

Information for Carers: Breaks for carers

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Information sheet E3

October 2011

This information sheet is about:

- A break from tasks at home - Care at home
- Planned breaks, including:
- Support groups and networks
- Sitting service
- Residential short breaks
- Breaks together and organising your break away
- Paying for breaks, including Direct Payments
- Emergency breaks

It is important that everyone has some time to themselves, to rest, relax and enjoy their own interests. It is especially important that you can do that as a carer, either on your own, with the person you care for, or with friends, family or other like-minded people.

A break can mean very different things to different people and it is important that you have breaks that suit you. There are a number of ways we can help you do that.

A break from tasks at home

There can be ways to help give you a break from some routine tasks in the home.

Care at Home is a service that helps with personal care and essential tasks. Care at Home is provided as part of an agreed care plan after the person you care for has had an assessment to agree what is needed. They may be eligible to receive this free of charge or they may need to pay. To find out more about the care and support that is available, phone us on 0845 345 9133, or go to www.somerset.gov.uk/careathome

Planned breaks

These could be for just an hour or two, days out, or a break away for a few days or more. The important thing is that you have a break from your caring role. There are a number of suggestions below.

Support groups and networks

There are a large number of local support groups for carers, giving you the opportunity to take a break with other carers who know about, and understand, the sort of things you face. You can find information about support groups and networks in our information sheet [E2, Information for Carers: Carer support groups and networks](#).

Sitting Service

The Sitting Service can help you take a break with the peace of mind that the person you care for is being well looked after. The Sitting Service provides fully trained staff who can come into your home or take the person you care for out. They can offer companionship, support, personal care and assistance. They may be able to accompany a person to an appointment or to

go out to social activities. You will need to cover the cost of any trip of visit, including mileage and entry fees.

The Sitting Service is available on a regular or occasional basis any day of the week between 8.00am and 11.00pm. Sessions may last from two hours up to a maximum of eight hours each day. Please try and give a weeks notice when requesting this service.

Carers are encouraged to try out the service before committing themselves. All first sitting sessions are “free of charge”. To find out more go to our website www.somerset.gov.uk/sittingservice or phone us on 0845 345 9133.

Residential Short Breaks

It may be possible for the person you care for to spend time away at a care home. Short breaks can be arranged to meet your needs, or the needs of the person you are caring for, as part of an agreed care plan. To find out more phone us on 0845 345 9133.

You can find a directory of care services in Somerset, including care homes, at http://www.carechoices.co.uk/e_books/somerset.html

Quantock House, a carers residential centre in the Quantock Hills, offers carers and their families the chance to have a free break. You can enjoy bed, breakfast and evening meals in a quiet and peaceful environment to help you relax and unwind. This facility is free to anyone who is a carer in Somerset. For more information please look on the St. Margaret’s Hospice website www.st-margarets-hospice.org.uk or phone 0845 070 8910 (press option 2).

Paying for breaks, including Direct Payments

You, and the person you care for, may be eligible for a break after the needs of both of you have been assessed. If you are not eligible to receive help but are unable to pay for a break yourself, there are some charities that can help provide funding for a break.

If you are eligible for a break, then the person you care for may be able to have a **Direct Payment**. Direct Payments are an agreed sum of money for the person you care for to purchase care or support needs, such as a break, rather than Somerset County Council arranging it.

To find out more about paying for breaks, or Direct Payments, phone us on 0845 345 9133 or go to www.somerset.gov.uk/directpayments

Emergency breaks

It is possible that you may need a break at short notice for a variety of reasons.

Help in Crisis

Help in Crisis is a free service to help carers deal with emergencies. It doesn’t provide long-term care, but it does provide immediate help while other care arrangements are made. Phone Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9133 to request this service.

You may be able to use the service if you:

- need to be confined to bed at home or admitted to hospital because of an accident or illness.
- are in a state of exhaustion and need immediate rest and sleep.
- are in an emotional or physical state of distress and immediate relief is vital to your

- mental or physical well-being, or vital to the safety of the person you care for.
- are needed in a family crisis.

It is provided by registered care providers and is available between 8.30am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, for a single session of 4 or 8 hours. To find out more about the service, or to access it in a crisis, phone us on 0845 345 9133. For more information go to www.somerset.gov.uk/helpincrisis

If you need emergency help outside these hours, you should phone the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 01458 253241. **Please note, this is an out-of-hours service only.**

Your opportunity to feedback

We welcome your comments about the services you receive. If you would like to tell us what you think, please either:

- Contact us electronically, by going to our website, www.somerset.gov.uk, or
- Speak to your social care worker if you have one.
- Phone Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9133, or
- Contact the Community Directorate Complaints Officer:
The Complaints Officer - Community Directorate
Floor A2 East
County Hall
Taunton
TA1 4DY
Phone: 01823 356274
- Email: adults@somerset.gov.uk

<p>This document is also available on request in Braille, large print, tape, disc and can be translated into different languages.</p>
