

# Advice for carers

A practical guide

Home  
& care



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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is correct. However, things do change, so it is always a good idea to seek expert advice on your personal situation.

Date of publication: April 2012 © Age UK 2012



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# Introduction

Caring for a friend or relative can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. It's also a big undertaking that, on occasion, can leave you feeling tired and stressed. But there is support available.

Whether you have been a carer for a long time or have recently joined the millions of people across the UK who are caring for a relative or friend, you may wish to know more about the support available to you and the person you care for.

This guide looks at both the practical side of caring – the benefits you can claim, how to arrange flexible working hours, how to organise respite care – and the emotional side, such as the impact on your health and social life. It aims to let you know where to go for help, so you don't feel you have to manage on your own.

As far as possible, the information given in this guide is applicable across the UK.

## Key



This symbol indicates where information differs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



This symbol indicates who to contact for the next steps you need to take.

Note that when we refer to the local social services department, this term includes the Social Work Department in Scotland and the Health and Social Services Trust in Northern Ireland.

# Are you a carer?

If you look after your partner, or a relative or friend who needs help because they are ill or disabled, then you are a carer. You may have looked after someone for a long time without ever thinking of yourself as a carer.

There are different ways in which you may care for someone else. For instance, you might:

- visit a relative who lives far away once a month to check on their wellbeing
- arrange hospital appointments by telephone for a parent
- live close enough to a disabled friend to be able to drop in every day to provide a meal and some company
- move in with a relative to help them recuperate after a major operation
- be on hand to provide 24-hour constant care for your partner.

Whether or not to take on a caring role is a decision that many of us will have to make at some point in our lives. Becoming a carer can be rewarding, but also overwhelming and demanding. Take time to review your options to ensure that you make the best decision for both you and the person who needs care. Getting help from friends and family can ease the stress, and your GP and social services should be able to provide support.

## what next?

The charity Carers UK is a good source of information, advice and support for carers (see page 35). In England, the government service Carers Direct can also offer information and advice (see page 34).

# Your rights as a carer

As a carer, you have certain basic rights. You have the right to:



- have your views taken into consideration by social services when they are deciding how best to meet the needs of the person you care for
- a carer's assessment (see pages 6–7).

You may also have the right to:

- request flexible working from your employer (see page 21)
- receive financial support through Carer's Allowance (see page 12)
- assistance from social services, such as practical help at home, help with taxi fares, counselling to deal with stress, and information about local support groups (see pages 6–7)
- arrange respite care to give you a break (see page 26).

If you spend a lot of time caring for someone, you will have your own needs as a carer. Make sure you do not overlook these: making time for yourself and being aware of your limits is crucial to your health and wellbeing (see pages 24–25).

In November 2011, a new policy to help carers was introduced in England called *Recognised, valued and supported: next steps for the Carers' Strategy*. This replaced the National Carers' Strategy, which aimed to make sure carers are treated with dignity, have access to the services they need, have a life of their own, are not forced into financial hardship and are helped to stay well. This new document explains how the Government intends to improve the lives of carers over the next four years.

-  In Wales, in November 2010, the Welsh Government introduced the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010. This places a duty on the NHS and local authorities to work together to provide information and advice to carers and engage with them when providing services.
-  A separate Carers' Strategy has also been produced in Scotland.

### what next?

In England, you can obtain a copy of *Recognised, valued and supported: next steps for the Carers' Strategy* from the Department of Health by calling 0300 123 1002 or download it from [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk). In Wales, contact the Welsh Assembly Government on 029 2068 1239 for a copy of its carers' strategy or download it from [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk). In Scotland, you can download a copy of its strategy at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

## *Support with caring*

Caring for someone can be difficult and there can be lots of reasons why you might need support.

- You may find certain tasks difficult to carry out for health or personal reasons.
- It may be hard finding time for yourself, your family and friends.
- The condition of the person you care for may have become worse.

You can ask your local council social services department for a care needs assessment on behalf of the person you care for, or they can ask for one directly. This must also include an assessment of your needs as the carer and how you see your caring role. You should also be involved in the decision about the kind of support services that are provided. If the person you care for has 'eligible' needs according to the council's criteria, the council has a legal duty to meet those needs. However, the person may need to pay towards the services provided – this is decided by means-testing.

