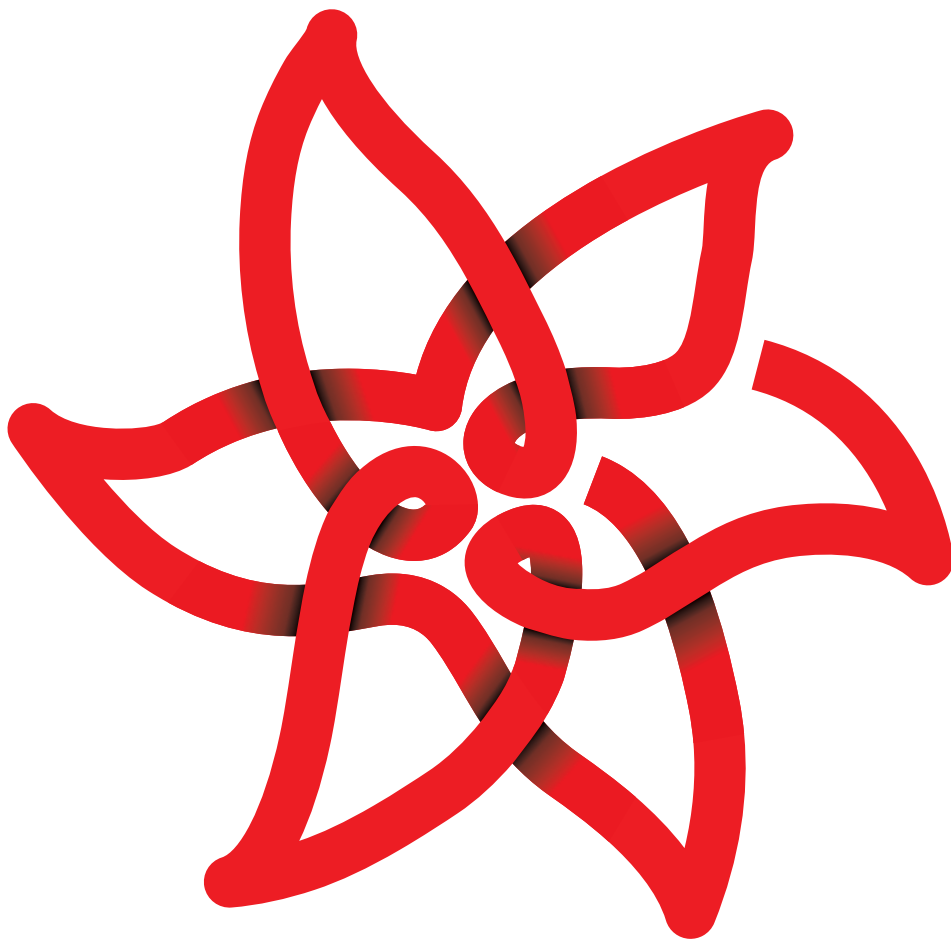


# When caring ends or changes



**Looking after someone may be a large part of your life, but it is inevitable that your caring role will change over time. This may be because the person you cared for has recovered and no longer needs care, they can no longer be cared for at home, or because they have died.**

Whatever your situation, it is important to realise that you are not alone. It will be difficult, but you can find help and support.

This resource is for carers who are experiencing significant change in their lives. It outlines the support available and the steps you can take to help you through each situation.

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## Residential care

If the person you look after is no longer able to look after themselves and you are unable to provide the care they need, for whatever reason, residential or nursing care is a sensible and realistic option.

### Making the decision that residential care might be an option

Residential care for the person you are looking after might feel like a difficult option to consider. You may have really conflicting feelings about this. Carers have told us that they experience a mixture of sadness and guilt, whilst also feeling relief that the person they are looking after will be given a level of practical care and assistance that is now too difficult to maintain at home. Caring can be both physically and mentally exhausting and it can be much better to arrange the best residential care possible than struggle on until you reach crisis point.

