

CARERS UK
the voice of carers

Looking after someone a guide to carers' rights and benefits 2008/9



About Carers UK

Carers UK is the voice of carers.

Carers provide unpaid care by looking after an ill, frail or disabled family member, friend or partner. Carers give so much to society yet they experience ill health, poverty and discrimination because they provide care. Carers UK campaigns to end this injustice.

We were set up by carers to improve carers' lives. To this day carers run the organisation and decide what needs to be done. Carers UK will not stop until people recognise the true value of carers' contribution to society and carers get the practical, financial and emotional support they need.

Carers UK together with Carers Northern Ireland, Carers Scotland and Carers Wales improve carers' lives by campaigning for the changes that make a real difference for carers:

- providing information and advice to carers about their rights and how to get support
- mobilising carers and supporters to influence decision-makers
- gathering hard evidence about what needs to change
- transforming the understanding of caring so that carers are valued and not discriminated against.

Carers UK's campaigns

Carers UK campaigns for people to recognise carers' true contribution to society and for carers to get the practical, financial and emotional help they need.

- Carers UK's Real change not short change highlights the impact of caring on people's finances. We are calling on the Government to radically reform the tax and benefit system.
- Carers UK's Back Me Up campaign is calling on Government to radically overhaul and invest in the health and social care system.
- Carers UK's make WORK work campaign wants a social care and tax, benefit and pension system that helps carers return to and stay in work.

Add your voice – join Carers UK. To find out how see page 21.

About this guide

Carers have certain legal rights to benefits and other help. Carers UK is aware of many carers who do not know about their rights or how to get help. Every year £740 million of carers' benefits are unclaimed. Carers UK is here to make sure carers know about their rights and the help available to them.

This guide sets out what rights carers have and how they can get:

- financial help
- practical help
- help with combining work and caring.

For more information, or advice about the benefits you can claim, contact CarersLine on 0808 808 7777. You can also get help to find out more, and in some cases to fill out forms, from Citizens Advice Bureaux, carers' centres, Age Concern branches and many local councils have welfare rights teams; all of these should be listed in your phone book.

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Financial help

The information below applies to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland unless otherwise stated.

The benefit system is complicated and finding out what you are entitled to can be difficult. The main benefits affecting carers are listed below, but this is not an exhaustive list of the benefits available.

Carers' benefits

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for carers. It is paid at a basic rate of £50.55 a week. (2008/9 rates) You can get Carer's Allowance if:

- you look after someone for at least 35 hours each week, and
- the person you look after gets Attendance Allowance or the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance at or above the normal maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or full day rate with a War Disablement Pension, and
- you are aged 16 or over, and
- you are not studying for more than 21 hours a week, and
- you don't earn more than £95 a week from work (after some deductions), and
- you satisfy UK residence and immigration rules.

Note: if you are getting State Retirement Pension, Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Bereavement Benefit or any other 'earnings replacement' benefit of more than the rate of Carer's Allowance, you cannot be paid Carer's Allowance.

If this is the case, you could have 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance, which can help you to get more money from other benefits (eg an extra amount of Income Support or Pension Credit), so it is still worth claiming.

Sometimes, if you are paid Carer's Allowance, the person you care for may lose some of their benefit. If you are unsure, seek further advice. Call CarersLine 0808 808 7777.

To claim, call the Carer's Allowance Unit on 01253 85 61 23 (Textphone: 01772 89 94 89) or claim online at www.direct.gov/carers. In Northern Ireland, call 028 9090 6186.

Alternatively you can call the Benefits Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00 (Textphone: 0800 24 33 55); in Northern Ireland 0800 220 674 (textphone 0800 243 787).

Carer premium/addition

The carer premium and addition are extra amounts used in the calculation of some means-tested benefits. The carer premium is used in Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and the carer addition is used in Pension Credit. The carer premium/addition is worth £27.75 (2008/9 rates) a week and is included in your benefit calculations if you get Carer's Allowance or if you have 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance (see above).

Planning ahead

For every week Carer's Allowance is paid, you are credited with a National Insurance contribution. This helps to protect your entitlement to State Retirement Pension.