You're entitled to your own independent carer's assessment, whether or not the person you care for is having their needs assessed. The council's contact number should be in your phone book.

The kind of help and support you can get includes respite care to give you a break (see page 26); emotional support from other carers; help with caring; and equipment to help you (our free guide *Adapting your home* has more information on this).



If you live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland you can have these services provided directly to you by the local authority, but you may be charged for them. If you live in Scotland, you can't receive services in your own right, but the social work department should take your needs into account when the person you care for has an assessment of their needs.


Before you have an assessment, think about the following questions.

- Are you getting enough sleep?
- Can you get out and do things by yourself?
- Is your health being affected by caring?
- Can you cope with other family commitments?
- Is juggling work and caring difficult?
- Are there any other issues that may affect your ability to continue caring?


**what  
next?**

**Contact Carers UK for further support and advice (see page 35). Visit Carers Direct for detailed advice on preparing for a carer's assessment (see page 34).**

# Different ways to fund care

 If the person you care for has been assessed as needing help from social services, they may be eligible for direct payments (sometimes called Self-Directed Support in Scotland). These are cash payments, enabling people to arrange and pay for their own care and support, rather than receiving services directly from their local council. They aim to give people more control and flexibility over the care they receive. It's up to the person you care for to choose whether they prefer social services to arrange their care, or would rather use direct payments.

In certain circumstances, this will allow the person you look after to employ you as their carer. However, unless the council decides that exceptional circumstances make it necessary, you cannot receive direct payments from your spouse, civil partner, live-in partner, or a close relative who lives with you (or their spouse or partner).

 In England, alongside direct payments, the Government is developing personal budgets. These aim to give people even more choice and control over the services they receive, and how they're funded. Personal budgets are not available in Wales.

Direct payments and personal budgets aren't suitable for everyone and the person you care for will need to think carefully before accepting them. They should contact their local social services department for more information.

Social services should provide advice and support to help the person make the decision.

**what  
next?**

See our free guide *Personal budgets* and free factsheet *Self-directed support: direct payments and personal budgets* for more information. Our free guide *Care at home* has information about what help you may be able to receive from your local authority.

***Direct payments enable people to arrange and pay for their own care and support.***



# Caring from a distance

If you live a long way from your relative, being actively involved in their care as they get older can be a challenge. However, a planned, organised approach will help make your life easier. Think carefully about the following points and don't over-commit yourself.

- Have you asked what the person you care for wants and needs?
- Being a distance-carer can be time-consuming and expensive: you may find yourself travelling miles every weekend. Can you afford the time and the money to pay for fuel or fares?
- Can anyone else share the responsibility? Could they contribute towards the costs, even if they're not able to be there very often?
- Travelling and looking after people are both tiring – have you got the health and energy you need?
- Carers may be entitled to benefits – make sure you've applied for any you're eligible for (see pages 12–13).
- The local social services department can assess the practical and emotional needs of both you and your relative and may provide services to support you both.
- Could your relative's local Age UK provide services to help them, such as home visits or handyman services, which can help with minor home repairs? Other charities and home improvement agencies might also offer these services.

- Have you and your relative considered other options – perhaps retirement housing, moving to a care home, moving your relative closer to you or perhaps in with you?
- Has the person you care for considered installing a community alarm, in case they have a fall or need help when you're not there?
- Are there other telecare options that can help you care from a distance? Telecare refers to equipment and services that support someone's safety and independence at home. Different equipment can sense risks such as floods or gas, remind someone to take their pills, or even call for help. Contact the Disabled Living Foundation to find out more (see page 38).
- In England and Wales, if the person you care for is likely to lose their capacity to make decisions, talk to them about setting up a Power of Attorney to let you make decisions on their behalf. See our guides *Powers of attorney* and *Looking after someone else's affairs* to find out more.
- Make sure the person you care for has had a community care assessment. They may be entitled to care at home that will ease the burden on you.

## what next?

For more information about retirement housing, read our free guide *Housing options*. Many local councils run community alarm schemes. You can contact your council for more information. Age UK also provides Personal Alarms\* – for more information about the service and the likely costs, call 0800 77 22 66.

\*Age UK Personal Alarm is a product name of and is provided by Aid-Call Limited, which is a commercial services arm of Age UK.