*“I know that feeling of having a huge weight lifted off your shoulders. It’s what I felt when I made the decision that my brother had to be in a care home, and simply could not live independently any longer. I also know the guilt that comes with that decision.”*

Anon – Forum user

If possible you should talk with the person you are looking after about how they feel about a move into residential care and discuss what is best for both of you. If either of you are finding the thought of a move upsetting or difficult to deal with, it may help to talk it over with a friend, family member, another carer, your GP or social worker.

Residential care homes should be happy for you to go and visit to look around and should answer any questions you both may have.

If the person you are looking after moves into residential care then this might mean your caring role changes or it might mean your caring role comes to an end. You can find information about life after caring later in this booklet.

If you will still be providing care to the person then remember that there might still be support you can get through the local Trust as a carer; there might still be benefits that you can claim as a carer and/or there might still be rights in work you can access as a carer.

### Finding residential care

The local Trust should be able to provide you with a list of residential care homes in the area, and should be able to advise on suitable residential care homes within their budget (if they are helping with the cost – see below) or

the budget of the person you are looking after if they are self-funding.

▶▶ **Note:** The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent health and social care regulator and has an online directory of registered residential care homes: [rqia.org.uk](http://rqia.org.uk)

▶▶ **Note:** You can also use the Which? Care Services Directory where you can search for residential care homes anywhere in the UK: [which.co.uk/elderly-care/care-services-directory](http://which.co.uk/elderly-care/care-services-directory)

## Paying for residential care

The person you are looking after may be able to get help with the cost of their residential care home fees from their local Trust depending on their income and capital. Alternatively the person you are looking after may have to pay the full cost of their residential care home fees.

### Help through the local Trust

If the local Trust assesses the person you are looking after as needing residential care, then they may help with the cost.

To work out whether they will help with the cost they will firstly look at whether the person you are looking after has capital over a certain amount – this is explained in further detail below.

If the person you are looking after does not have capital over this amount, then the local Trust will carry out a full financial assessment to see whether they will help with the cost. Local trusts must follow statutory guidelines when carrying out financial assessments.

### *The capital limits*

If the person you are looking after has capital over a certain limit, (which includes savings, investments and property which they own or have a legal entitlement to) then they will need to pay the full cost of their residential care home fees.

▶▶ **Note:** Capital limits are subject to change. For the current figure contact Carers UK on 0808 808 7777 or [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org), or visit the NI Direct website: [nidirect.gov.uk](http://nidirect.gov.uk)

Only the capital of the person you are looking after, plus half of any joint capital, is taken into account.

If the person you are looking after owns their own home then it will usually be counted as capital 12 weeks after they permanently move into residential care. However, the value of the home will not be counted if certain close relatives are still living there (see below), and have been continually occupying the property as their main home since before the person entered residential care.

The value of the property can be disregarded (indefinitely if circumstances don't change) if it is occupied by:

- a spouse, civil partner, or partner (unless they are estranged)
- a lone parent if they are the person's estranged or divorced partner
- a relative or member of their family who is aged 60 or over
- a child under 18 (in England & Wales) or a child under 16 (in Scotland & Northern Ireland) who the person has a duty to maintain
- a close relative or member of their family who is incapacitated.

Other discretionary disregards may also apply.

## Help through the NHS

NHS continuing healthcare is a package of care arranged and funded by the NHS for those who have a 'primary health need'.

However, in Northern Ireland there is currently no guiding framework for NHS continuing healthcare, which makes getting an assessment challenging.

▶▶ **Note:** For further information contact Carers UK on 0808 808 7777 or [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)

## Paying the full cost themselves

If the person you are looking after is going to pay the full cost of the residential care fees themselves, then you should ensure that the fee payable is clear and transparent, and you know what any charges are for and when they are due.

## Benefits

If you or the person you are looking after receive any benefits, these may be affected by a move into residential care.

If the person you care for is funding their own care, all their benefits –

including Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/Personal Independence Payment (PIP)/Attendance Allowance – will continue. Your entitlement to Carer's Allowance may continue if you are still caring for them for 35 hours a week or more.

If the residential care home is funded (fully or partially) by the local Trust, the DLA care component/PIP daily living component /Attendance Allowance will stop being paid to the person you care for once they have lived in the care home for 28 days. The mobility component of DLA and PIP can continue to be paid.