If you are a carer, but are not entitled to Carer's Allowance, you may be able to claim Home Responsibilities Protection for every year you are a carer for at least 48 weeks. For more information about Home Responsibilities Protection contact The Pension Service on 0845 60 60 265 (Textphone: 0845 60 60 285) or ask at your local Jobcentre Plus office. In Northern Ireland contact the Pension Service on 028 9054 9393 or ask at your local Social Security office.

Note: If you are thinking about deferring your pension you need to be aware that you will not earn any extra State Pension or a lump-sum payment if while deferring your pension you claim Carers' Allowance.

Disability benefits

Disability Living Allowance

Disability Living Allowance is a benefit paid to help with the extra costs of long-term illness or disability. To qualify for Disability Living Allowance, you must make a claim before your 65th birthday. Your income and savings do not affect whether you can get Disability Living Allowance, or how much you get.

Disability Living Allowance is split into two parts; you can claim for either or both these components:

- care component – this is for the help someone needs to look after themselves and can be paid at one of three rates (lower, middle or higher)
- mobility component – this is for the help someone needs getting around and can be paid at one of two rates (lower or higher).

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is a benefit paid to people aged 65 or over to help them with the extra costs of a long-term illness or disability. Your income and savings do not affect whether you can get Attendance Allowance or how much you can get. Attendance Allowance is paid at two rates (lower or higher); the amount you get depends on the amount of help you need. There is no amount for mobility needs in Attendance Allowance.

To claim Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, call the Benefits Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00 (Textphone: 0800 24 33 55) or claim online at www.direct.gov.uk/disability. In Northern Ireland call the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 220 674 (Textphone: 0800 243 787).

Other benefits for people on a low income

Income Support

Income Support is a means-tested benefit paid to people on a low income (or with no other income) aged under 60 who do not have to sign on to look for work. Since October 2008 Income Support has not been paid to new claimants on the grounds of disability – Employment and Support Allowance has been paid instead. The amount of Income Support you get varies according to your family circumstances, income and age. You cannot get Income Support if your savings are higher than £16,000.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) can be either means-tested or based on National Insurance contributions you have made through previous work; the amount of means-tested benefit you can get varies according to your family circumstances, income and age. You cannot claim means-tested JSA if you have savings of more than £16,000. To claim Jobseeker's Allowance you must be available for and actively seeking work and you will have to sign on regularly to prove this.

Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) was introduced on the 27th October 2008, and replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on the grounds of disability, for new claimants. If you were getting Incapacity Benefit and/or Income Support before that date you will continue to do so.

Entitlement to ESA depends on you having 'limited capability for work'. Like Jobseeker's Allowance ESA can be either means-tested or based on National Insurance Contributions; the amount of means-tested benefit you can get varies according to your family circumstances, income and age. You cannot claim means-tested ESA if you have savings of more than £16,000.

For the first 13 weeks of your claim you will be paid a personal allowance while you are being assessed. Following the assessment you will be placed in one of two groups and paid either the work related activity component or the support component in addition to a personal allowance.

- The *work-related activity group*: If you are placed in this group you will have to take part in assessments, attend interviews and you may have to undertake workrelated activity. If you fail to fulfill these conditions without a good reason your ESA can be reduced.
- The *support group*: you will be placed in this group if you have a limited capacity for work related activity and you will not be expected to take part in work-focused activities unless you want to.

To claim Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office. Details of your local office should be in your phone directory or can be found at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk. In Northern Ireland go to your local Social Security office; details can be found at www.dsdni.gov.uk.

Pension Credit

Pension Credit is a benefit for people aged 60 or over on a low income. It is split into two parts; Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit.

- Guarantee Credit can be claimed by people aged 60 or over. If you are under 60, but your partner is over 60, your partner can claim it for both of you. The Guarantee Credit is means-tested, so your income and savings will affect the amount you get.
- Savings Credit rewards pensioners who have a second pension or modest savings. It is paid to pensioners who are 65 or over, and your income and savings will affect the amount you get.

The calculation of Pension Credit can be quite complex. To find out if you are entitled and how much you could get, phone Pension Credit on 0800 99 12 34 or go to www.thepensionservice.gov.uk. Claims can be completed for you over the phone, they will then be sent out for you to check and sign. In Northern Ireland phone the Pension Service on 0808 100 6165.

Getting Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit can lead to help with your housing costs, Council Tax and health benefits – see later in this guide.

Tax Credits

Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit are paid to top up the incomes of families or workers with a low income. The amount you get of either/both is affected by your household income and savings.