# Carer's Allowance

The main welfare benefit for carers is called Carer's Allowance. To qualify for Carer's Allowance you must:

- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a disabled person
- be caring for someone who receives either the highest or middle rate of Disability Living Allowance care component, Attendance Allowance, or Constant Attendance Allowance paid with either Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or War Disablement Pension
- not be in full-time education or earning more than £100 a week.

Carer's Allowance is paid at £58.45 per week.

If your State Pension is more than £58.45 a week, you will not be paid Carer's Allowance but you should be awarded an 'underlying entitlement'. If you get Carer's Allowance or have been awarded an underlying entitlement, you will qualify for a carer premium, which will be added to any means-tested benefit you claim, such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Rates Relief, or Council Tax Benefit. It will increase the amount you get. If you're under State Pension age and receiving other benefits such as Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support, the same principle may apply and make a claim for Carer's Allowance worthwhile.

However, claiming Carer's Allowance can mean that any income-related benefits that the person you care for receives are reduced. Check whether this is the case before making a claim.

**what  
next?**

For more information, read our free factsheet *Carer's Allowance*. Call the Benefit Enquiry Line (see page 34) from anywhere in the UK to request a claim form. If you live in England, Scotland or Wales, you can also request a form from the Carer's Allowance Unit (see page 34) or make a claim online at [www.dwp.gov.uk/carersallowance](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/carersallowance)

- ① In Northern Ireland, you can request a form from the Disability and Carers Service (see page 38).

***You're entitled to your own independent carer's assessment, whether or not the person you care for is having their needs assessed.***



# Council Tax reduction for carers

You may be entitled to a reduction in your Council Tax if you're a carer.

## Exemption

If you have left your usual home empty to go somewhere else to care for someone, you should be able to get an exemption from Council Tax on your usual home.

## Discount

You may qualify for a discount if you:

- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a disabled person who is not your spouse, partner or child aged under 18
- live with the person you care for
- care for someone who receives either the highest rate of Disability Living Allowance care component, or higher rate Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance.

More than one person in a household can be discounted as a carer under these rules.

Whether you get a discount, and the amount of the discount, will depend on how many other people live in your home and count for Council Tax purposes. Some people aren't included when counting the number of people in your home, for example, children and people who have a severe mental disability such as dementia. You may qualify for a discount of 25 per cent or 50 per cent.

what  
next?

See our free factsheet [Council Tax for more information.](#)

## Carer's Credit

If you give up work to care for someone, you may be worried that not paying National Insurance (NI) will mean you are losing out on your entitlement to a State Pension. The amount of State Pension you get usually depends on how many qualifying years of National Insurance you have built up. However, if you're a carer and you carry out caring duties for at least 20 hours per week, there is a system in place to protect your entitlement to basic and additional State Pension.

In 2010 the Government introduced a new weekly NI credit for carers, known as Carer's Credit. This replaced the old system of Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP), which worked by reducing the number of qualifying years needed for a full basic State Pension to as few as 20. Past years of HRP will be recalculated into years of Carer's Credit, which will count towards your basic State Pension. You will automatically get Carer's Credit if you are already claiming Carer's Allowance. If not, you will need to apply for them. Call the Carer's Allowance Unit on 0845 608 4321 for more information.

### what next?

See our free guide *More money in your pocket: a guide to claiming benefits for people over pension age* for more information about State Pensions. Carers UK produces a free guide called *Looking after someone: a guide to carers' rights and benefits* (see page 35).

# Disability benefits for the person you are caring for

If the person you care for needs extra help with mobility, or with personal care such as dressing or washing, they may be eligible to claim either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Attendance Allowance (AA).

## Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

If the person you care for is under 65 and needs help with either personal care or walking around, they can claim DLA. This has two components:

- care: if they have difficulty with things like cooking, washing, dressing and eating, or need someone to watch over them to keep them or others safe
- mobility: if they have difficulty walking outdoors.

They can claim one component or both, depending on their disability. The components are paid at different rates depending on their level of difficulty.