Once the person you care for stops getting the DLA care component/PIP daily living component/Attendance Allowance, your entitlement to Carer's Allowance will also stop (unless you are also caring for another person, and meet the criteria for Carer's Allowance as their carer).

If you are receiving any means-tested benefits, eg Income Support or Pension Credit, you might be getting an additional amount of money included in this means-tested benefit called a Carer Premium or Carer Addition.

If your Carer's Allowance stops then this additional amount can continue to be paid for an extra eight weeks. You will need to contact the benefit agencies and let them know about your change in circumstances. They should then adjust the amount of benefit you get for the eight weeks. After the eight weeks the benefits you are able to claim may change. This is because some benefits such as Income Support rely on the person you care for getting their qualifying disability benefit.

If you are getting Universal Credit you might be getting an additional amount of money called a Carer Element. If your Carer's Allowance stops then this additional amount can continue for the rest of your Universal Credit assessment period. At the end of this time it will stop and you may need to discuss a new Claimant Commitment with your work coach.

If the person you care for is your partner or spouse, you will no longer be assessed as a couple for means-tested benefits. You will be assessed as a single person.

## End of life planning

When someone is nearing the end of life they may want to consider and plan how they will be looked after at this time. You can find out more about end of life care on [thepalliativehub.com](http://thepalliativehub.com)

This may include advance care planning or thinking about moving into a hospice.

## Advance care planning

If the person you are looking after is nearing the end of their life and the expectation is that their condition will deteriorate and they may lose capacity to make decisions about their care, they should be offered advance care planning. This means they can record their wishes around the end of life care they will receive.

This is a voluntary process and the advance care plan (sometimes called a statement of wishes) can be used to record care and treatment wishes. It should be attached to the medical notes and should also be easily accessible to those who are involved in looking after the person.

The advance care plan can include:

- where they want to be cared for when they are dying
- where they want to die
- who they want to be with them
- values such as religious beliefs
- routines that are important to them
- anything that helps them feel safe and comfortable

Through this planning, the person you are looking after can also make an Advance Decision about the treatment they wish or do not wish to receive.

▶▶ **Note:** The charity Compassion in Dying contains comprehensive information on advance planning: [compassionindying.org.uk](http://compassionindying.org.uk)

If none of the above measures are in place, decisions about care and treatment for the person you are looking after will be made in their 'best interests' by medical and/or social care professionals. Family and carers should be involved in this process.

## Moving into a hospice

If the person you are looking after is nearing the end of their life, it may be recommended that they move to a hospice. They may move into a hospice from their home or from a residential care home or hospital.

The end of life palliative care that people receive at a hospice is for those whose illness may no longer be curable, but for whom a hospital stay is not necessary.

A hospice can offer a wide range of supportive care that focuses not just on medical needs but on emotional wellbeing and support as well, both for the person being looked after, and for family members and carers.

End of life palliative care services include:

- skilled medical and nursing care, including pain and symptom control
- counselling
- complementary therapies
- practical advice
- spiritual/religious support
- creative activities
- physiotherapy
- bereavement support

There are normally no set visiting times for family members and friends. This means that you can be with the person as often as you wish, and the hospice will aim to provide a welcoming, informal, warm and supportive environment.

People are usually referred to a hospice by their GP, hospital doctor or nurse.

Time spent at a hospice and the services they provide are given free of charge.

If the person you are looking after moves to a hospice their Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Attendance Allowance can continue to be paid in full. This is as long as the Disability and Carers Service are informed in writing that the person you are looking after is terminally ill. If you receive Carer's Allowance then this should also continue to be paid if you still meet all of the eligibility conditions.



## Bereavement

Losing someone close to you is devastating. If you have been caring for that person, the loss can seem even greater. How you cope with the death of the person you cared for is a very personal thing. There is no right or wrong way to feel following a death.

Immediately after a death there are a lot of practical things to do, like registering the death and arranging the funeral, and family and friends tend to be around a lot more. It may be that only when all the practicalities are dealt with, and the people around you get back to their everyday lives, that you really start to grieve.