Child Tax Credit is a means-tested credit paid to people with a child under 16 (or 19 if they are in certain education or training). It can be paid to people both in and out of work. Extra credit can be paid if you have a disabled child.

Working Tax Credit is a means-tested credit paid to people in work. The amount that you get depends on your income and personal circumstances.

For more information or to claim tax credits, call 0845 300 3900 (Textphone: 0845 300 3909) or visit www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk.

Help with housing costs

Help to pay your rent

If you have to pay rent and are on a low income, you may be able to get Housing Benefit to help you pay your rent. Your family circumstances, income, savings and rent charges will affect how much you get. You cannot usually get Housing Benefit if you have savings of more than £16,000.

To claim Housing Benefit, contact your local council or local Housing Executive in Northern Ireland.

Local Housing Allowance

If you are a private tenant and make a new claim for Housing Benefit after April 7th 2008 the local housing allowance rules are likely to apply to you. This means that a standard allowance for rent will be set by rent officers and the exact amount will depend on the area where you live and the size of dwelling allowed for your household. Your family circumstances, income and savings will still affect how much you get.

Help with mortgage costs

If you are getting Income Support, (means-tested) Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit, you may be able to get help with your mortgage costs. Not all mortgage/other housing costs can be met and a waiting period applies before you can get this help.

To claim help with mortgage/housing costs, contact Jobcentre Plus or The Pension Service (see above for more contact details). In Northern Ireland, contact your local Social Security office.

Help with your Council Tax bill or rates

Council Tax Benefit (or Rates Rebate in Northern Ireland)

Council Tax Benefit (or Rates Rebate) helps people to pay their Council Tax (or rates). The amount you get depends upon your family circumstances, income, savings and the level of your Council Tax. You cannot usually get Council Tax Benefit (or Rates Rebate) if you have savings of £16,000 or more.

To claim Council Tax Benefit, contact your local council. To claim Rate Rebate, contact your local Housing Executive or Rates Collection Agency Office.

Reducing your Council Tax bill (England, Wales and Scotland)

Disability reduction scheme

You may be able to get a reduction to your Council Tax which does not depend on your income or savings eg if your home is adapted for a disabled person.

Council Tax discounts

People who live alone qualify for a 25% Council Tax discount. Empty properties can have a 50% discount on their Council Tax bill. Some carers

and other people such as those with a severe mental impairment are not counted when working out how many people live in a property. This means you might still get a discount even if you don't actually live alone. As a carer, you will not be counted for Council Tax purposes if:

- you provide at least 35 hours of care a week, and
- the person you care for gets the highest rate of Disability Living Allowance care component or the higher rate of Attendance Allowance, and
- you live with the person you are caring for, and
- you are not the partner of the person you care for, or their parent if you care for child under the age of 18.

You don't have to get Carer's Allowance to get this discount. If there is more than one carer in the property, each carer can be disregarded. Council Tax discounts can be backdated as far as 1993 if all the qualifying conditions were met during this time so it could mean you can get a significant refund on Council Tax you have already paid.

To apply for a Council Tax reduction or discount, contact your local council.

Help to adapt your home/carry out repairs

In England, Wales or Northern Ireland, if you need to adapt your home to make it suitable for a disabled person eg to build a new bathroom, you may be able to get a Disabled Facilities Grant to help with the costs. Usually you must not start work on any adaptations before your application has been approved in writing, otherwise you may not get a grant.

Grants are means-tested unless you need the grant to adapt your home for a disabled child, and can be paid to owner occupiers, tenants or landlords with a disabled tenant. In some cases, a legal charge may be placed against the property. For more information, contact your local council, Care and Repair England on 0115 950-6500, or your Housing Executive Office in Northern Ireland.

In Scotland you may be eligible for a Home Improvement and Repair Grant which is means tested. To apply for this grant contact your local council or alternatively, your local Care and Repair scheme can help you apply. Contact Care and Repair Scotland on 0141 221 9879

Help with fuel costs

Winter Fuel Payments

Every household which includes someone aged 60 or over will get a Winter Fuel Payment this winter to help with their fuel bills. The payment is £200, if you are between 60 and 79 on or before the 21st September 2008 and £300, if there is someone aged at least 80 or over on or before the 21st September 2008.

