

Care and Support

Respite care



Some older people are only able to remain at home with assistance from a spouse, relative or friend. The person may be dependent on their carer for daily tasks such as shopping, cooking or bathing. The caring role is often extremely demanding. The carer may become housebound and isolated and need a break.

Respite care enables the carer to have a rest, go out, attend to business, or go on a holiday. It also gives the person they care for the opportunity to meet other people. Respite care can be provided on a planned, regular basis for short or long periods of time. In some circumstances, respite can be provided in an emergency.

Eligibility and access to subsidised services may depend on the age of the person receiving care and their condition.

Community respite care

In-home respite care

Some people may only need a respite care worker to provide minimal assistance in their home while their regular carer has a short break. This may include day respite or overnight respite.

Centre-based, out-of-home day respite

Full or half-day programs may be available in day care centres or other community settings. Meals and transport to the facility may be provided, as well as activities that will assist socialisation.

Respite care may also involve a person being accompanied by a respite care worker to a community-based activity (e.g. social event or outing), while their carer has a break.

Overnight respite care – respite cottages

Overnight respite care in ‘respite cottages’ ranging from 24 hours to a few days is also available in some areas. These are usually adapted houses and aim to provide a home-like environment, catering for just a few clients at a time.

Some day care centres and most respite cottages are able to provide respite with programs suitable for people with early stages of dementia.

For people aged 65 years and over (50 and over if Indigenous Australians) in-home and community respite care may be available through Australian Government-subsidised services.

Contact **My Aged Care** tel. **1800 200 422**;
www.myagedcare.gov.au.

For younger people with a disability services may be available through a **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** care plan. To apply to become a participant or to obtain further information, contact

the NDIS, tel. **1800 800 110** or visit
www.ndis.gov.au.

Respite care in an aged care home

It may be necessary to arrange for a short period of respite in a Commonwealth-funded aged care home. This enables carers to have a longer break from their caring role.

First, the person you are caring for needs to be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). This can be arranged by a family member or a health professional through a referral to **My Aged Care** tel. **1800 200 422**. If you have an existing permanent or respite residential care approval you need **not** contact **My Aged Care**, unless you have been assessed as eligible for low care respite only and your needs have increased since.

A total of 63 days respite care is allowed per person in a financial year and this time does not have to be taken all at once. It is important to keep a record of the respite days used. If you need to check how much residential respite balance you have left, call **Services Australia**, tel. **1800 195 206**. There is the possibility of an additional period of 21 days where the ACAT considers extra time is needed.

Once you are approved by the ACAT, you may apply directly to the aged care home for respite.

Some aged care homes have respite-dedicated beds that can be booked ahead. Other only offer respite places that can be booked for occupancy in the next few days. Most aged care homes will set a minimum of two weeks’ stay to offer respite.

Catalyst Foundation (including Seniors

Information Service) maintains a residential aged care vacancy register including respite places available. The high care and low care vacancy lists are available on the Foundation’s website (www.catalystfoundation.com.au). Alternatively you can phone us for information on the vacancies listed. **Tel (08) 8168 8776**

Residential respite fees

In respite you will only pay the basic daily fee (85% of the basic rate of the single Age Pension) regardless of whether you are a pensioner or not. Accommodation payment/contribution and means-tested fee do NOT apply to respite residents.

Some aged care homes provide ‘extra services’. This means that the facility offers a higher standard of accommodation, food or services such as a glass of wine with the evening meal, greater choice of meals, Wi-Fi, daily newspaper and/or superior décor.

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It does not mean that a higher standard of care is offered. All aged care homes must meet the same care standards set by the Australian Government. If you have respite in an 'extra services' aged care home you may be asked to pay an extra fee to cover the cost of those services.

Facilities may also provide additional services on a needs basis. This applies to services not included in Schedule 1 of the Quality of Care Principles 2014 as being required to be provided to all care recipients who need them.

Some homes may ask for a booking fee if you organise respite in advance. They cannot charge you in excess of either a week's fee, or 25% of the fee for the whole period. This is a PREPAYMENT of respite care fees and not an additional payment.

Pension payment for a couple temporarily separated due to respite

Under the Social Security law "*Respite care couples will be assessed against the single rate of payment applicable but the assessment will still take into account the combined income and assets as if they were a member of a couple*". This means that if a member of the couple is in respite for at least 14 days in a row they may each receive the single rate of the Age Pension for the period. It is important to obtain evidence from the aged care provider and apply to Centrelink as soon as possible.

Hardship provisions

If payment of daily care fees for residential aged care respite will cause undue hardship, they can be reduced or even waived (excluding extra services fees). Once Services Australia (Centrelink) receives your application it will be assessed within 28 days. You will be notified of the decision in writing. Therefore if you want to receive approval before entering respite care, lodge an application well in advance of the planned respite care dates.

Services Australia manages all financial hardship applications. You can call them on **1800 227 475** to obtain a copy of the *Financial hardship assistance for Home Care and Residential Respite Care form (SA462)*, to discuss an existing application or for further information. The form is also available at www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/sa462.

Respite in supported residential facilities and serviced apartments/units

Supported Residential Facilities (SRFs) provide accommodation and personal care to people with disabilities. SRFs are regulated by the Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992; they are privately operated.

Serviced apartments/units are a type of retirement village residence where certain services, e.g. meals, may be provided. Some also offer respite care.

ACAT approval is not required for respite in SRFs and serviced apartments. The time available for respite will be determined by the particular facility. It is important to ask what support is available and what it will cost, as there are no set services or fees in SRFs and serviced apartments.

Catalyst Foundation (including Seniors

Information Service) maintains an SRFs vacancy register including respite places available. The vacancy list is available on the Foundation's website.

Alternatively you can phone us for information. A list of serviced apartment operators including those providing respite services is also available.

Catalyst can also assist with exploring other respite care options. **Tel. 8168 8776**,

www.catalystfoundation.com.au.

Veterans and War Widow(er)s

For eligible veterans and war widow(er)s holding a Gold or White Repatriation Health Card, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) may pay for up to 28 days (196 hours) of respite care in any one financial year. This can be in-home or residential or a combination of both. Seven hours in-home respite is equivalent to one day in a residential respite facility.

DVA will only pay for genuine respite in a residential aged care home – that is to give a carer a break. DVA will not pay for residential aged care respite for a veteran waiting for permanent placement in a facility. Contact **Veterans' Home Care, tel. 1300 550 450**

Carer Gateway

This is a national initiative supporting people who are looking after someone with a disability, a medical condition, mental illness or who is frail due to age. The Gateway includes online and phone services that provide practical information and resources to support carers, including respite services.

Tel. 1800 422 737 to be connected to your local provider and/or visit www.carergateway.gov.au

Registered carers on a case-by-case, needs basis may receive financial support to pay for support and respite care, including emergency respite.

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