### How grief might affect you

Everyone's reaction to losing someone is different. There is no right or wrong way to deal with your own grief. Many people find that it is beneficial to listen to their own feelings; to do what's best for you rather than what other people think is best.

There are no time limits on grief, and no set pattern of emotions and behaviours that everybody follows. Grief does not always happen straight away.

As well as coping with the loss of the person you cared for, you also have to deal with the loss of your caring role. You may feel guilty about feeling relief, but you may also feel exhausted and alone.

*“I have been caring for my wife for the past eight years. She passed away a few weeks ago, and I am feeling so bereft. Not only is it the acute sadness of losing the woman I love, whom I had been married to for 45 years, but I am no longer needed for the caring role that I had spent 24 hours a day thinking about.”*

Anon – Forum user

*“I think we can all relate to how hard it is losing someone, but when you've also been that person's carer it's a double whammy. Your whole identity is changed in an instant.”*

Anon – Forum user

The death of the person you cared for may mean that the relationships you built up with the professionals involved in their care come to an end. Carers also often talk about losing contact with friends and family because of the demands of their caring role and picking up old social contacts or meeting new people may be the last thing you feel like doing when you have just lost someone.

## Finding support

The best help and support often comes from the people you know best – and who know you best. You may find that some people seem awkward around you, often because they want to do and say the ‘right thing’ but are not sure what that is. If you feel able, tell the people around you what you need from them and how they can help. Close family and friends may also be able to help you do this.

Talking about what has happened, and about the person who died, can help you to come to terms with their death, and to cope with the feelings you have. Friends and relatives who knew the deceased and can share memories of them with you can be a great source of support. Talking to other people who have been bereaved, and who have a better understanding of what you are going through, can also help.

▶▶ **Note:** There are many organisations, such as Cruse Bereavement Care: [cruse.org.uk/northern-ireland](http://cruse.org.uk/northern-ireland) which run groups for people who are grieving. Your GP can put you in touch with a local bereavement counsellor if you’d like more formal one-to-one counselling. A hospice may also provide bereavement support for the families of people who have used their services.

## Practical matters following a death

Thinking about what we need to do in the short- and long-term can be helpful. Here is some information on questions and practical matters that arise when a person dies.

▶▶ **Note:** You can also find a useful checklist about what to do when someone dies at: [nidirect.gov.uk/articles/what-do-when-someone-dies-checklist](http://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/what-do-when-someone-dies-checklist)

## Medical Death Certificate

When you have the medical death certificate, you need to take this to the local registrar’s office to register the death. The hospital, hospice or GP will issue the medical certificate for the cause of death with a form called Notice to informant, which explains how to register the death.

## A Post-mortem

A post mortem is a medical examination of the body of the deceased. Post mortems are usually carried out when there is uncertainty about the cause of

death. The doctor who certifies the death has a legal responsibility to inform the coroner if a post-mortem is needed.

Post mortems can be requested by the coroner (an independent official who enquires into un-natural death, for example, sudden, unexpected or those related to procedures or operations) or by the hospital or close relatives.

Permission of the close relatives of the deceased must be sought if the hospital wants a post mortem to be carried out but permission is not needed if the post mortem is requested by the coroner.

Post mortems usually take place within a couple of days of the death and the body is released on the day of the post mortem, so planning for the funeral should not be affected.

Following the post mortem, reports are sent to the GP/consultant of the deceased person and the coroner (if applicable). Relatives can also request a copy.

## **Organ donation**

It may have been the deceased's wish to donate their organs for transplant or medical research and, if you are aware that is the case, you need to inform the healthcare professionals involved in their care as soon as you can after the death.

## **Other practical issues you may need to consider**

The following would be useful to get done as soon as you can manage it:

- send the certificate for social security benefits (Form BD8) to the Social Security Agency so that they can deal with the pension and/or benefits of the deceased
- contact the local tax office to inform them of the death
- contact any relevant insurance companies, pension providers, banks and building societies
- contact the executors of the Will if there is one or, if there is no Will, decide who will apply for letters of administration
- if the person you cared for had any NHS equipment on loan, eg crutches, wheelchair or medical equipment, you will need to arrange for this to be returned - the person's GP or local health trust will be able to tell you how to do this

## Registering the death

In Northern Ireland a death must be registered within five days. This can be extended in certain circumstances.