Additional payment for winter 2008/9

There will be an additional payment for winter 2008/9 of £50 for households with someone aged 60 to 79 and £100 for households with someone aged 80 or over. This will be paid alongside the Winter Fuel Payment. If you think you qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment but it has not arrived by the middle of December 2008, call the Winter Fuel Payments Helpline on 08459 15 15 15.

Note: If you have deferred your state retirement pension and you are not getting any other benefits you will need to make a claim for your winter fuel payment and you must do this before the 31 March following the winter you are claiming for.

Cold Weather Payments

Cold weather payments are additional amounts of Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance/Pension Credit/Jobseeker's Allowance paid for each week in which the average temperature in the local area is at or below freezing. They are paid automatically to you if you are over 60, disabled or have a disabled child.

Warm Front Grants (England only)

The Warm Front Scheme is funded by the Government and can help you to pay for heating and insulation improvements to your home if you are getting a disability or means-tested benefit. For more information call EAGA Partnership Warm Front on 0800 316 6011 (Textphone: 0800 072 0156).

Home Energy Efficiency Scheme Grants (HEES) (Wales only)

This scheme can help pay for heating and insulation improvements to your home if you are getting a disability or means tested benefit. For information about the help available and how to apply, call HEES on 0800 316 2815.

Warm Deal/Central Heating Programme Grants (Scotland only)

The Warm Deal scheme provides insulation improvements if you are disabled or on means tested benefits. The Central Heating Programme is available to all households who lack central heating (where the householder or partner is aged 60 or over) or whose central heating system has broken down (where the householder or partner is aged 80 or over or is aged 60 or over and in receipt of the guarantee element of Pension Credit). For information on Warm Deal grants telephone 0800 072 0150 or for information on the Central Heating Programme grant telephone 0800 316 1653.

Warm Homes Scheme (Northern Ireland only)

The scheme helps to pay for heating and insulation improvements to your home if you are getting a disability or means tested benefit. For more information call EAGA on 0800 181 667.

Other help (England, Wales and Scotland)

For more information about help with fuel costs including help if you are at risk of your fuel supplies being disconnected, call the Home Heat Helpline on 0800 33 66 99 (minicom: 0800 027 2122).

Help with health costs

If you are getting Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income-related Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit or certain amounts of Tax Credits, you can get free NHS benefits which include:

- free prescriptions
- free dental treatment
- free NHS eye tests and vouchers to help with the cost of glasses
- reimbursement of fares to hospital for treatment (including if you are escorting someone else to hospital for treatment).

If you are aged 60 and over, you can get free prescriptions and NHS eye tests regardless of your income.

If you don't qualify for free NHS benefits, but have a low income, you may be able to get help with health costs from the 'Low Income Scheme'. Pre-payment certificates for prescriptions can also reduce costs if you regularly pay for medication.

For more information about health benefits in England, Wales and Scotland, call Patients' Services on 0845 850 1166.

Other help

Social Fund

If you are getting Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income-related Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit or certain amounts of Tax Credits, you can get free NHS benefits which include:

- Funeral Expenses Payments can help with the costs of a funeral if you are responsible for arranging it
- Community Care Grants are paid to help you buy items that will help you or your family to live independently in the community; they do not have to be repaid
- Budgeting Loans and Crisis Loans can be claimed to help you meet bigger or urgent expenses; both must be repaid.

For more information about the Social Fund, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office. Details of your local office should be in your phone directory or can be found at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk. In Northern Ireland contact your local Social Security office, details at www.dsdni.gov.uk

TV licence concessions

Concessions on the TV licence fee are available for all aged 75 or over, for people living in certain kinds of accommodation (eg care homes, sheltered accommodation) and also for people who are registered blind.

For more information or to apply for a concession call TV Licensing on 0870 241 6468 (National rate call) in England, Scotland and Wales, contact Age Concern on 0800 00 99 66 and ask for a copy of their factsheet 'TV Licence Concessions'.

Other help

If you are over 65 (or over 40 and are unable to work because of incapacity), and have a low income, you may be able to get help from the charity Independent Age. This could be an one-off grant to help you to buy things you need for your home, or a regular amount of money to top up your income. For more details phone 020 7605 4200 or go to www.independentage.org.uk/home

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau should also have lists of local charities who may be able to help.

