

Factsheet

Holidays for
Carers



The IET Benevolent Fund

Help for Carers: Having a Break

Everyone needs a change and time off occasionally, whether it's for an hour, a day or a week. This is especially true for carers. Taking a break from caring is not an admission of failure. Nor is it saying you don't care. It's a sensible and realistic thing to do if you want to carry on caring. Without an occasional break you may become exhausted or unwell.

A break can allow you to do all the things you can't do while you are caring, to catch up on friends or family or just to have a rest. It may mean that the person you care for has the benefit of a break from you, other people to talk to and other things to talk about.

What you arrange will depend on what you and the person you are caring for need, what is available locally and the cost. Whatever arrangements you make, involve the person you are caring for in the decisions.

Make sure that anyone who takes over from you has all the information necessary to adequately look after the person that you care for. Tell them how to contact you in an emergency.

Holidays

If you want to go on holiday, either alone or with the person you care for there are a number of things to consider.

Going away alone

You may need to arrange alternative care for the person you look after. If you cannot afford to arrange this care, or can afford it but find making the arrangements too difficult, you should contact your local social services department. They can arrange additional care in the home, extra visits to a day-care centre, or residential care for the person that you look after whilst you are away.

Going away together

If you need to find accommodation to suit the needs of the person that you look after there are a number of voluntary agencies who

can give details of holiday accommodation that is suitable for disabled people.

Care Homes

Care homes can provide short-term care for the person you look after so that you can get a break. Care homes are expensive. Social services can help to pay for respite care (either by paying the home directly, or through direct payments or vouchers to you or the person that you look after). If they do so, both your benefits and those of the person that you look after may be affected.

Attendance allowance and the care component of disability living allowance stop after 28 days in residential care if social services help with the costs. If two separate stays in residential care are separated by 28 days or less, they are added together when deciding when the attendance allowance or disability living allowance should stop.

If possible, you may want to time stays in respite care so that the benefits of both you and the person that you look after are unaffected. You should be able to get help with the costs of a nursing home from your health authority.

Day Care Services

Many social services departments, health authorities and voluntary organisations run day centres for the care of adults with disabilities. These centres arrange social activities, craftwork clubs or outings. Some run sheltered workshops or specialise in training and may be associated with colleges. Most can arrange transport to and from the centre.

Day care is available for children from other organisations such as the education departments of your local council. These may be nurseries or playgroups; family centres or play schemes for school-age children.

Your local social services department should be able to tell you about the day care providers in your area.

Care at home

What you arrange depends on the needs of the person you care for and what is available locally. Some types of support can be quite expensive so it's worth checking all the options first to find out if you can get any help towards fees.

Community care plans

Local authorities must update their community care plan on a regular basis. These set out who will be eligible for council services. If the needs of the person that you look after match these eligibility criteria, the local authority must provide services to meet their needs.

Social services:

- must only meet the needs that no-one else is willing to meet.
- cannot refuse to meet a need they have identified solely because they do not have the money or other resources.

The person that you look after can refuse help from social services. Ask your local social services to assess your needs as a carer. The assessment must be done by the local authority in the area where the person you look after lives.

Social services:

- must look at whether you need help to allow you to continue to provide care.
- can provide the service either to the person that you look after or (except in Scotland) to you directly.

Once a need has been identified, the local authority can meet it in a number of ways. Including:

- providing care in the home
- providing a place in a residential home
- giving a direct payment to the person you look after to allow them to arrange their own care (not Scotland).

Social services can only charge the person who receives the services. They cannot charge you for a service provided to the person that you look after. They must take the income of the person charged into account. If the charge causes hardship it can be reduced or waived.

Most services, including respite care, are provided to the person that you look after.

In Scotland, people over 65 should not be charged for "personal care".

Useful Contacts

For more information on travel for elderly and disabled people, contact:

Holiday Care

Info. Line: 0845 124 9971 (UK only) +44 208 760 0072
(outside UK)
Web: www.holidaycare.org.uk

Carers UK - 020 7490 8818; CarersLine 0808 808 7777
20-25 Glasshouse Yard, London EC1A 4JT
<http://www.carersuk.demon.co.uk/>
Informs and supports carers, brings needs of carers to the attention of government.

For more information please contact the IET Connect Helpline on 0845 685 0685