### Where do I register the death?

Deaths are registered at the local registry office. You do not have to register the death yourself. Another relative may be able to register the death as long as they take all the necessary documents – including the medical death certificate.

Many registry offices now only see people by appointment so it is a good idea to phone the office first. You can find details of your local registry office in the telephone directory or follow this link to find your local office: [nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/district-registrars-northern-ireland](https://nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/district-registrars-northern-ireland)

### What documents do I need to take with me?

When you register the death, the registrar will need:

- the medical certificate showing cause of death
- the deceased's NHS medical card (if possible)

You will also need to tell the registrar:

- the date and place the deceased was born and the date and place they died
- their full name (including any maiden name)
- their occupation and the name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner
- their usual address
- whether or not the deceased received a pension or any state benefits

▶▶ **Note:** For further information on registering a death visit: [nidirect.gov.uk/articles/registering-death](https://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/registering-death)

### What do I need to get from the registrar?

The registrar will give you:

- the certificate for burial or cremation (you will normally need to give this to the funeral director)

- a death certificate - a small fee will be charged - it is advisable to have a few extra copies for dealing with the Will and other tasks
- a certificate of registration of death issued for social security benefits (Form BD8)

## Arranging the funeral

The funeral can be very important in helping you and friends and family of the deceased to mourn. It is an event where the person's life can be thought of, valued, and celebrated. It is a time to think of the person who lived, and not just the difficulties of the last few weeks, months or years spent caring for them.

When the funeral takes place may depend on factors such as religious or cultural requirements. Aside from that, the funeral or cremation does not have to happen immediately, unless that is what you want. In any case, you will not be able to finalise the date until the death has been registered.

When planning the funeral, you should find out whether the deceased left any instructions about their funeral in a Will or other written document. Other than that you can choose between burial, cremation or alternative burials of various sorts and, if you choose to use one, a professional funeral director will help you make the arrangements.

## Paying for the funeral

Funeral costs can be quite high so it is worth obtaining quotes from more than one funeral director if you are using one. Make sure that everything has been included (church or other venue for the service, burial or cremation fees, cars for the mourners, flowers etc). You can ask for written quotations.

If you arrange the funeral, you will be the person responsible for ensuring the fees are paid, so it is sensible to check in advance if the deceased had money available to cover the funeral costs.

You could check their paperwork to find out:

- whether they took out a prepayment funeral plan
- whether they had a pension scheme or insurance plan which included a lump sum for funeral costs
- whether they belonged to a union or professional association which pays benefits when a member dies

Whether a lump sum could be released from a national savings account (bank

or building society accounts may be frozen until probate is granted but some banks or building societies may agree to release funds).

Alternatively, you or the executor (the person responsible for sorting out the deceased's estate) may be able to pay the costs of the funeral yourself and then recover those costs from the estate.

## **Help with funeral costs for people with a low income**

If there are no other means of paying for a funeral, you may be able to claim a Social Fund Funeral Payment from the Social Security Agency. Eligibility is based on your circumstances (rather than those of the deceased) and you may be eligible if you, or your partner, are in receipt of at least one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Child Tax Credit (which includes an amount higher than the family element)
- Working Tax Credit (where a disability or severe disability element is included)
- Universal Credit

You can claim the Funeral Payment any time between the date of the death and up to three months after the date of the funeral. The Social Security Agency must accept that it is reasonable for you to be responsible for the funeral expenses. There are specific rules about this and you should seek advice.

The payment covers the cost of specified necessary items and services (eg burial fees) and up to £700 for other funeral expenses. Be aware, though, that the payment will not necessarily cover all the costs of the funeral, so there may be an outstanding amount that you have to pay.