Practical help

The information below applies to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland unless otherwise stated.

As well as financial help, you may need more practical help to look after someone. This could be someone to sit with the person you care for while you go out for an hour, equipment to help you to lift the person you care for, information about local carers groups or arranging a break for yourself so that you can have a rest. The best place to start looking for this help is your local social services department. Contact details for your local social services should be in the phone book, or you can ask your GP or any other health professional you are in touch with to refer you.

Social services (social work department in Scotland)

Social services can offer a range of support for disabled people and carers. To determine what help is needed, and how they can help, social services will first need to carry out an assessment.

Community care assessments are for the cared for person. The assessment will focus on the cared for person's needs, but should also look at the role of the carer and the help they provide.

Carers' assessments are for people who provide 'regular and substantial' care for a partner, friend or relative. No definition of 'substantial' is given, so if you feel you devote a lot of time to caring for someone and you do this regularly, you can have a carer's assessment. You can have a carer's assessment whether or not the person you care for has had an assessment or wants one themselves. Your carer's assessment should look at:

- how you feel about your caring role
- whether you are coping with the level of care you are providing now and how this might change in the future
- what help you need to be able to carry on providing care
- your health – is it suffering because you are a carer?
- work, training and leisure interests – are you working and caring? Would you like to work? Are there hobbies or interests you would like more time to pursue?

Social services must tell you about your right to a carer's assessment, but you will still need to ask them to carry out an assessment for you.

Following the assessment, you should be sent a copy of the 'care plan' social services have produced; this will outline the services and support they can give you.

What sort of help can social services give?

Services for the person you care for could include:

- home care – someone to come and look after the person you care for
- practical help such as help with cleaning, laundry or gardening
- short-term breaks for the person you care for (also called 'respite care')
- aids and equipment
- adaptations to your home
- meals on wheels
- personal care eg help to get washed and dressed in the morning.

Services for carers could include: (England and Wales only)

- vouchers to enable carers to take a break from caring
- help with taxi fares
- mobile phone for the carer (if this would give them peace of mind when they are away from the person they care for)
- counselling or alternative therapies to deal with emotional issues and stress
- information about local support groups for carers
- practical help at home.

Direct Payments and Individual Budgets

Direct Payments are cash payments given in lieu of community care services people have been assessed as needing, and are intended to give individuals greater choice about their care. The payment must be sufficient to enable them to purchase services to meet their needs, and must be spent on services that they have been assessed as needing. Like care organised by social services, they are means-tested so the person you care for may be asked to contribute to the cost of their care.

People using Direct Payments have the responsibility to employ people or buy-in services for themselves. If the person you care for wants to use their direct payment to employ someone, for example, a personal assistant, then they take on all the responsibilities of an employer, such as payroll, meeting minimum wage and other legislative requirements and establishing contracts

of employment. However, there is help and advice available. Some of these services can be contracted out and many councils have commissioned support organisations to help service users handle these responsibilities.

Individual Budgets (or ‘personal budgets’) (not available in Scotland) are a more recent development than Direct Payments, having first been announced in the March 2005 adult social care green paper, and they differ from direct payments in two respects. Firstly, they can include several funding streams, such as Supporting People, Disabled Facilities Grant, Independent Living Fund, Access to Work and community equipment services. Secondly they set an overall budget for these services, which people can choose to take as a cash payment, as services, or a mixture of both. This allows for more freedom than direct payments as people can design the whole package of support they want. They can also either employ care workers themselves, buy support through an agency or ask their local council to continue to pay for the care service directly.

Charging

Social services can charge you or the person you look after for the services they provide. Charging policies vary across the country, but your social worker should explain the local policy when you have your assessment. Note that carers can only be charged for services provided for them, and the person that you look after can only be charged for the services that they are assessed as needing (England and Wales only). To check which services are provided for the carer or cared for person, check your care plans.

In Scotland if the person you care for is aged 65 or over, they cannot be charged for any personal care services provided at home.

Coming out of hospital – social services / continuing care

Before someone is discharged from hospital, an assessment of their needs should be carried out; you can also ask for a carer’s assessment to look at the help that you may need as their carer. If the person you care for has medical support needs, the NHS may have to provide free care.