## Attendance Allowance (AA)

If the person you care for is over 65 and has difficulty with their personal care, they can claim Attendance Allowance. There is no mobility component to AA. There are different rates depending on how their disability affects them. Use our online benefits calculator to check which benefits you or the person you care for are entitled to – go to [www.ageuk.org.uk/benefitscheck](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/benefitscheck)

### what next?

For more information, see our free guides *More money in your pocket: a guide to claiming benefits for people over pension age* and *Claiming benefits: a guide for people of working age*. Our free factsheets *Attendance Allowance* and *Disability Living Allowance* provide more detailed information.

# Making an application for disability benefits

You may need to help the person you care for fill in any application forms to claim a disability benefit (and if they are mentally incapacitated or terminally ill, you can claim it on their behalf). Most claims are decided solely on the information on the claim form, so it's important to explain clearly the problems caused by the person's disability or health conditions.

You can get a claim form for DLA or AA by calling the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00 (textphone: 0800 24 33 55). Your local Age UK or Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) may be able to help you fill in the form to increase the chances of the person being awarded disability benefits.

When filling in the form, do not underestimate the person's needs. Ask them to think about all the things they can't do or have difficulty with.

- Describe any accidents or falls they've had.
- Explain the effects of all their disabilities and health conditions, and how they interact with each other.
- List things they struggle to do unaided, even if they have developed special ways to cope with certain activities. If an activity takes much longer than it would somebody without a disability, or if it is difficult to do safely, that can be taken into account.

# ***Common care needs to include***

This section looks only at the care needs of the person you look after. Remember to include their mobility needs if they are applying for DLA.

Listed below are some examples of what to include when explaining what help the person you care for needs. Use these suggestions as a guide, but give plenty of information in your own words about their personal circumstances.

## **Washing, bathing and looking after their appearance**

Do they need help getting in and out of the bath or shower; adjusting shower controls; shaving; putting on make-up; washing or drying their hair?

## **Going to the toilet**

Do they need help adjusting their clothes after using the toilet; finding the toilet in unfamiliar places; using the toilet during the night; changing clothes or bedding if they have an accident?

## **Getting dressed or undressed**

Do they need help with fastenings, shoelaces and buttons or recognising when their clothes are on inside out?

## **Mealtimes**

Do they need help or encouragement to plan and prepare a meal? Can they peel and chop vegetables and use the cooker? Do they need help eating and drinking?

### **Help with medical treatment**

Do they need help identifying their tablets; reading and understanding instructions about taking medication; managing a condition like diabetes; recognising whether their condition deteriorates; adjusting their hearing aid?

### **Communicating**

Do they need help understanding or hearing people, or being understood by them; answering the phone; reading and writing letters?

### **Supervision**

Do they need someone to watch over them in case they have a seizure or pass out; in case they lack awareness of danger, or could be a danger to themselves or others; or in case they get confused, forgetful or disorientated? Do they need someone to give them medication for angina or asthma attacks; or to help calm them down during a panic attack?

### **Getting around indoors**

Do they need help navigating stairs; getting up from a chair; getting in and out of bed; moving safely from room to room?

## ***What if the application is turned down?***

If the application is turned down, ask an advice agency such as Age UK about whether you should challenge the decision. Look at all the common needs on pages 18–19. Have you missed any out?

Remember that the person's needs may change and increase, so even if they aren't eligible for DLA or AA now, they may be able to claim successfully in the future.

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***Remember that the person's needs may change and increase, so they may be able to claim successfully in the future.***

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## Work and caring

If you're working as well as caring for someone, you may need flexible working arrangements. Being a carer doesn't necessarily mean giving up your job – you may just need to work in a way that fits in with your caring responsibilities. Common types of flexible working include part-time, flexi-time, compressed hours (working your agreed hours over fewer days), job-sharing or homeworking.

Carers have the right to request flexible working from their employer under the Work and Families Act 2006, but the employer does not have to agree to it. You can make a request if you've been working for your employer for at least six months; and

- you're a parent with a child or children under 17, or a disabled child or children under 18

or

- you're a carer who cares for a spouse, partner, civil partner or relative who lives with you, or you live at the same address as the adult in need of care.

You can make one request for flexible working per year but if your circumstances change, your employer may be understanding of your needs. If you do not have the legal right to request flexible working you can, of course, still ask your employer if you can work flexibly. You may find they are willing to consider your request.

