

A photograph of three women of different ages and ethnicities laughing together outdoors. The woman on the left is Black with curly hair, wearing a grey hoodie and a blue sleeve. The woman in the middle is older with short white hair, wearing a pink top and a black jacket. The woman on the right is white with short blonde hair, wearing a light blue mesh top. They are all smiling broadly and looking towards the camera.

**Central
Bedfordshire**

RESPITE OPTIONS & PLANNING

Carers 
in bedfordshire

Respite means a short-term, planned break from your caring role. This can be hours, days or a few weeks depending on your need.

Respite can be at your home, in a day centre, in a care home, with a family member or close friend or through another professional organisation.

Why respite matters

Caring for someone else without a break is not sustainable, and taking time for respite is essential to prevent burnout. Regular breaks not only help you provide better care for longer but also support your mental and physical wellbeing. Respite allows you to maintain a balance between your caring responsibilities and other aspects of life, such as work, education, and social connections. Remember, giving yourself permission to take a break is not only deserved, it's vital. By looking after yourself, you ensure you can continue caring effectively.

Who can access respite?

Respite is available to unpaid carers, family members or friends, who provide substantial, regular support to adults with care needs that meet the eligibility criteria under the Care Act 2014. Those who self-fund their care, paying privately because their savings or income exceed the local authority's threshold, can arrange respite independently. Others may qualify for financial support, which is determined through a means test assessing income and savings.

Our thanks to Central Bedfordshire Council
for funding the creation of this guide

The logo for Central Bedfordshire Council, featuring the text "Central Bedfordshire" in white on a green circular background.

**Central
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How do I access respite?

To access respite, start by contacting Adult Social Care at your local authority (who you pay your council tax to) or completing an online self-referral. You can then request a Carer's Assessment and/or a Care Needs Assessment to identify the type and level of support required.

Once assessments are complete, a support plan is agreed, outlining the number of respite hours, the type of care, and the budget. A financial assessment will determine whether you need to make any contribution.

Finally, you can book respite dates with the provider of your choice.

Following the discussion, the local authority will work with you to create a support plan. This plan outlines the types of support available and identifies what will best help you in your caring role. You may also be offered a direct payment to fund the agreed support.



“

After my assessment I got a fortnightly Direct Payment for respite. That gave me time to work part-time and recharge—simple but life-changing.

— Central Beds Carer

”

Paying and Funding Respite

Paying for Respite

Respite care can be funded in several ways. Council-funded respite may be available following an assessment of eligibility. You might also be able to use Direct Payments or carers' vouchers to cover the cost.

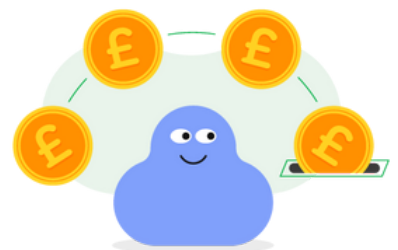
Certain benefits, such as Carer's Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), can be used towards paying for respite, though there is no additional funding specifically for respite through these benefits. Carers in Bedfordshire also offers grants that can help cover the cost of respite, providing extra support to make taking a break more accessible.

Residential Respite

If you have savings that are:

- Over £23,250 you pay the full cost.
- Between £14,250 – £23,250: part-funded; the amount awarded will be dependent on your personal circumstances.
- Below £14,250: Council funds care; you contribute from your income.

“ The Carers Grant gives me a lifeline as I know I have something to look forward to — and I cannot thank you all enough for the support I have been given at a time when I was so desperate. Thank you. ”



What types of Respite are there?

There are several models of respite support to meet different needs

Residential Respite

A short stay in a care home to give the carer a break.

Day Services

Daytime care and activities outside the home for the cared-for person.

Paid Carer/ Volunteer

Providing Short-Term Day Care: Temporary care at home to allow the carer time off.

Friend or Family Member

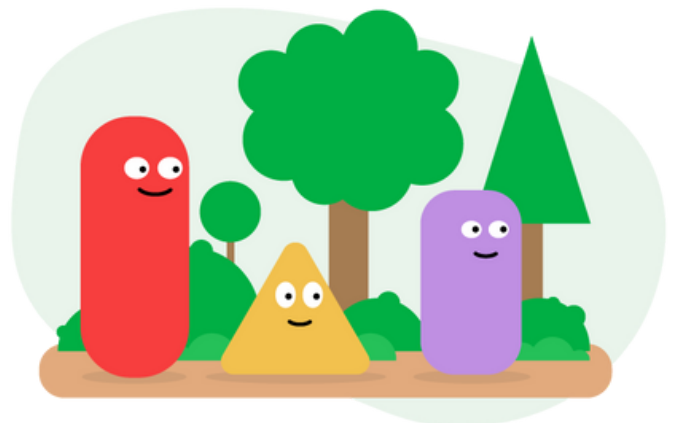
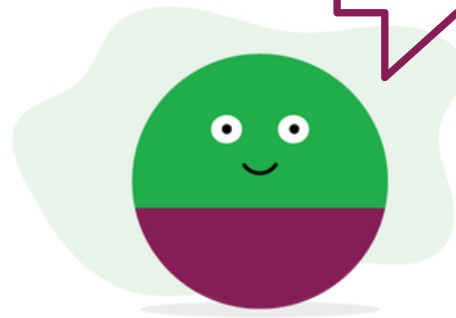
Providing Short-Term Care: Someone trusted steps in to help with care temporarily.

