



Helping Hands
The Home Care Specialists

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Caring For Caregivers

A Guide To Respite Care At Home



Introduction to Respite Care at Home

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Helping Hands is a specialist provider of respite care. We've helped carers, individuals and their families for more than 25 years with our temporary care services.

We believe an individual receiving care doesn't have to leave their home when their carer takes a short break from their role. With the right level of support, quality care can continue in the environment they know and love best – their own home.

The guide:

This guide has been created to show you the support that's available to family carers when they feel they need to take a break.

It outlines the importance of regular respite care breaks and examines the steps you should take before taking a break from your role.

You'll find out:

- *Why you might need respite care*
- *The benefits of home respite care over residential respite services*
- *How to deal with concerns about leaving the person you're caring for.*



Care In The UK

The facts

More and more people are stepping into the role of carer in the UK. In fact, it's been estimated that around 6,000 people take on the role of providing care each day¹.

In 2011, it was found that around just over one tenth of the population of England and Wales were providing some form of unpaid care². People who provide unpaid care are known as informal carers.

Informal carers look after loved ones, friends and neighbours affected by ill health on a voluntary

basis. It has been estimated that 1.4 million³ of these carers provide care for more than 50 hours per week. That's more than 50 hours a week in an intense role that requires full commitment.



What this means for you?

As rewarding as providing round-the-clock care for a friend or a relative can be, taking on sole responsibility for someone else's well-being can be exhausting. Over time this level of responsibility can have a negative impact on the health of you, the carer.

Many carers will continue on until they reach breaking point – the point where they feel like they can no longer continue caring.

That's why it's important for you to take regular breaks from caring – or a period of respite.



“It's been estimated that around 6,000 people take on the role of providing care each day.”

References

1. <http://www.carersuk.org/about-carersuk/why-we-re-here>
2. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/provision-of-unpaid-care-in-england-and-wales--2011/index.html>
3. http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=546



What is Respite Care?

It's temporary care

- Respite care is the care that's provided when you, the carer, step back from your day-to-day role
- Another carer will take on your role to provide temporary care for the person you're caring for
- There are two main types of respite care services in the UK – home respite care and *residential respite care*.



Residential respite services

- Residential respite care is provided on a temporary basis in a residential care or nursing home, with the individual receiving care moving in to get the support they require.
- Additionally *day care services* enable carers to enjoy a short break away from their routine for a couple of hours, and the individuals they're looking after to continue to get the medical support they need.

Home respite care

- Home respite care sees the temporary carer move into the home of an individual to provide help and support for a short time.

How long can a break last?

We're all different.

When looking after a loved one this is especially true. You might be delivering ten hours of care a week. You may provide round-the-clock care for more than 50 hours every week.

But regardless, you can't do it all the time and you may find yourself in need of a short break away from your role.

So, naturally, the length of a period of respite away from caring is likely to vary significantly from carer to carer.

It allows carers to take a couple of days to several weeks away from their role of caring for a loved one.

And that time is yours to do what you want to do with it – to relax, recharge your batteries and return to your role feeling revitalised.

Why Might You Need Respite Care?

You might need a respite carer to look after your loved one when you feel you've reached breaking point, but it's not the only reason.

Here are some of the reasons why you might need to take a period of respite away from caring:

A break

Caring requires a lot of commitment and a selfless attitude. But it doesn't mean you have to sacrifice your interests, hobbies and spending time with friends.

In fact it's healthy to have these things in your life.

Respite services enable you to have time to partake in these activities and just enjoy a bit of 'me time,' which we all need on a regular basis.

Emergency respite care

If you become ill or suffer a personal crisis, you might not be able to be there to care for a loved one.

Emergency respite care ensures your loved one continues to receive professional support in such situations.

Recuperation

There might be times when you require some time off to go into hospital – for example, to have an operation.

In situations like this, the need for a break won't necessarily be unexpected, but you'll still need to have someone step in to take over your role.

You may also need time to fully recover. So, a respite carer could help you should such a scenario arise.

Trial period

Choosing care is one of the most important decisions to make in life, and you shouldn't jump right into making a final choice.

Because respite care is temporary, it's ideal if you're considering care options for a loved one. You can use it as a trial period to see if live-in care is a good fit for both of you.

Holiday assistance

Having a respite carer doesn't necessarily mean you can't be around too.

You may decide you want to go away on holiday with the person you look after, but feel like additional short term assistance is necessary to enable you to enjoy the break as a family.

A respite carer can come in and provide that practical support, so you're free to enjoy yourselves.



The Benefits Of Home Respite Care For Your Loved One

Consistency

If you decide to take a break from caring for a loved one, there are going to be changes for you both.

Think about the impact it could have on what they're used to – their routines, their lifestyle, the medical support they receive and who they receive it from.

Consistency in all aspects of care is really important – whether it's people, environments, the level of support or routines.

With respite care this consistency becomes even more important –

with someone entirely new taking on your responsibilities.

However, with home respite care you can at least ensure that the other important elements remain the same.

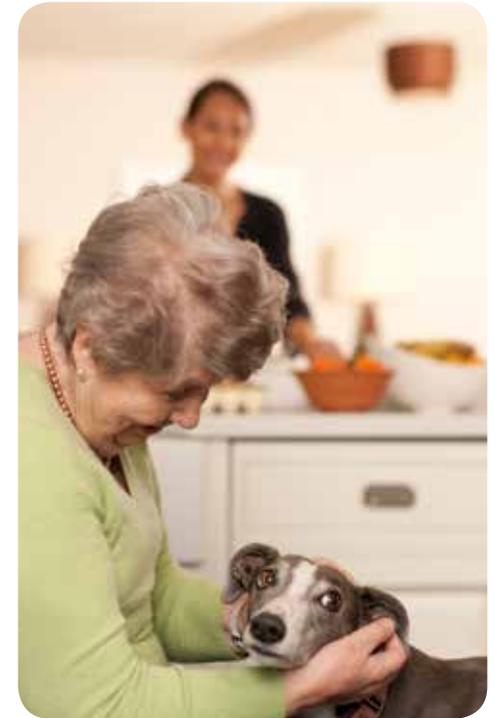
Rather than having to move into an environment that's entirely new to them, as they would with residential respite services, your loved one can remain in the place they're most familiar with – their home.