### what next?

Use the interactive tool on the Directgov website to see whether you have the right to request flexible working. Visit [www.direct.gov.uk/flexibleworking](http://www.direct.gov.uk/flexibleworking). Read our guide *Your rights at work* to find out more about your employment rights. For more information about work and caring, call Carers UK (see page 35).

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***‘Mum now goes to the day centre once a week and really looks forward to it.’***

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**Jane works full-time and shares caring for her mum with her two brothers, although she is the primary carer. They all live a long way from their mum, but Jane visits as often as she can and calls frequently, as well as relying on other support networks.**

‘My mum is in her late 80s. She lives in a flat on her own about 300 miles away and is about 200 miles from my two brothers. Her health has deteriorated over the past three years and she doesn’t go out alone any more. I phone several times a week and try to visit every month so I can take her out, help with paperwork and be there for hospital appointments. It’s difficult to fit everything in as I work full-time, but she so looks forward to my visits.

‘There’s always the worry that something will go wrong and none of us is near enough to get there quickly. But we’re somewhat reassured because she always wears her community alarm pendant and we have confidence in her support network. She has a good GP practice and a lady who comes to clean and shop but is more like a friend. I approached social services about some concerns I had and she now has carers who come in the morning. Several years ago a neighbour suggested we contact Age UK for help with an Attendance Allowance claim. Mum now goes to their day centre once a week and really looks forward to it. They helped us in the past to find out what was available locally, so I know where to go for help if things change.’



# Your health

Caring can have a significant impact on both your physical and emotional health. When you're caring for someone else, it's easy to overlook your own health needs, but it's important to stay as healthy as possible.

Tell your GP that you're a carer and how this affects your ability to care for your own health. They may be able to offer advice and support such as:

- discussing ways to help you manage your own long-term health needs and episodes of ill health, if your caring responsibilities make it difficult to get to the GP surgery
- arranging appointments for you and the person you care for at the same time to avoid having to visit the surgery twice
- arranging for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy to save you from picking them up from your GP surgery
- providing supporting letters and information to help you and the person you care for to access some benefits
- involving you, where appropriate, in discussions about medical treatments and a care plan for the person you care for, so you can feel more confident as a carer.

Also, carers of people with serious or ongoing health conditions may qualify for a free annual flu jab.


It's important to look after yourself by trying to eat healthily, stay active and get enough sleep. This can be difficult when you have caring responsibilities, but the Carewell website has plenty of tips or you can call to order a handbook (see page 35).

Don't forget about your emotional health. If you're struggling to manage or feeling isolated or depressed, let your family and friends know. Joining a carers' support group may help – you can meet carers in similar circumstances to your own, make new friends and get advice. Ask your GP about local groups.

**what  
next?**

Contact the Carer's Trust to find your local Carers' Centre. Its services include offering emotional support to carers from staff, trained volunteers and other carers (see page 34).

***When you're caring  
for someone else,  
it's easy to overlook  
your own health needs,  
but it's important to stay  
as healthy as possible.***



# Having a break from caring

When you're taking care of someone, you need to remember to take care of yourself, too. Having a break doesn't mean you are letting down the person you look after, or saying you don't care – it's a sensible and realistic thing to do. A break will help you pursue your own interests, catch up with friends, run errands, or simply recharge your batteries.

Your local authority has a responsibility to arrange services that help you take a break from caring. This is known as respite care, which includes the following.

- Services at home – sitting and talking with the person you care for, cooking for them, helping them get dressed or taking them on outings.
- Day care – day centres offer social activities and outings for disabled adults, and sometimes workshops and training. Most can arrange transport to and from the centre.
- Residential care – care homes can provide short-term care for the person you look after. Care homes are expensive, so ask social services or your health authority if you're eligible for help with funding.

In some areas, respite care is provided as a result of your carer's assessment, while in others it's provided through a community care assessment for the person you look after. It is best, therefore, to make sure you are both assessed. In England, the government has pledged to give the NHS £400 million over the next four years to help carers take breaks.

## what next?

Ask your social services department about what services are available in your area. Services may be provided by voluntary organisations, social services, health authorities or private agencies.