If a care plan, and services outlined in it, are not agreed or ready before someone is discharged from hospital, they may be entitled to free intermediate care for up to six weeks while more permanent services are put in place (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

More information about hospital discharge can be found at www.carersuk.org/Information/Helpwithcaring/Comingoutofhospital or www.carerscotland.org/Information/Helpwithcaring/Comingoutofhospital or www.carerswales.org/Information/Helpwithcaring/Comingoutofhospital

Other help

Health

It is important to let your GP know that you are a carer. Many GPs hold a register of carers. It means they can help you to look after your own health, and will be aware that when arranging any treatment etc for you, they must also make sure that the person you care for is looked after. As a carer, you can also ask for a flu jab every winter.

Local support

There may be local carers organisations or carers groups in your area which offer help, such as support groups or information on local services (eg sitting services). You may also have a Carers Emergency Scheme in your area; this is a service that will help you to plan for possible emergencies so that you know the person you care for will be looked after. To find out more about support in your area go to www.carersuk.org or call CarersLine. Your local council may also have details of local support groups or they may be listed in the telephone directory.

Telecare and telehealth

Telecare and telehealth are technological solutions that can help relieve stress, and provide support, peace of mind, independence and dignity to carers and the people they care for. Telecare includes equipment like fall detectors, sensors which detect if someone has left the home or got out of bed in the night, medication reminders and dispensers. It also includes environmental control solutions which can be programmed to open and close windows, curtains and doors and operate domestic appliances.

There are a variety of providers and solutions available. Your local authority and NHS may fund telecare and telehealth solutions, or they can be bought privately. There are a range of different providers who can offer advice. With the support of Tunstall, one of the UK's leading providers of telecare and telehealth solutions, Carers UK has produced a booklet called *Support for carers – a guide to telecare*. The guide explains how telecare can be used to benefit carers and provides an overview of the products available and how to obtain them. The booklet is available from www.carersuk.org or call 0845 241 0963 for a free copy.

Working and caring

Juggling work and looking after someone can be difficult. Having an understanding and knowledgeable employer or manager can make this easier. It is helpful to have access to information and advice in your workplace. Some companies operate counselling services and have advice packs for carers and trade unions can also be a good source of information and support. It may be that all you really need is access to a telephone so that you can keep in touch with the person you care for. Your legal rights as a carer at work are outlined below.

Flexible working

Many working carers now have the right to request a flexible working pattern from their employer to help them to balance their work and caring responsibilities. There is a set procedure that employers must use to consider such requests. As a carer, you have this right if you are an employee, and you have worked for your employer for at least 26 weeks, and you are a parent with a child(ren) under 6 or a disabled child(ren) under 18, or you are caring for an adult.

To qualify as a carer under the legislation, you must be, or expect to be, caring for a spouse, partner (who you live with), civil partner or relative, or live at the same address as the adult in need of care. 'Relative' includes parents, parent in law, adult child, adopted adult child, siblings (including those who are in laws), uncles, aunts or grandparents and step-relatives.

Flexible working could include flexible starting and finishing times; compressed working hours; annualised working hours; job sharing or part time working; home-working or tele-working; term-time working.

To apply, write to your employer asking for the changes you would like and why they will help. You will also need to explain the effect, if any, you think the proposed change might have on your job and, how you think this could be dealt with. For example, that a colleague could be trained to take on additional tasks.

You can only make one request per year and, if accepted, the changes will mean a permanent change to your employment contract, unless agreed otherwise, so it is important that you think carefully about any financial and practical implications before you apply. If your employer refuses your request, which they can on certain business grounds, you can appeal their decision.

Time off in emergencies

You have the right to take a ‘reasonable’ amount of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. This right also includes some protection from victimisation and dismissal. It is at the employer’s discretion whether the leave is paid or unpaid. Situations where this leave might be taken include:

- a disruption or breakdown in care arrangements
- if a dependant falls ill or has been assaulted or in an accident, including when the victim is hurt or upset rather than physically injured
- to deal with an incident involving a child during school hours
- to make longer term arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- to deal with the death of a dependant.

Parental Leave

If you have worked for your employer for at least a year and are responsible for a child, you are entitled to 13 weeks parental leave (per parent) before your child’s 5th birthday; if you have a disabled child (a child for whom you get Disability Living Allowance), each parent can take 18 weeks parental leave before their child’s 18th birthday. You can usually take a maximum of four weeks parental leave in a year (unless you have a collective agreement which says you can take more than this). If your child is disabled you can take the leave as a day or multiples of a day, if not you must take the leave in weekly blocks. Parental leave is usually unpaid, but employers can choose to offer paid leave – check your employer’s policies.