Respite care at home is delivered on a one-to-one basis.

This means the respite carer provides medical support for your loved one and only your loved one. Your loved one's needs are at the core of home-based care.

It's also built around the individual.

This means there won't be any unnecessary changes to long-standing routines. They receive the support they usually would and in the same way – retaining that consistency.



Having a respite carer come into the home can be good for the individual in that it allows them to get to know someone entirely new. Someone they can have new conversations and explore new activities with.

A respite care break can be good for everyone.

Concerns About Taking A Break

You shouldn't feel guilty

There are many reasons why you might feel like you can't take a break from looking after a loved one.

Past research has shown that one of the main reasons informal carers don't seek respite is because of a feeling of guilt.

You may feel like you should be solely responsible for your loved one's care needs, but there's nothing wrong with seeking support when you need it.

Everyone needs a break.

And by taking a break, whether a couple of days or a few weeks, you'll reduce the strain on your health and wellbeing - feeling happy, fresh, revitalised and ready to provide care again.



Respite carers – just like you

It's understandable that you may feel anxious about leaving the person you support with someone they don't know.

But professional respite carers are no different to you.

They're trained to deliver medical support in the home. They're passionate about what they do and have the best interests of those they care for at heart – just like you do.

A respite carer for life

Many respite carers form strong bonds with the people they've looked after on a temporary basis.

These friendships last and often see them returning to provide short term care on numerous occasions throughout their customer's lives.



Respite services for complex conditions

Complex conditions require very specific levels of medical support. If your loved one is affected by a complex condition, it's understandable that you might feel that care from a third party isn't an option.

However, there are many respite care providers who offer specialist carers. You can find carers that understand the intricacies of caring for someone with MS (multiple sclerosis), Dementia, brain injuries, spinal injuries, cerebral palsy, and many other complex conditions.

There are also specialist respite carers who can also provide nursing-led gastric, continence and ventilation care in the home.

A respite carer will never fully replace you and the role you play in the day-to-day life of your loved one. But they will ensure that they're safe and that their medical needs are accounted for with minimal disruption to their lifestyle and routine.





Preparing For Respite Care

Communication is key

Before you take a break from your role, it's important to make sure both you and your loved one feel comfortable.

Be open and discuss it as a unit – with your friends or family. Understand that it's okay to take a break.

Let them know where you're going, how long you're going to be away for and when you're coming back. Although it may seem like basic information, it

emphasises to them that you won't be away forever.

Find out more about the respite carer

If they feel anxious about the prospect of you going, reassure them and let them see their respite carer's profile. Here, they can get to know a little bit about their temporary carer before the period of respite takes place.

Stay in touch

Although you're taking a break away from caring for a loved one, it doesn't mean you can't stay in touch.

Regular phone calls or, if you have access to the Internet, Skype conversations, provide

great ways to contact each other and talk about what you've been up to.

It's also another useful way of maintaining that consistent presence, allowing you to reassure them if they're nervous.



Prepare the respite carer

Talk with the respite care provider and make sure they have a clear idea of your loved one's medical requirements, routines, likes and dislikes.

Reputable respite care agencies like Helping Hands use what's known as a digital support plan (or a DSP, for short). This plan is simply used to map out all of these key elements and is filled out digitally. Your temporary carer

can then join your household without disrupting what your loved one is used to.

This preparation is beneficial for everyone – especially you. The more prepared the respite carer is to come and provide care, the safer in the knowledge you'll be, able to feel that your loved one will be getting the support they require.

You can then go away, free of worry, to relax and enjoy some well-deserved time off.



Respite Care - A Case Study

Respite for a father and son

Joseph, of St Albans, has been his father's carer for more than three years.

Stephen is affected by multiple sclerosis (MS), which means that he needs constant support to get around the family home. Having largely been the only person to provide care for his father during that period, Joseph found himself increasingly feeling tired and lethargic.

Afraid that his father wouldn't receive the consistent level of

support he provided on a daily basis from a respite carer, he continued on with his role until he reached breaking point.

At this point Joseph contacted Helping Hands for temporary care.

Whilst Joseph took a couple of weeks off to rest, a respite carer temporarily moved into his father's home.

As well as allowing Joseph to enjoy his first holiday in four years, the time also proved to

be refreshing for Stephen, who struck up a bond with his respite carer – becoming friends over their mutual love of music.

Following the break, Joseph said: "The break wasn't just what I needed, but also what my Dad needed too. It did us both the

world of good to be away from each other for a short period of time. The break was welcome for me, and gave my Dad the chance to have someone new around the home to get to know and spend time with."

Need more Information?



We hope that this eBook has helped you to understand that it's okay to take a break, and reassured any concerns you might have had about respite care.

A period of respite is always an option if you feel like you need to take some time away.

If you've got any questions or want to know more visit:

<http://www.helpinghandshomecare.co.uk/respite.aspx>, contact our friendly team of respite care advisors today. They're always happy to provide their advice and support.

To speak to a member of Helping Hands' respite care team, call: 0808 180 1041

This guide has been created by Helping Hands, a provider of live-in, hourly and respite care at home, across England and Wales.

*To find out more about Helping Hands and the home care services it provides, visit: **<http://www.helpinghandshomecare.co.uk>***