# What happens to my Carer's Allowance when I have a break?

If you have time off from caring, there are special rules to decide whether you'll continue to receive Carer's Allowance or whether the payment will be suspended. The rules are quite complicated, so get specialist advice from the Carer's Allowance Unit (see page 34). However, the basic rules are:

- you are allowed four weeks off from caring, for any reason, in any 26-week period without your Carer's Allowance being affected
- your Carer's Allowance will stop if the disability benefits of the person you are caring for stops – this might happen if they go into a hospital or care home for more than 28 days (unless they are paying the hospital or care home fees themselves)
- if you go into hospital, your Carer's Allowance may continue for up to 12 weeks; this may be less if you've had any other breaks from caring within the last 26 weeks.

## what next?

When you have a break from caring, always inform the Carer's Allowance Unit where you made your claim (or the Disability and Carers Service in Northern Ireland)



– see pages 34 and 38 for contact details. If your Carer's Allowance is suspended, contact them as soon as you resume caring so that it can start being paid again.

## Caring and other activities

You may feel that your life revolves around caring and you have little opportunity to do other things. If you are able to, you may find it helps to take part in a hobby or activity. This could be something you enjoy doing at home by yourself or something you go out to do, like an exercise group. You may want to learn a new skill by going to an evening class. This could also be a good way of meeting new friends.

Taking part in an activity or hobby you enjoy will give you the opportunity to do something for yourself – it's important that, as a carer, you have your own interests and make time where you can to pursue them.

### what next?

See our free guide *Leisure and learning* for ideas about what you could do. Your local library is an excellent source of information about social activities, events, education and courses. Contact U3A (University of the Third Age) to learn about courses in your area (see page 38).

# When your caring role changes

If the condition of the person you've been caring for deteriorates and, for whatever reason, you are no longer able to provide the care they need, then it's time to think about arranging a different system of care.

The person you look after may require more support than you have the time or energy to give. Ask their local social services department to assess or reassess their care needs. Their changing health needs may entitle them to more services and support at home than before. Get a carer's assessment for yourself too, as you may be entitled to extra support.

If, however, the person you care for needs more intensive care, they may need to consider the possibility of moving into sheltered housing or a care home. This is a big decision and you should both take the time to look at all the options open to you. Think about other types of housing that may be suitable, such as extra-care sheltered housing. See our free guide *Housing options* for more information.

You may continue to provide some care for the person you look after, or you may find that your caring role has come to an end. If this is the case, read the next section, 'When caring ends'.

**what  
next?**

For information on care homes, see our free guide *Care homes and our Care home checklist*.

## When caring ends

Caring may come to an end when the person you're looking after moves into a care home, or when they die. Whatever the reason for your role as a carer ending, you may experience mixed emotions. You may feel guilty about being relieved that you can have your life back, but you may also experience grief, emptiness and loneliness.

### **If the person you care for has moved into a care home**

This might have been a difficult decision, and perhaps you feel you've let down the person you were looking after. Remember, you're only human and there are limits to the care you can provide at home. If you're becoming exhausted or the person you care for is getting worse, a care home can be the best option for you both. If you find you're still spending a lot of time caring for the person, you may still be entitled to a carer's assessment (see pages 6–7). You also still have the right to request flexible working (see page 21).

Once the person you care for stops getting disability benefits (usually after four weeks), you'll no longer be entitled to Carer's Allowance. If you received a carer premium with means-tested benefits (see page 12), this will continue for an extra eight weeks after your Carer's Allowance stops. However, if the person is paying for their place in the care home and you are still providing a lot of care, you may still be able to receive Carer's Allowance.

#### **what next?**

This could be a good opportunity to get a benefits check to make sure you're claiming everything you are entitled to. Drop into your local Age UK or Citizens Advice Bureau to get one (see page 33 and 35). Also see our free guides *More money in your pocket: a guide to claiming benefits for people over pension age* and *Claiming benefits: a guide for people of working age*.

## If the person you care for has died

As well as the loss of the person you cared for, you may also face the loss of the relationships you built up with the professionals involved in their care. Being a carer can be demanding and you may have lost touch with family and friends; getting back in contact with them or meeting new people may be the last thing you feel like doing while coping with a bereavement. As a result, you may feel very alone or isolated.

It may help to talk to family and friends who knew the person you cared for, to share memories and support each other. Or you might prefer to contact an organisation that offers support for people who have suffered a bereavement.

Specialist organisations such as Cruse Bereavement Care (see page 37) can offer counselling, advice and practical help, and put you in touch with local bereavement groups.