## **Wills and probate**

When someone dies, everything they own (their money, property and possessions) is called their estate. If the person who has died has left a Will, this will indicate how they wanted their estate to be divided after their death.

It will also usually name executors (the people they want to deal with the Will).

The estate cannot be used to pay bills or debts, or be divided up for gifts and inheritance until either of the following takes place:

- ▶ the Will has been granted probate – this is a formality which confirms that a Will is legally in order
- ▶ a grant of letters of administration has been given – this is a formality which allows the personal representative to deal with the estate when there is no Will

This means that any bank accounts in the deceased person's name will be frozen until the formalities have been completed. Bank accounts in joint names can be used by the other account holder.

If you had Power of Attorney for the person you cared for, because they were no longer able to deal with their own money and affairs, the Power of Attorney stops being in force as soon as the person dies.

You will not be able to continue to use their bank account, or carry out any business on their behalf.

▶▶ **Note:** For further information about Power of Attorney visit:  
[courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/OCP/EPA/Pages/default.aspx](https://courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/OCP/EPA/Pages/default.aspx)

If you had Controllership for the person you cared your powers as the Controller end when that person dies. There are, however, still things that need to be done. You must notify the Court that the Patient has died, giving the date of death, as soon as possible; you will then be told by letter what else needs to be done.

▶▶ **Note:** For more information about controllership visit:  
[courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/OCP/how-2-become-controller/Pages/default.aspx](https://courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/OCP/how-2-become-controller/Pages/default.aspx)

If the person you cared for has an estate worth more than £325,000, Inheritance Tax will have to be paid on any amount above that. However, Inheritance Tax does not have to be paid if the estate goes to the deceased's spouse or civil partner (no matter how much they inherit).

## Benefits

The death of the person you cared for may have an effect on your own financial situation and you may need to find out which benefits you can claim.

## **Carer's Allowance and carer premium/carers addition**

If you were receiving Carer's Allowance when the person you cared for died, this will usually continue for eight weeks from the Sunday following their death.

If you are 65 or over and were entitled to Invalid Care Allowance on the 27th October 2002 (as Carer's Allowance was then called), you will be entitled to Carer's Allowance indefinitely after the person you looked after has died.

If you are receiving a carer premium as part of your Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, this can continue for eight weeks following the death.

If you are receiving Universal Credit, the carer element can continue for the rest of your Universal Credit assessment period in which the death occurred, and for the next two assessment periods. At the end of this time it will stop and you may need to discuss a new claimant commitment with your work coach.

## **Benefits you may be able to claim now your circumstances have changed**

If your income is relatively low, you may be able to claim one or more of the following means tested benefits:

- Income Support – for people under state pension age who do not have to look for work - for example, single parents of young children and carers
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA) - if you have an illness of disability and your ability to work is limited due to this
- Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) – for people under state pension age who are available for and actively seeking work - it is important to sign on if you want to continue to get National Insurance Contribution Credits and you can sign on even if you will not be paid any JSA
- Universal Credit (UC) – this is for people who are under State Pension age who have a low income - UC is being introduced in Northern Ireland in 2017 and will gradually replace many benefits
- Pension Credit – for people of pensionable age or over
- Housing Benefit – help to pay the rent
- Rates – help to pay your rates



You may also be entitled to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (if under 65) or Attendance Allowance (if 65 or over) if you need help to look after yourself or with getting around.

▶▶ **Note:** For further information about benefits and tax credits visit: [carersuk.org/benefits](https://carersuk.org/benefits)

## Bereavement Support Payment

If it was your spouse or civil partner who has died then you may be able to get a Bereavement Support Payment.

There are two rates of Bereavement Support Payment, and which one you might be eligible for will depend on your circumstances.

▶▶ **Note:** For further information contact Carers NI on 028 9043 9843 or [advice@carersni.org](mailto:advice@carersni.org), or telephone the Bereavement Service on 0800 085 2463.

## Housing

Your housing situation may change when your caring role changes or comes to an end.

If the property is a rented property, then the right to inherit a tenancy when the tenant dies is known as succession. Succession rights depend on your relationship with the tenant and the type of tenancy they had.

