

Respite Care

Your Employee Wellbeing is dedicated to helping employees find the best advice, support and care in their personal and work lives. Expert services include access to health and fitness professionals, from nutritionists and osteopaths to life coaches, therapists and counsellors.

What is Respite Care?

Respite care is care that is provided to an individual by a temporary care provider whilst their usual carer takes a break from their regular caring responsibilities. Caring for an elderly relative is physically and mentally demanding and for those carers who are long term care givers handing over responsibilities can be a difficult decision. Respite is however, extremely important. A carer will have temporary relief from the demands of caring for a loved one which is crucial for positive mental wellbeing and this will also help to disperse any resentment that may build up if a family member is the prime carer for long periods of time.

A beneficial aspect of respite is the opportunity for an elderly relative to increase in his/her social interaction and experience new activities. Respite care can also bring a change of scenery which is very important too. The carer and the person being cared for will, therefore, both have positive experiences through time spent in a change of surroundings or with a different person to talk to each day.



Respite care can vary from a temporary visit providing hour-long relief for carers to a longer form of short-term alternative care. It could refer to care by a professional carer or family and friends who are providing temporary care. It can also include short-term care home stays where relatives can attend sessions for companionship as well as care.

Help at home from a paid carer

If you care for a parent or relative and need more time for yourself, you can arrange for a paid carer to help at their home. This is also called homecare. It might be a regular period of time (for example, one day a week to allow you to work, study or have a day off) or for a short period, such as a week, so you can take a holiday. If the person you care for needs 24-hour supervision, you can also arrange live-in care. Information about how to arrange respite care to assist you and support the needs of your elderly relative can be found in our respite care fact sheet.

Short-term stay in a care home

Some care homes offer short-term respite care. It can be difficult to organise respite space at short notice, but some care homes take advanced bookings which can help you to plan ahead, if for example, you want to book a holiday. You can search the NHS website for [local care homes with nursing](#) and [local care homes without nursing](#). Please also see our fact sheet about [residential care](#) for further information.

Day care centres

Day Care Centres, usually run by councils or local charities, offer a chance for people who find it difficult to get out and about to socialise, make friends and take part in activities such as dances, singing, games and arts and crafts. Some offer hairdressing, foot care and assisted bathing. Transport is often provided, but there may be a charge. To find out what is available in your area contact your local council or charities such as Age UK or Contact the Elderly.

Respite holidays

Respite holidays allow carers and people with illnesses or disabilities, to take a break from everyday life. There are many types of holidays available to you. Private holiday companies and a number of charities specialise in this area of respite. Please refer to our respite resources fact sheet for more information.

Sitting services

Some charities and carers' organisations offer sitting services where a trained volunteer will come to your relative's home to keep them company for a while, usually a few hours at a time. This type of sitting service is often free, or there may be a small charge.

Emergency respite care

It is also a good idea to think about who you could contact in the event of an emergency within your own social network. This might be another relative, friend or neighbour who could step in for a few hours while proper arrangements are made. Make sure they have door keys or know the code to a key safe, and also that they know the type of care the person will need – this may be as simple as sitting and chatting with them, making a meal for them or helping them take their medicines.

Write some notes about what kind of care the person you look after needs and leave them somewhere obvious to help anyone who steps in at short notice. These notes could include essential information on medicines, and any dos and don'ts the substitute carer may need to know.

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Costs of Respite Care

Respite care can cost on average £700-800 a week. For emergency respite care, live-in care, or staying in a care home, it can cost as much as £1,500 a week. For more information about the costs of elder care generally, please refer to our fact sheet on this subject.

Funding Respite Care

Local councils and charities will sometimes help with funding respite care. Councils however will only fund respite care for people that they have already assessed for such a need. If you would like to find out if the council would pay for respite care for either yourself as a carer or the person you look after, it's important that you both have an assessment. Carers should have a carer's assessment and the person in need of care should have a needs assessment. You can apply for a needs assessment with Social Services on the Government website. If your relative qualifies for council-funded respite care, you can ask the council to arrange it for you, or you can do it yourself through a personal budget or direct payment. Even if your relative does not require council funding, it's still useful for the person you look after to have a needs assessment as it will say which type of respite care will be most suited to them should the need arise. On occasions grants are made available to carers to support them with respite. Please refer to our Eldercare fact sheet on Respite Care for further details.

If the relative you care for has to pay for their own respite care, they might be able to raise money towards this from:

- income from pensions, work, investments or property
- savings
- benefits, such as Attendance Allowance

If you need some form of respite or short break from your caring duties or are looking for someone to temporarily replace another form of professional care, we would be happy to advise you.

Your Employee Wellbeing has been making a difference to employees since 2011. If you would like to find out more about our services, please get in touch.

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