

# Accessing respite care

If you wait until  
you are exhausted,  
you may need a  
longer break.



As a carer you should try to take regular breaks from your caring role. Such breaks are known as respite. Taking a well-deserved break may help relieve stress for both you and the person receiving care.

Leaving the person in someone else's care is a major emotional hurdle for many carers. The carer worries about their loved one, who may be uncomfortable with intimate care from someone else.

It is sometimes difficult to explain your need for time out to the person who is unwell. If this is the case for you, ask a member of the care team to help. If you take regular time out from the start, the person will get used to other carers.

Respite care can be provided by family or friends, or by a respite service. You may choose respite at home or a centre-based service. Different types of respite services are available but availability may vary depending on services provided in your area.



### **In-home respite**

A care worker provides care in the home or may organise to take the person you care for on an outing. In-home respite can also be overnight.

### **Centre-based respite**

Held at a centre or club that organises group activities for the person you care for, allowing them to meet other people.

### **Community access respite**


Provides activities out in the community to encourage the person you care for to maintain a sense of independence and social interaction.


### **Residential respite care**

A short stay in a residential care home can be organised for the person you care for.

Consider planning a break in advance to avoid stress build up and avoid waiting lists. Emergency respite care may be available if the unexpected happens and you need help at short notice.

Contact **Carer Gateway** for information about planned and emergency respite as well as access to other carer support services available in your area:

 1800 422 737

 [carergateway.gov.au](https://carergateway.gov.au)

You may also be able to access respite or other supports through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) if the person you care for is under the age of 65 or My Aged Care if 65 years and over.

Some condition-specific organisations such as Dementia Australia NSW, MS and Cancer Council NSW offer respite services. Refer to the useful contacts section on page 54.

## What is the cost of care?

Some services are free, others are not. The cost of treatment, care and equipment will depend on government subsidies through various care packages (if eligible), whether care is provided at home or in a public hospital, the service provider, the length of time involved, and the type of care needed.

Before engaging services, be sure to ask about what the services provide free of charge and the cost of other services to reduce the risk of receiving an unexpected bill.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, a social worker may be able to assist with identifying potential sources of support.


It may also be a good time to seek financial counselling or the advice of a financial advisor so you can factor in the cost of care over the caring journey, particularly if your income has been impacted by loss of wages or you are experiencing financial difficulties. Carer Payments or Carer Allowance paid by Centrelink may also be available to you (see details here).


## Sources of financial support

### Carer allowance

You may be entitled to Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance if you give constant care to someone who has a severe disability, illness, or an adult who is frail.

Visit **Services Australia** to find out more about the carer allowance:

 132 717

 [servicesaustralia.gov.au/  
carer-allowance](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers-allowance)

### Home support

If the person you care for is over the age of 65 you may be eligible for entry-level support at home through the Commonwealth Home Support Program, or if needs are more complex, the Home Care Packages Program (4 levels) available through My Aged Care.


Eligibility for these services is determined through an aged care assessment. There are two types of assessments:


- A **basic assessment** with a member of the Regional Assessment Service (RAS) for entry level support at home.
- A **comprehensive assessment** with a member of an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) for more complex support at home.

There is no cost for the assessment, though you are expected to contribute to the cost of care where your personal circumstances allow.

You may need to complete a formal income assessment by Services Australia before you can receive services.

To check eligibility and apply for assessment to receive services, refer to **My Aged Care**:

 1800 200 422

 [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au)

### **Veteran and war widow support**

Eligible veterans and war widows may be entitled to financial support for services, equipment and medications.

For more information, contact the **Department of Veteran Affairs:**

☎ 1800 838 372

🖱 [dva.gov.au](http://dva.gov.au)

### **Disability support**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides access to services and supports people under the age of 65 living with a permanent and significant disability, their carers and families.

For more information on the **National Disability Insurance Scheme:**

☎ 1800 800 110

🖱 [ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au)

### **Medications**

Many of the medications used by people receiving Palliative Care are listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule, which means they are subsidised by the federal government.

### **Insurance & health cover**

Many superannuation funds offer life and other insurance benefits that will be paid out on diagnosis of a life-limiting illness.

If the person you are caring for has private health insurance with ancillary cover, check whether it covers the cost of private nursing or personal care services provided by nursing agencies.

### **Cancer support**

If you are caring for someone with a cancer diagnosis, the NSW Cancer Council can provide some financial assistance to pay utility bills up to \$350.

**NSW Cancer Council:**


🖱 [cancercouncil.com.au/  
get-support/financial-assistance](http://cancercouncil.com.au/get-support/financial-assistance)



## Transport


The Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS) supports NSW residents who are unable to use public transport because of a severe and permanent disability.

