



RESPITE/SHORT BREAKS FOR CARERS

Respite or a short break is a much needed break for both you and the person you care for. It's an opportunity to have an occasional break so that you feel better able to continue in your caring role and it should be a positive experience for you and the person you care for.

You may feel guilty about spending time away from the person you care for but it is important that you are able to take a break to protect your own health and wellbeing.

"If you feel you need a break from caring, or may do so in the future, you should seek help now. Don't put it off because it can take a while between applying for respite and receiving the help you need." Ian, a local carer

Why do you need a break?

- ▶ To unwind and have time to yourself
- ▶ To spend time with family or friends
- ▶ A break from the person you care for
- ▶ To try something new
- ▶ To have a holiday
- ▶ To get out of the house
- ▶ To maintain or regain your health
- ▶ To catch up with sleep and re-charge your batteries

Why does the person you care for need a break?

- ▶ To have a holiday
- ▶ To increase their opportunities to be independent
- ▶ To ensure that in a crisis they're used to being cared for by others
- ▶ To reduce any feelings of being a burden
- ▶ A break from you
- ▶ Rehabilitation and therapy

"All I wanted was a bit of time to myself and I had no idea just how exhausted I was."

What does respite or a short break look like?

Traditionally a break has meant some time in a residential care home or nursing home. This type of break is suitable for some, but others may want a choice about how, where and when the break is provided.

Breaks can vary from a few hours to a few weeks and may be arranged on a regular planned basis, as a holiday, or to deal with an unexpected emergency.

Breaks can take many forms - you can go away or stay at home; try something new or make time for your old interests; spend time on your own or with others.

Short breaks should deliver positive outcomes for all those involved in the caring relationship. They should offer a break from daily routine, time to pursue personal interests and improve confidence, health and well-being.

How do I get respite or a short break?

- ▶ Most respite care is accessed through your local health and social care team

- ▶ In most cases, if you can pay for the break yourself, you do not need to involve your local health and social care team.
- ▶ You can apply in person to any voluntary or private scheme offering respite. They might want to check that you meet the criteria for using their service, or may want an assessment to be carried out by a Social Worker, GP or other professional.

The Borders Carers Centre can provide information on accessible accommodation.

The Borders Carers Centre also has a fund that carers can apply to if they need a short break, contact us for more information.

Do I have to pay for respite or a short break?

This depends on who is providing the respite care:

- ▶ The National Health Service cannot charge for respite care in a hospital.
- ▶ Health and Social Care have the legal power to charge for some of the services they provide and will therefore have to carry out a financial assessment of the person receiving the care, before deciding how much they will be charged, if appropriate. However, they cannot charge certain people. These are:
 - Carers – the local authority can only charge the person who is receiving care.

*"It's
not easy but
it is so important
to remember that
you have needs too,
whether it's going fishing
or retail therapy, get
support and time for
you."*

- A young person between 16 and 18 who is getting income support
- A child with disability, up to the age of 19, who is still attending school/higher education
- A person receiving a service provided under the Mental Health Act.

Arranging a short break for yourself

If you are arranging a short break yourself, then there are a number of factors to consider, including cost. Shared Care Scotland provide a range of tools and resources for carers who are planning short breaks - visit their website: www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk or call 01383 622462.



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