Other help

You may also be able to use your annual leave or other entitlements (including unpaid leave) to cover intensive periods of care. If you’re thinking of giving up work, you may be able to agree a career break with your employer - allowing you to keep your options open. You will have a job to return to after some time off, and will be kept in touch with the world of work while you’re away.

Carers’ assessments must look at how you are managing to balance your caring responsibilities with your employment. If you are thinking of giving up work to care full time, ask for a carers assessment (or reassessment if you’ve already had one); the fact that your job is at risk means that social services must treat you as a priority and consider what help they can provide to enable you to continue working (England and Wales only).

Useful contacts

Age Concern

(England and Wales)

0800 009 966 www.ace.org.uk

National and local information and support for older people (60+).

*Northern Ireland: 028 9024 5729
or www.ageconcernni.org*

Alzheimer's Society

(England and Wales)

0845 300 0336

www.alzheimers.org.uk

National and local information, advice and support for people with Alzheimer's and their carers.

Northern Ireland: 028 9066 4100

Scotland: 0131 243 1453

Citizens Advice

(England and Wales)

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Network of local offices offering advice and representation e.g. on benefits, debt, housing issues.

In Northern Ireland visit website

www.adviceguide.org.uk/nireland

In Scotland www.cas.org.uk

Contact A Family

(England, Wales and Scotland)

0808 808 3555

Textphone 0808 808 3556

www.cafamily.org.uk

Information and support to parents and families who care for children with a disability or special need.

Northern Ireland: 028 9262 7552

www.cafamily.org.uk/nireland

Crossroads

(England)

0845 450 0350

www.crossroads.org.uk

Crossroads has a network of care attendant schemes to enable carers to take a break. Local schemes provide breaks, holidays, respite care.

Scotland: 0141 226 3796

www.crossroads-scotland.org.uk

Northern Ireland: 028 9181 4455

www.crossroadscare.co.uk

Disabled Living Foundation

0845 130 9177

Textphone 020 7432 8009

www.dlf.org.uk

Provides advice & information on equipment for independent living.

Help the Aged

(England)

0808 800 6565

Textphone 0800 26 96 26

www.helptheaged.org.uk

Provides information and advice to people aged 50+.

Wales: 029 2034 6550

Northern Ireland: 028 9023 0666

Independent Age

020 7605 4200

www.independentage.org.uk

Offers to older people small regular payments, grants for essential repairs, friendship of volunteer visitors.

Help improve carers' lives

If you have experience of looking after someone with an illness or disability, you will know it can be rewarding. But it can also be exhausting, making a huge impact on your life. Without the right support, caring for someone can all too easily take its toll on your health, lead to money worries and make it difficult to stay in work. It can be difficult to pick up the pieces when caring comes to an end.

Carers UK is here to change the lives of the UK's six million carers. We make sure carers have information about their rights and where to get help. We campaign for changes in the law and practical support so that carers can live full and varied lives where their loved ones are cared for with dignity.

You can support Carers UK by becoming a member or making a donation to help us achieve our vision of full support and recognition for every carer.

Join Carers UK

Carers UK welcomes carers, former carers and others who support our aims. As a member you will receive a free regular copy of our magazine *Caring* which will provide you with practical ideas on how to cope and keep you in touch with changes to your rights. Also, your voice strengthens our campaigning power to achieve lasting change for you and all carers.

Please tell us whether you are a carer former carer or supporter

There is no fixed rate for membership. The annual cost of supporting our individual members is £18. Our suggested minimum subscription is £15. However, we realise you have many calls on your finances and we will happily accept members who cannot afford to pay. The more of our members who can pay something towards our costs, the lower we can keep our future costs. Please give as generously as you can.

Please tick the level of subscription you wish to make

£10 £15 £20 £25 £30 Other

CRG/UK/Mem/320000

If you are a carer or former carer and would like free membership please tick here

You can also join by emailing membership@carersuk.org or phoning the Membership hotline on 020 7566 7602

Your details

Name [Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms]

Address

Postcode

Email

Phone

To complete your details please see overleaf.

