

Information sheet: Carers' breaks and respite care

It is important that carers get time for themselves, to support their own wellbeing. Respite care lets you have a break from your caring role. Having someone else temporarily look after the person you care for can give you time to spend on your own needs and to recharge your batteries from your caring role.

We use the word 'respite' to cover all the services that exist to offer carers a break. In this information sheet you can read about the respite services available in Solihull, how to access them and examples of how respite care could help you.

Types of respite available

- **Carers' support groups** and other community groups, where you can take the person you care for and speak to others in the same situation.
- **Respite at home** - where a carer comes to your house and looks after your loved one for a short period of time, either regularly or as a one off
- **Regular days out**, for the person you care for, at a day service (or day centre as they're often called)
- **Evening support** allows you to go out for the evening
- **Overnight cover** in your home, allowing the person you care for to stay at home while you go away on a break or holiday
- **Residential respite** – where your loved one goes to stay in a care home for a few days to a week or two, this can mean you are able to book a longer break away
- **Respite away from home, but not in a care home** - for example in a shared lives (also known as adult fostering) setting or a specialist holiday for people with disabilities.

Arranging respite care with the Council

In Solihull, the Council can only fund respite care for people who have been assessed as needing it.

If you care for someone who already has a care and support plan with us, please contact their social worker about arranging respite care.

If the person you care for does not have a care and support plan and you want to arrange respite care through the Council, the person you care for will need to have a **social care assessment** and a **financial assessment**. The financial assessment will work out how much the Council will fund.

To request these assessments, call Solihull Connect Adult Social Care on **0121 704 8007**.

If the social care assessment says the person you care for is entitled to respite care, we will offer you a service to have a break from your caring role. We will work with you to choose an option that suits your circumstances best.

Even if the person you care for is not eligible for, or does not want, council funding it's still useful for the person you look after to have a social care needs assessment as it will say which type of respite care is most suitable.

How carers' breaks and respite care could help you and the person you care for

Brenda is 90 and lives alone at home. She is cared for by her daughter Alison who also looks after her own autistic son, as well as having work commitments. Brenda attends a day centre three days a week so she can mix with other people, as well as giving her daughter a break. Brenda also has **respite care** at the day centre during the school holidays. These extra days mean Alison can spend time with her own children.

Jim is 55 and lives with his mother, Maureen, who cares for him. Most of the time things are fine but occasionally Maureen has been unable to care for Jim and he has had to move into emergency placements. This has changed since Jim has had **residential respite care** on a regular basis. Maureen has had a much-needed break and an emergency placement has not been needed. The residential respite care team are also helping her to plan a longer term, permanent move for Jim.

Alan is in his 70s and lives at home with his wife, Sue who is also his main carer. Alan has to be supervised at all times because he has dementia and needs help with everyday activities. To give Sue the opportunity to go out, they considered **respite care** using day opportunities, but Alan wasn't keen. However he was happy to have **respite at home**, which offers activities such as gardening or doing puzzles, for a few hours one day a week. This regular break has given Sue time to socialise and meet friends, knowing that Alan is safe at home.

These examples are based on real situations. The names have been changed.

Further information

You can read about the range of support available including carer's assessments and emotional support in the Carers section of the Council website

www.solihull.gov.uk/carers

You can also contact Carers Trust Solihull by calling them on **0121 788 1143** (9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm Friday) or visiting their website **solihullcarers.org**

If you want to arrange and fund respite care privately, Carers UK has information on their website about taking a break. Visit **www.carersuk.org** or contact the Carers UK Helpline service (Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm) on **0808 808 7777**. Alternatively, you can contact their helpline service by emailing **advice@carersuk.org** at any time.

The government website has advice for disabled people travelling abroad. Visit **www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-travellers**

Information last reviewed: September 2025