More information on eligibility and to apply for the **Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme**, visit:

 [service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-for-the-taxi-transport-subsidy-scheme](https://service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-for-the-taxi-transport-subsidy-scheme)

Patient Transport Service (PTS) is available for patients who meet eligibility criteria. Within greater metropolitan Sydney, transport is undertaken by qualified patient transport officers or, when required, under the supervision of an enrolled or registered nurse. Patient transport may be undertaken by NSW Ambulance in some regional areas.

More information about the **NSW Health Patient Transport Service** can be found here:


 [health.nsw.gov.au/pts/Pages/info-for-patients.aspx](https://health.nsw.gov.au/pts/Pages/info-for-patients.aspx)



The person you are caring for may be eligible for a Companion Card if they have a significant and permanent disability and require attendant care support to participate at community venues and activities.

Participating businesses will recognise the Companion Card and issue the cardholder a second ticket for their companion at no charge:

For more information about the **Companion Card**, visit:

 [companioncard.nsw.gov.au/cardholders/where-can-i-use-my-card](https://companioncard.nsw.gov.au/cardholders/where-can-i-use-my-card)

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## Useful contacts

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### Australian Indigenous Health InfoNet

- ☎ (08) 9370 6336
- 🖱 [healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/learn/health-system/palliative-care](http://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/learn/health-system/palliative-care)

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### Cancer Council NSW

- ☎ 13 11 20
- 🖱 [cancercouncil.com.au](http://cancercouncil.com.au)

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### Carer Gateway

- ☎ 1800 422 737
- 🖱 [carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au)

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### Carers NSW

- ☎ (02) 9280 4744
- 🖱 [carersnsw.org.au](http://carersnsw.org.au)

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### Caresearch

- ☎ (08) 7221 8233
- 🖱 [caresearch.com.au](http://caresearch.com.au)

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### Centrelink

- ☎ 13 27 17
  - 🖱 [servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au)
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### Dementia Australia NSW

- ☎ 1800 100 500
- 🖱 [dementia.org.au](http://dementia.org.au)

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### GriefLine National

- ☎ 1300 845 745
- 🖱 [griefline.org.au](http://griefline.org.au)

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### Leukaemia Foundation

- ☎ 1800 620 420
- ✉ [info@leukaemia.org.au](mailto:info@leukaemia.org.au)
- 🖱 [leukaemia.org.au](http://leukaemia.org.au)

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### Lifeline

- ☎ 13 11 14
- 🖱 [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

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### My Aged Care

- ☎ 1800 200 422
  - 🖱 [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au)
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### My Health Record

- ☎ 1800 723 471
- 🖱 [myhealthrecord.gov.au](https://myhealthrecord.gov.au)

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### National Disability Insurance Service (NDIS)

- ☎ 1800 800 110
- 🖱 [ndis.gov.au](https://ndis.gov.au)

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### National Stroke Foundation

- ☎ StrokeLine: 1800 787 653
- 🖱 [strokefoundation.org.au](https://strokefoundation.org.au)

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### NSW Trustee & Guardian

- ☎ 1300 109 290
- 🖱 [tag.nsw.gov.au](https://tag.nsw.gov.au)

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### Palliative Care NSW

- ☎ (02) 8076 5600
- 🖱 [palliativecarensw.org.au](https://palliativecarensw.org.au)

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### Relationships Australia

- ☎ 1300 364 277
- 🖱 [relationships.org.au](https://relationships.org.au)

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### Services Australia

- ☎ [servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/contact-us/phone-us](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/contact-us/phone-us)
- 🖱 [servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au)

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### The Department of Veteran's Affairs

- ☎ General enquiries: 1800 838 372
- ☎ Counselling Service: 1800 011 046
- 🖱 [dva.gov.au](https://dva.gov.au)

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### If you require an interpreter, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

- ☎ 13 14 50
- 🖱 [tisnational.gov.au](https://tisnational.gov.au)

### If you have a hearing or speech impairment, contact the National Relay Service

- ☎ 24 hour relay call numbers  
TTY/voice calls: 133 677  
Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727  
SMS Relay: 0423 677 767
- 🖱 [relayservice.gov.au](https://relayservice.gov.au)



Caring for someone as they approach the end of their life can be both rewarding and demanding. It is hoped that this book will help to explain what caring involves, so you are better equipped to make informed decisions which reflect your needs and circumstances.

**You matter.**



**Palliative Care**  
NEW SOUTH WALES

**Palliative Care NSW**

706/50 Clarence St Sydney NSW 2000

(02) 8076 5600

[info@palliativecarensw.org.au](mailto:info@palliativecarensw.org.au)

[palliativecarensw.org.au](http://palliativecarensw.org.au)