▶▶ **Note:** If you are in a Housing Executive property you can get further information on the Housing Rights website: [housingadviceni.org/advice-housing-executive-tenants](https://housingadviceni.org/advice-housing-executive-tenants)

▶▶ **Note:** If you are in a housing association property you can see some further information on the Housing Rights website: [housingadviceni.org/advice-housing-association-tenants](https://housingadviceni.org/advice-housing-association-tenants)

If the property is mortgaged then what will happen will depend on whether anyone else is also on the mortgage, what type of mortgage it is, and whether there is any mortgage protection insurance in place.

▶▶ **Note:** For specialist housing advice you could contact the Housing Rights Service: [housingrights.org.uk](https://housingrights.org.uk)

## Life after caring

The end of your caring role may take some time to adjust to. Having more time to yourself may give you the opportunity for a much needed rest, but it can also leave you feeling that you have a lot of time to fill.

If you are used to always having things to do, it can be hard to stop and think about what you would like to do now.

Some people find that once they are no longer caring, exhaustion – both physical and emotional – catches up with them and they may feel unwell for a while.

Some practical matters, such as making sure you are claiming the right benefits for your situation now you are no longer caring, and dealing with any changes to your housing situation (if there are any), have to be dealt with fairly quickly. However, you do not need to rush into making decisions about other aspects of your life. The following suggestions may be helpful for you if and when you feel the time is right.

## Taking time for yourself

Resting and letting yourself have a break now your caring role has ended, is just as important as taking on a new endeavour.

►► **Note:** You could see if you can take a short break somewhere, and it might be that there are grants you could apply for to help with the cost of such as break. For more information visit: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-household-finances/grants](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-household-finances/grants)

You could take some time for yourself just to do things you enjoy, such as reading, going for a walk, or seeing family/friends.

*“Yesterday, dad died. I know life will be hectic for the next few weeks. So, today, I did something I’ve never done before. I have sat in my garden all day and done absolutely nothing. I didn’t read or listen to music; I just sat and reflected.”*

Anon – Forum user

## Access support from other former carers

You may feel isolated after many years of caring, and you might want to see if there is any support you can get from others in a similar position.

You could find out what support your local carer’s organisation or local carers group offers to former carers.

▶▶ **Note:** You could also speak to other former carers on the Carers UK Forum: [carersuk.org/forum](https://carersuk.org/forum)

## Learn something new

You may feel that you would like to refresh skills that you have not used for a while; return to hobbies or interests that you put aside; or learn something completely new.

You may have also gained new skills or interests from your caring role that you want to pursue.

You could contact your local library or regional college to find out about courses or training in your area.

Many local and community colleges offer evening and part time courses in a broad range of subjects, from courses to help you retrain for employment to those purely for interest and enjoyment.

Taking a course can also be a great way to meet new people.

## Volunteering

If you have some spare time, and feel you are ready to take on something new, you may be interested in volunteering.

As well as offering much needed help to local people or organisations, volunteering can be a very social activity, and can be a good way to meet new people.

Volunteering opportunities can range from befriending older or disabled people, offering your skills to a local charity (for example, administration, fundraising, legal advice etc.), to helping out on a local conservation project.

You can find your local volunteering centre by contacting Volunteer Now: [volunteernow.co.uk](https://volunteernow.co.uk). The website Do-It: [do-it.org](https://do-it.org) holds many volunteer opportunities and is searchable by subject as well as postcode.

Many former carers volunteer with Carers Northern Ireland. The volunteering opportunities range from events volunteers, local awareness volunteers, insight volunteers and listening support volunteers.

▶▶ **Note:** Read more about the opportunities on our website: [carersuk.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer](https://carersuk.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer)

## Starting (or returning to) paid employment

If you have some spare time, and feel you are ready to take on something new, you may be interested in starting, or returning to, paid employment.

If you are not sure what you would like to do and where to begin, start by recognising the skills and interests you have.

Think about the skills you have gained from:

- any paid work that you have done
- any volunteering work that you have done
- your role as a carer

Think about the interests you have:

- what you enjoy doing
- how you would like to use your skills
- things you miss doing that you once did, eg from previous work or volunteering

You could have a look on some careers websites to try and identify the sort of job which might match your skills and interests.

