidays for blind, visually impaired and sighted people to a wide range of international holiday destinations.

**w:** [traveleyes-international.com](https://traveleyes-international.com) | **t:** 0113 834 6094

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

**w:** [turn2us.org.uk](https://turn2us.org.uk) | **form:** [turn2us.org.uk/about-us/contact-us](https://turn2us.org.uk/about-us/contact-us)

## Finding 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:** [cqc.org.uk](https://www.cqc.org.uk) | **t:** 03000 616 161 | **e:** [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

**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. They also have a guide called ‘Choosing Care at Home’.

**w:** [homecareassociation.org.uk](http://homecareassociation.org.uk) | **t:** 020 8661 8188

**e:** [enquiries@homecareassociation.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@homecareassociation.org.uk)

## Wales

**Care 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:** [careinspectorate.wales](http://careinspectorate.wales) | **t:** 0300 7900 126 | **e:** [ciw@gov.wales](mailto:ciw@gov.wales)

## 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:** [careinspectorate.com](http://careinspectorate.com) | **t:** 0345 600 9527

**e:** [enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot)

**Shared Care Scotland** – has a range of services including a directory of break services. Some also have a scheme called Respitability and Scotspirit, where local businesses and tourist attractions provide breaks and activities free of charge for carers.

**w:** [sharedcarescotland.org.uk](http://sharedcarescotland.org.uk) | **t:** 01383 622462

**form:** [sharedcarescotland.org.uk/contact/](http://sharedcarescotland.org.uk/contact/)

## 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:** [rqia.org.uk](http://rqia.org.uk) | **t:** 028 9536 1990 | **e:** [info@rqia.org.uk](mailto:info@rqia.org.uk)

## England, Wales, Scotland

**ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)** provides advice and information to employers and employees including information on employing personal care workers.


**w:** [acas.org.uk](http://acas.org.uk) | **t:** 0300 123 1100

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 Helpline or visiting our website for the latest information.

We would welcome your feedback on this factsheet – please email: [info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org)  
This factsheet was updated in April 2026. Next review due April 2027.

## Carers UK Helpline

For expert information and advice about caring.

 **0808 808 7777**  
(Monday – Friday 9am-6pm)

 [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)

## Carers UK

20 Great Dover Street  
London SE1 4LX  
020 7378 4999  
[info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org)

## Carers Wales

029 2081 1370  
[info@carerswales.org](mailto:info@carerswales.org)

## Carers Scotland

0141 445 3070  
[info@carerscotland.org](mailto:info@carerscotland.org)

## Carers Northern Ireland

02890 43 98 43  
[info@carersni.org](mailto:info@carersni.org)

However caring affects you,  
we're here.

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: join us for free at [carersuk.org/join](https://carersuk.org/join)

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](https://carersuk.org)

**This information can be requested in large print or as a text file.**