



Respite care, short stays and convalescence

Some people look for respite/convalescence/short term care for a period, perhaps after a stay in hospital, while they are waiting to move to somewhere permanent, to give their carers a break or to see whether they would like to live in the care home permanently.

WHAT CHOICES DO I HAVE?

- **Convalescent Homes**

Traditional convalescent homes are now rarely available.

- **Intermediate Care**

Intermediate care provides rehabilitation services to older people who have finished their hospital treatment but are not yet ready to manage independently at home. It can also be provided to prevent a hospital admission. Services can be provided in the persons' own home or in a care home, and are time limited usually to a maximum of six weeks. Intermediate care, including care home fees, is provided free by the NHS.

- **Respite or short term care in care homes**

These can be care homes either for personal care or nursing care, offering accommodation, help with personal care, supervision and meals. Nursing homes offer care to people who are very frail, bedridden or who need a lot of attention from a nurse.

- **Care in your home**

It is sometimes possible to arrange respite care in your own home. Contact your local social services department, Age Concern or commercial home care agency - the United Kingdom Home Care Association [UKHCA] will be able to give you details of member agencies in your area.

For more details contact:

The United Kingdom Home Care Association Tel 020 8288 1551,

e-mail: enquiries@ukhca.demon.co.uk

- **Holidays**

Some holiday hotels offer holiday/respite/short term care. The Holiday Care Service will be able to give you more information.

For more details contact:

The Holiday Care Service Tel 0845 124 9971,

e-mail: holiday.care@virgin.net

HOW CAN I ARRANGE RESPITE/SHORT TERM CARE IN A CARE HOME?

If you are paying for the care yourself, approach your chosen care home and check whether they have a vacancy when you want it and ask whether they can provide the care you need (especially if you have recently come out of hospital). Ensure that you get details of the charges and services in writing.

IF YOU NEED HELP PAYING FOR RESPITE/SHORT TERM CARE

Contact your Local Authority and ask for an assessment of your needs (and if appropriate your carer's needs). If they assess you as needing respite/short term care this will be noted on your care assessment and the local authority will ask you to pay towards the costs in one of two ways. Either they will ask you to pay a "reasonable amount" towards the cost, or they will assess your finances straight away. After 8 weeks, local authorities have to carry out a nationally agreed financial assessment. If, however, you receive regular planned respite care (perhaps 1 week in 4) and if your local authority's policy is to charge you a "reasonable amount" this will be the amount you will pay each time. The authority will not link the separate weeks together.

THE FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT FOR PEOPLE IN RESPITE/SHORT STAY

When assessing you for respite/short term care, the local authority must:

- Help you financially if your savings are under £19,500, your income is low and you are assessed as needing respite care.
- Ignore the value of your home
- Ignore some income so that you can still pay household bill such as water rates, insurance premiums and some fuel charges
- Ignore any housing benefit and any income support relating to housing costs
- Ignore the Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance

CHANGING FROM TEMPORARY TO PERMANENT CARE

If a temporary stay becomes permanent, the local authority will carry out the financial assessment under the normal rules. However this financial assessment will only apply from the date a permanent stay was agreed.

BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE RECEIVING RESPITE/SHORT TERM CARE

Minimum Income Guarantee [Income Support] rules for temporary residents in care homes are different from the rules for permanent residents. For temporary residents, the capital limit is £12,000 (excluding the value of your property). Savings between £6,000 and £12,000 will be treated as if they produce income (tariff income). If you are away from home, for instance having a "trial" period in a care home, Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit can only be paid for 13 weeks.

<p>If you would like to discuss any of these areas or if you would like a list of care homes that may offer short term care in any part of the United Kingdom please contact EAC Advice Line: 020 7820 1343.</p>