▶▶ **Note:** The Careers Service has a Career Horizons tool to help you make career decisions that best suit you:

[nidirect.gov.uk/services/career-horizons-adults](http://nidirect.gov.uk/services/career-horizons-adults)

## Helping to improve support for carers

Many former carers go on to become great campaigners. They have the experience of knowing what it is like to be at the sharp end of caring and they often have more time than those who are still caring.

If you want to get involved you can contact Carers Northern Ireland. Your local Trust may also welcome the input of carers in the planning and development of services for carers in your area. You can contact your local carer co-ordinator for further information. The contact details are at the back of this booklet.

## Useful organisations

### Carers Helpline

Caring can present all kinds of challenges, from filling in forms to coping with emotions. We're here for you with advice, information and support every step of the way.

t: 0808 808 7777 | e: [advice@carersni.org](mailto:advice@carersni.org)

[carersuk.org/northernireland](https://carersuk.org/northernireland)

### Other organisations

#### AdviceNI

Money and debt advice service for anyone struggling with their finances.

t: 0808 802 0020 (welfare changes) / 0800 988 2377 (tax and benefits)

[adviceni.net](https://adviceni.net)

#### Age NI

Information and advice for the over 60s.

t: 0808 808 7575

[ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland](https://ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland)

#### Careers Service

Impartial, all-age careers information, advice and guidance service.

t: 0300 200 7820

[nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/careers-service](https://nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/careers-service)

#### Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice local offices for advice/ representation on benefits, debt and housing.

[citizensadvice.co.uk](https://citizensadvice.co.uk)

### **CRUSE**

Support, advice and information for children, young people and adults when someone dies.

t: 0808 808 1677

[cruse.org.uk/northern-ireland-about](http://cruse.org.uk/northern-ireland-about)

### **Helplines Network**

Membership-led organisation consisting of over 25 different helplines operating across Northern Ireland.

[helplinesnetworkni.com](http://helplinesnetworkni.com)

### **Housing Rights**

Housing Rights Service information and advice on housing issues.

t: 028 9024 5640

[housingrights.org.uk](http://housingrights.org.uk)

### **Lifeline**

Crisis helpline service for people who are experiencing distress or despair.

t: 0808 808 8000

[lifelinehelpline.info](http://lifelinehelpline.info)

### **NILibraries**

Information on the services and resources available through your library.

[www.librariesni.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.librariesni.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx)

### **Regulation Quality and Improvement Authority**

The independent body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

t: 028 9536 1111

[rqia.org.uk](http://rqia.org.uk)

### **Volunteer Now**

Works to promote, develop and support volunteering across Northern Ireland

t: 028 9023 2020

[volunteernow.co.uk](http://volunteernow.co.uk)

## Benefits Helplines

### Disability and Carers Service

For Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance or Disability Living Allowance queries

t: 0800 587 0912 (textphone: 028 9031 1092)

### Jobs and Benefits Offices, Job Centres and Social Security Offices

Find your local office for Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance.

[nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-offices](https://nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-offices)

### Pension Credit

t: application line: 0808 100 6165 (textphone: 0808 100 1165)

t: help line: 0800 587 0892 (textphone: 0845 601 8841)

### Personal Independence Payment

t: 0800 012 1573 (textphone: 0800 012 1574)

### Tax Credits

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 Helpline or visiting our website for the latest information.

This factsheet was updated in April 2022.

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### **Carers NI**

58 Howard Street,  
Belfast, BT1 6PJ

**T 028 9043 9843**

**E [info@carersni.org](mailto:info@carersni.org)**

**[carersni.org](http://carersni.org)**

### **Carers UK Helpline**

For expert information and  
advice about caring.

**T 0808 808 7777**

(Monday to Friday, 9am - 6pm)

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

(Please note where you're from  
so that our advisers can tailor  
their guidance for you.)

**Carers NI is part of Carers UK,  
working together to make 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/ni](http://carersuk.org/ni)**

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