In Scotland, contact Cruse Bereavement Scotland and in Northern Ireland, contact Cruse Bereavement Northern Ireland (see page 37). Whatever you do, remember that you do not have to cope alone. There is help out there for you from people who understand what you are going through.

You can continue to get Carer's Allowance for up to eight weeks after the death.

### what next?

For more information about managing after a death, see our free guides *When someone dies* and *Bereavement*. Carers UK produces a free guide in partnership with Help the Hospices called *When caring comes to an end*. Call Help the Hospices on 020 7520 8200 to order a copy, or download it from [www.helpthehospices.org.uk](http://www.helpthehospices.org.uk)

# Safeguarding from abuse

All the health and social care professionals working with you and the person you care for should treat you with dignity and respect. If you have any concerns about the service that either of you receive, discuss it with the service provider or make a complaint. If you think that abuse is taking place, it's important to take action to deal with it. Start by talking to the person you care for to find out what they want to do.

If you care for someone who lacks capacity to express their views, then you should follow the 'best interest' standards in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which say that any decision you take for them must be done in their best interests. In extreme cases you may need to raise a safeguarding alert with the local authority or, if a crime has been committed, to contact the police.

## what next?

See our factsheets *Safeguarding older people from abuse* and *Arranging for someone to make decisions about your finance and welfare* to find out more. Contact Action on Elder Abuse for help (see page 34).

# Useful organisations

## Age UK

Age UK is the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged. We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Call Age UK Advice to find out whether there is a local Age UK near you, and to order free copies of our information guides and factsheets.

In Wales, contact

**Age Cymru:** 0800 169 65 65

[www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)

In Northern Ireland, contact

**Age NI:** 0808 808 7575

[www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)

In Scotland, contact

**Age Scotland:** 0845 125 9732

[www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)

Age UK produces *LifeBook*, a free and simple way to record your details, contacts, and the location of important documents. Call 0845 685 1061 for more information and to order your free copy.

### **Action on Elder Abuse**

Works to protect, and prevent the abuse of, vulnerable older adults.

PO Box 60001  
Streatham  
London SW16 9BY

Tel: 0808 808 8141  
[www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)

### **Benefit Enquiry Line**

Tel: 0800 88 22 00  
Textphone: 0800 24 33 55

### **Carer's Allowance Unit**

Tel: 0845 608 4321

### **Carers Direct**

Help and support if you want to talk to someone about your caring role and the options available to you.

PO Box 4338  
Manchester M61 0BY

Tel: 0808 802 0202 (England only)  
[www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)  
[www.carersdirectenquiry.nhs.uk](http://www.carersdirectenquiry.nhs.uk) (online enquiries)

### **Carers Trust**

Formerly Crossroads Care and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers. Offers practical help and assistance to carers.

10 Regents Place  
Rugby CV21 2PN

Tel: 0845 450 0350  
[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

## **Carers UK**

Provides information and support for carers, including information about benefits.

20 Great Dover Street  
London SE1 4LX

Tel: 0808 808 7777

Publication order line: 0845 241 0963

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

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

## **Carewell**

Website set up by Carers UK and Bupa to give carers tips about staying healthy. You can also order *The Carewell Handbook* by calling the number below.

Tel: 0800 011 4777

[www.carewelluk.org](http://www.carewelluk.org)

## **Citizens Advice**

National network of free advice centres offering free, confidential and independent advice, face to face or by telephone.

Tel: 020 7833 2181

(for details of your local Citizens Advice Bureau)

In Wales there is a national phone advice service on 0844 477 2020. It is available in some parts of England on 0844 411 1444.

To find details of your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in:

England or Wales, go to [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Northern Ireland, go to [www.citizensadvice.co.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk)

Scotland, go to [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

Visit [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) for online information.

### **Counsel and Care**

Provides advice and information for older people, their friends and families.

Twyman House  
16 Bonny Street  
London NW1 9PG

Tel: 0845 300 7585  
Email: [advice@counselandcare.org.uk](mailto:advice@counselandcare.org.uk)  
[www.counselandcare.org.uk](http://www.counselandcare.org.uk)

### **Crossroads Caring**

Offers practical help and assistance to carers in Scotland.