Professional Agency

Providing Planned Care Services: Scheduled care by trained staff arranged in advance.

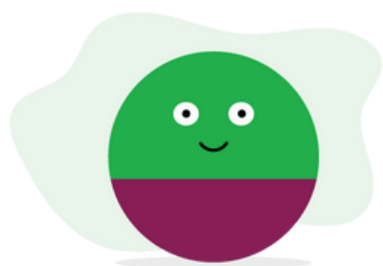
Respite Holidays

For Both, with Care Provided: A break away together with care included during the stay.



Discussing respite with the person you care for

Talking about taking a break can feel daunting, but it's an important step in planning respite. Approach the conversation openly and honestly, explaining that taking time for yourself will help you continue to provide the best care possible. Emphasise that respite is not about leaving them alone, but about ensuring they receive quality care from trained providers while you recharge. Listen to their thoughts and concerns, involve them in decisions about the type and timing of respite, and reassure them that their routines and preferences will be respected. Planning together helps make the experience positive for both of you and can reduce any anxiety about using respite services.



Top tips

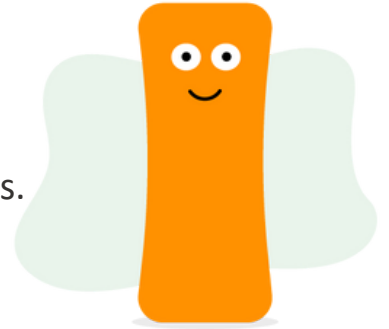
- ✓ Choose a calm moment; emphasise benefits for both of you.
- ✓ Involve them in visits, brochures and virtual tours.
- ✓ Offer a short trial day first.
- ✓ Reassure about continuity of routines, pets, favourite items.

If the person you care for doesn't agree

It's common for someone you care for to feel anxious about using respite, often due to past experiences or unfamiliar staff. Take time to explore their concerns and reassure them that their comfort and routine will be respected. A gradual approach can help, starting with short visits or hourly sitting and building up to longer stays or overnight breaks. Involving a professional, such as a GP or social worker, can help explain the risks of carer burnout and the benefits of respite. If the person lacks the capacity to make this decision, respite can be arranged as a Best Interest decision in line with the Mental Capacity Act, ensuring their wellbeing and safety are prioritised.

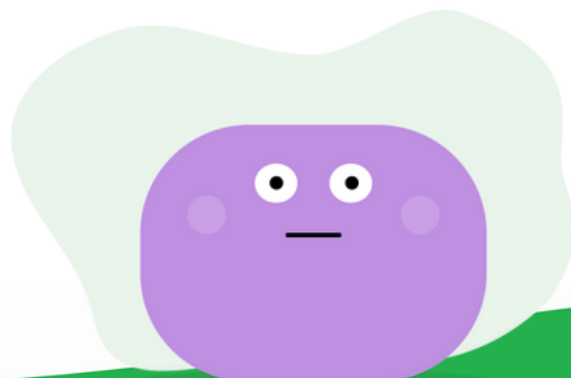
How to know if respite is going well

- ☐ Loved one looks relaxed, clean and engaged.
- ☐ Staff know their likes, routines and health conditions.
- ☐ You receive prompt updates on any incidents or GP visits.
- ☐ Environment is clean, safe, pleasant-smelling.
- ☐ Check the provider's CQC rating and last inspection report.



If you have concerns about care

- ☐ Speak to the shift leader or manager straight away.
- ☐ Escalate to Central Bedfordshire Council's Brokerage & Quality Team or Safeguarding Adults Team (0300 300 8122).
- ☐ Raise a formal complaint via provider policy or email customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.
- ☐ Report serious issues to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) – 03000 616161.



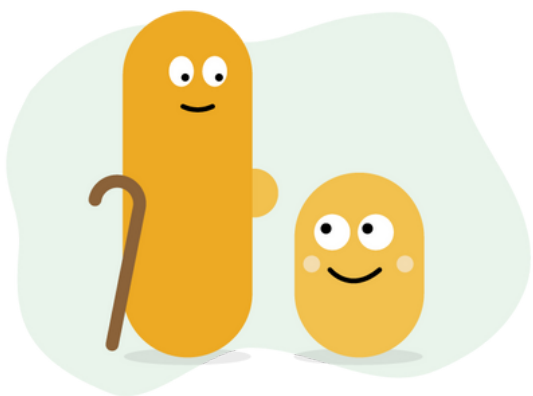
Top tips

Plan Ahead

- ✓ Request assessment early
- ✓ Plan regular short or longer breaks
- ✓ Keep emergency care plans updated
- ✓ Maximise use of vouchers, direct payments, grants
- ✓ Link with peer support and online communities

Key Contact Information

- Adult Social Care Access Point: 0300 300 8303
- Carers in Bedfordshire: 0300 111 1919
- Care Quality Commission: www.cqc.org.uk
- Age UK Bedfordshire: 01234 360510
- Emergency Duty Team (out of hours): 0300 300 8123



Caring well includes caring for yourself. A planned break keeps both you and the person you love healthier and happier.