

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 areas, 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 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 and help increase skill levels and manual dexterity.

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.

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 on the number of respite days you may call **Services Australia (Medicare)**, 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. Where possible, it is advisable to book ahead.

To be referred for an assessment by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) ring **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.

Most aged care homes will set a minimum of weeks’ stay to offer respite.

Catalyst Foundation (including Seniors Information Service) maintains a residential aged care vacancy register including respite places available. The vacancy high care and low care lists are available on the Foundation’s website. Alternatively you can phone us for places available.

Tel 8168 8776 (SA country callers 1800 63 63 68); www.catalystfoundation.com.au.

Residential respite fees

In respite you will only pay the basic daily fee of (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 bigger room, a glass of wine with the evening meal, greater

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choice of meals and/or superior décor.

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.

Some homes may ask for a booking fee if you organise respite in advance. It 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. The same principle applies when a member of a couple stays in hospital for two weeks or more.

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.

Contact **My Aged Care**, tel. **1800 200 422** or access the *Financial hardship assistance for Home Care and Residential Respite Care form (SA462)* at www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/forms/sa462

Respite in supported residential facilities and serviced apartments/units

Supported Residential Facilities (SRFs) provide accommodation and personal care to people with disabilities and may also cater for older people. 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.

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 upon request.

Tel. 8168 8776 (SA country callers 1800 63 63 68; 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 service that provides 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 respite. This may include in-home and out-of-home day respite and overnight respite in an aged care home.

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