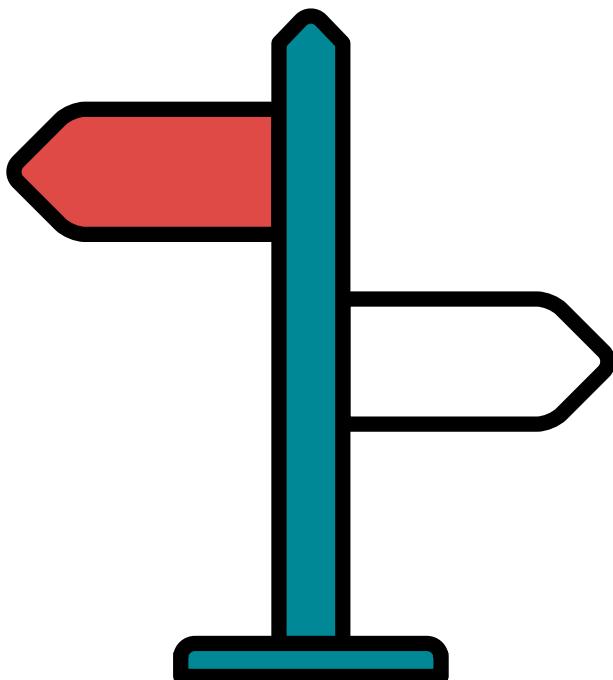




Respite Care

Factsheet



Respite care

'Respite care' gives carers time away from their responsibilities to rest, so they can continue to look after their loved ones should they choose to continue doing so.

Across the UK today almost 7 million people are carers, supporting a loved one who is older, disabled or seriously ill, often juggling this role with work or schooling. A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who cannot cope without their support.

Caring can be an isolating experience leaving somebody physically and emotionally exhausted. It can lead to

stress, depression and other mental ill health issues and may affect relationships with others. But there is help and support out there through local authorities and specialist organisations.

As almoner you should remember that a carer may need your support or assistance in order to understand the types of respite care and how to access them, as well as guidance on carrying out a Carer's Assessment and how to pay for care if support is awarded.



The types of respite care

The main types of respite care are:

- **Domiciliary Respite Care.** Suitable if the family member depends on the carer for help with personal tasks. If current circumstances permit, it could be arranged for another carer to visit at home and provide support with difficult activities such as dressing and showering.
- **Day Respite Care.** Suitable if the family member lives at home but is isolated or lonely. They could attend a local Day Centre if current circumstances permit.
- **Residential Respite Care.** Suitable if the 'carer' needs a short break to look after his/her own health and wellbeing. If current circumstances permit, the person being cared for will go for a short stay in a residential or nursing home.

Accessing respite care

If a carer is in need of support they should have a Carer's Assessment which is an opportunity for them to discuss their needs with their local authority. This is free and the local authority will use it to decide what support to give. **This should happen even if the carer doesn't ask for one.** However, if the carer thinks they should have had a Carer's Assessment but haven't been offered one, they should contact their local council to find out what support they qualify for.

The assessment will look at how caring affects the carer's everyday life, including for example, physical, mental and emotional needs, and whether they are able or willing to carry on caring. The need may be for regular support or for the carer to have a short break or holiday time. Find the local authority on www.gov.uk and get in touch with them to find out more.

After the assessment the local authority will decide if the carer is entitled to any support from them. If support is offered they will write a care plan with the carer that sets out how their needs will be met. This could include getting help with transport or with technology so they can keep in touch with family and friends. As part of the care plan a personal budget will be allocated. This is a statement showing the cost of meeting the carer's needs. They can choose to take this personal budget in the form of direct payments.

If the carer is not entitled to help then the local authority must give a reason for their decision. Even if somebody doesn't qualify for support the council should give them information about other organisations that might be able to help.



Affording care

There are two main ways of getting help with the cost of respite care:

- from the council
- from a charity

Or, you can pay for it yourself.

Councils will only pay for respite care for people who they've assessed as needing it following a needs assessment and carer's assessment.

If you or the person you care for qualifies for respite care, the council will do a financial assessment to work out if it will pay towards it. If you or the person you care for 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.

The [Carers Trust](#) offers some grants to carers who need respite. The charity, [Turn2us](#), can help to find grants for people who need respite care but can't afford it.

If the person 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

Masonic support

The Masonic Charitable Foundation has an arrangement with the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution Care Company (RMBICC) to offer short stays in a residential or nursing home for Freemasons and family members.

More recently this help has been extended to provide respite care in the home using agency personnel for a night, day or a weekend. This support is financially assessed and an enquiry should be made to MCF directly (see Getting help). A Carer's Assessment will be required before any application for respite care will be considered by the MCF. If there is a problem with securing accommodation in an RMBI home, the local authority holds a register of local homes in the area including the type of care available - nursing, residential or dementia care which you can request from them.



Getting help

- **Age UK:** Deals with the needs and aspirations of older people and provides advice for carers – www.ageuk.org.uk or call the advice line on 0800 055 6112.
- **Carers Trust:** Improves support, services, and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring for a loved one – www.carers.org or call 0300 772 9600.
- **Carers UK:** Gives expert advice, information, and support to carers – www.carersuk.org or call 020 7378 4999.
- **The MCF's Advice and Support Team:** offers advice, guidance and support on a range of issues and organisations that can help - www.mcf.org.uk or contact them by calling 0800 035 60 90.

The information contained in this factsheet is intended for general guidance only and does not constitute advice. The organisations referred to for further help are just a sample of other support services available.