Help us make a difference to carers' lives

Our commitment is to use your donation to run our free helpline, provide free information for carers and campaign for better support.

I wish to make a donation towards Carers UK's vital work.

£10 £25 £50 £100

or £

CRGUKFUN310100

Payment Methods

- I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to Carers UK
- Mastercard/Visa/Switch Card no. (please delete as applicable)

Valid from Expiry date

Issue no. (Switch/Maestro only)

Amount £ Security code

Date

Signature

- I wish to pay by Direct Debit (see form)

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Use Gift Aid to make your donation or membership contribution worth even more.

I want Carers UK to treat all my donations I have made this year, the six years prior to the year of this declaration and all donations I make until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

I understand that I must pay an amount of Income Tax/Capital Gains Tax at least equivalent to the amount Carers UK reclaims on my donations in the appropriate year (currently 25p of each £1 donated).

Data Protection

Carers UK takes your privacy very seriously. We will not pass your details to other organisations. Occasionally we would like to send you further information about how you can support the work of Carers UK. If you do not wish to receive this information, please tick here

Please detach this form and return to:

**Carers UK,
FREEPOST RRYC – LTCB – GTHC
20 Great Dover Street,
London SE1 4LX**

Instructions to your Bank/Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form

1 Name and full postal address of your bank or Building Society

To: The Manager

Bank/Building Society

Address

Postcode

2 Name of account holder(s)

3 Branch sort code (from top right-hand corner of your cheque)

4 Bank/Building Society account number

Bank/Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.

5 The amount you would like to pay and how often

Amount £ frequency Annually/Monthly

6 Instructions

Please pay Carers UK Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand this instruction may remain with Carers UK and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature

Date

Carers UK ref:

For Carers UK official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your bank/building society

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change Carers UK will notify you 14 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by Carers UK or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

Mencap

(England and Wales)

0808 808 1111 (minicom 0808 808 8181) www.mencap.org.uk

Provides information and advice for people with a learning disability and their families and carers.

Wales: 0800 8000 300

Northern Ireland: 028 9069 1351

Princess Royal Trust for Carers

(England and Wales)

0844 8004361 www.carers.org

Provides information, advice and support services across the UK through a network of carers' centres.

Scotland: 0141 221 5066

Rethink

020 8974 6814 www.rethink.org

Offers information, advice and community services for people affected by severe mental illness and their care.

Northern Ireland: 028 9024 8006

Wales

Hafal

01792 816600

www.mentalhealthwales.org

Hafal is the principal organisation in Wales working with individuals recovering from severe mental illness and their families.

Scotland

Enable

0141 226 4541 www.enable.org.uk

Provides advice, information and support to people with learning disabilities, their families and carers

NSF Scotland

Helpline 0131 557 8969

www.nsfscot.org.uk

Provides information and advice, community services for people affected by schizophrenia and other severe mental illness and their carers.

Scottish Helpline for Older People

0845 125 9732

National helpline for older people providing information on a range of issues including benefits, pensions and community care.

Northern Ireland

Belfast Carers Centre

028 9043 4700

www.carerscentre.org

Provides information, advice and support services to carers in the Greater Belfast area.

Carers UK

20 Great Dover Street
London SE1 4LX
Tel: 020 7378 4999
Fax: 020 7378 9781
info@carersuk.org
www.carersuk.org

Carers Northern Ireland

58 Howard Street,
Belfast BT1 6PJ
Tel: 028 9043 9843
Fax: 028 9032 9299
info@carersni.org
www.carersni.org

Carers Wales

River House, Ynysbridge Court,
Gwaelod-y-Garth, Cardiff CF15 9SS
Tel: 029 2081 1370
Fax: 029 2081 1575
info@carerswales.org
www.carerswales.org

Carers Scotland

91 Mitchell Street,
Glasgow G1 3LN
Tel: 0141 221 9141
Fax: 0141 221 9140
info@carerscotland.org
www.carerscotland.org

CarersLine: 0808 808 7777

(free advice from 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm Wednesday and Thursday)

Carers UK is a charity registered in England and Wales (246329) and in Scotland (SC039307) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (864097). Registered office 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX.

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The information in this leaflet is for guidance only and is not an authoritative statement of the law.

This information is correct as of December 2008

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CARERS UK
the voice of carers



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