24 George Square  
Glasgow G2 1EG

Tel: 0141 226 3793  
[www.crossroads-scotland.co.uk](http://www.crossroads-scotland.co.uk)

### **Crossroads Caring for Carers**

Offer practical help and assistance to carers in Northern Ireland.

7 Regent Street  
Newtownards  
County Down BT23 4AB

Tel: 028 9181 4455  
[www.crossroadscare.co.uk](http://www.crossroadscare.co.uk)

### **Cruse Bereavement Care (England and Wales)**

Counselling and advice service for bereaved people that also offers advice, information and practical support.

Tel: 0844 477 9400 (lo-call rate)

Email: [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

### **Cruse Bereavement Northern Ireland**

Graham House  
Knockbracken Healthcare Park  
Saintfield Road  
Belfast BT8 8BH

Tel: 028 9079 2419

[www.cruse.org.uk/northernireland](http://www.cruse.org.uk/northernireland)

### **Cruse Bereavement Scotland**

Riverview House  
Friarton Road  
Perth PH2 8DF

Tel: 0845 600 2227

[www.crusescotland.org.uk](http://www.crusescotland.org.uk)

### **Directgov**

Provides information on public services such as benefits, jobs, pensions and health services.

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

In Northern Ireland, visit NI Direct at [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

## **Disability and Carers Service (Northern Ireland)**

Castle Court  
Royal Avenue  
Belfast BT1 1HR

Tel: 028 9090 6186

## **Disabled Living Foundation**

Helps older and disabled people live independently at home with equipment.

380–384 Harrow Road  
London W9 2HU

Tel: 0845 130 9177

Textphone: 020 7432 8009

[www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

[www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)

(for advice on daily living equipment)

## **U3A (University of the Third Age)**

Provides a chance for older people to study a wide variety of subjects in local groups. The emphasis is on learning for pleasure, so there are no accreditations or qualifications.

Old Municipal Buildings  
19 East Street  
Bromley  
Kent BR1 1QE

Tel: 020 8466 6139

[www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

# Can you help Age UK?

Please complete the donation form below with a gift of whatever you can afford and return to: Age UK, FREEPOST LON13041, PO Box 203, London N1 9BR. Alternatively, you can phone 0800 169 87 87 or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/donate](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/donate). If you prefer, you can donate directly to one of our national or local partners. Thank you.

## Personal details

Title:	Initials:	Surname:
Address:		
Postcode:		
Tel:	Email:	

By providing your email address and/or mobile number you are agreeing to us contacting you in these ways. You may contact us at any time to unsubscribe from our communications.

## Your gift

I would like to make a gift of: £

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to Age UK

## Card payment

I wish to pay by (please tick)  MasterCard  Visa  CAF CharityCard  
 Maestro  American Express

(Maestro only)

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Signature <b>X</b>
Expiry date	<input type="text"/>	/	<input type="text"/>	Issue no. (Maestro only)	<input type="text"/>	

## Gift aid declaration

(please tick) Yes, I want Age UK and its partner organisations\* to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as gift aid donations. I confirm I pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity will reclaim on my donations in the tax year. Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ (please complete). \*Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI



We will use the information you have supplied to communicate with you according to data protection guidelines. Age UK (registered charity number 1128267) comprises the charity, its group of companies and national partners (Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI). If you would prefer not to hear from them or carefully selected third parties, let us know by phoning 0800 107 8977.

## You may be interested in other guides in this range

- Adapting your home
- Care at home
- Care home checklist
- Care homes
- Home safety checker
- Housing options
- Personal budgets
- Retiring abroad
- Staying safe



To order any of our **free** publications, please call Age UK Advice free on:

**0800 169 65 65**

[www.ageuk.org.uk/homeandcare](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/homeandcare)

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# What should I do now?

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For more information on the issues covered in this guide, or to order any of our publications, please call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65** or visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/homeandcare](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/homeandcare)

Our publications are also available in large print and audio formats.

The following Age UK information guides may be useful:

- *Claiming benefits: a guide for people of working age*
- *Health services*
- *More money in your pocket: a guide to claiming benefits for people over pension age*

The Age UK Group offers a wide range of products and services specially designed for people in later life. For more information, please call **0800 169 18 19**.

If contact details for your local Age UK are not in the box below, call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65**.

