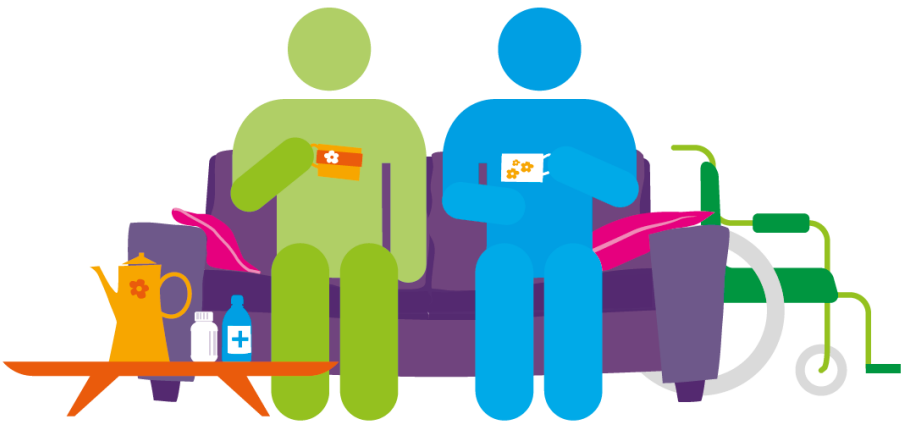


A Guide for Adult Carers in Scotland



Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people can make the most of later life.

Our three strategic aims are to:



Help older people to be as well as they can be



Promote a positive view of ageing and later life



Tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

The Age Scotland **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

For information, advice and friendship



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)



Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)
to find out more.



What this guide is about

Caring for a friend or relative can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. It can also be stressful and exhausting, but there is support available for both you and the person you care for.

This guide looks at your right to get support with your caring role and other things to be aware of as a carer.

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Age Scotland does not accept any liability arising from its use and it is the reader's sole responsibility to ensure any information is up to date and accurate.

Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Scotland.

Are you a carer?

Many people look after someone else, but don't see themselves as a carer; they just feel they are doing what anyone would do to support friends or family. If you support your partner, relative or friend, who needs help because they are ill or have a disability, then you are a carer. It doesn't matter whether you live with them, how often you help them or how long you spend providing the help.

There are different ways to be a carer. You might:

- live near a friend who has a disability and drop in every day to provide a meal and some company
- move in with a relative to help them after they have been in hospital
- provide 24-hour constant care for a close member of your family
- be a carer for your partner, even if they have paid carers too
- provide regular social support by phone
- have a disability yourself and care for someone who also provides care for you.

You may have chosen to be someone's carer, or you may have found yourself in a situation where you felt you had no choice.

If you are trying to decide whether to become a carer to someone, think about:

- the support you can actually provide
- how it may change your relationship with the person
- what support you will need for yourself – practical, emotional and financial
- who else could help – friends, family, the local council or health board?
- what would change in your own life if you became a carer

Your local carers' centre can talk to you about what caring might involve and how you could best manage the changes to your life.



Rights and issues for carers

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 defines a carer as someone who “provides or intends to provide care for another individual”. Since April 2018 this has given new rights to carers in Scotland. If you are a carer you have the right to get support with your caring role, and with looking after your own health and wellbeing.

These rights to support from your council or health board are set out in the Carers’ Charter. You can see the Carers’ Charter online at **www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter**.

The council or health board must make sure there is a local information and advice service for carers, which can give you advice about the Carers’ Charter, benefits, advocacy services, health and wellbeing, short breaks, bereavement support and care planning.

How can the council or health board help?

If you are a carer, you can ask for an Adult Carer Support Plan from the local council where the person you care for lives. They should arrange to assess your needs within a reasonable period of time.

The Adult Carer Support Plan must include information about:

- your personal circumstances and the nature of your caring role
- how much care you are able and willing to provide
- the personal outcomes that matter to you; these are things you need to happen so you can be a carer and also look after your own health, wellbeing and interests
- the support available locally
- the support you qualify for according to the council's local rules
- a plan for what would happen in an emergency, so everyone knows what to expect and what help the person you care for would need
- if relevant, how you will be involved in planning for the person you care for to be discharged from hospital

Some of the questions you may be asked for the assessment may seem quite personal and difficult to answer; you will need to explain what care you provide, what support you have and what support would help you.



You could prepare for the assessment by thinking about:

- how much time you spend caring
- the type of care you provide, such as help with washing, eating, dressing or getting out of bed
- any care you find difficult, for health or personal reasons
- anything you have to do as a carer that doesn't seem safe
- whether you have time to take care of yourself – eating, sleeping, looking after your own health, seeing friends and doing things you enjoy
- how caring fits in with your work and family
- any issues that may affect your ability to continue caring.

If you qualify for help under their local rules, the council or health board should provide this support free of charge. Under the rules of Self-Directed Support, you can get the council to arrange these services, or ask for a budget you can use to arrange them for yourself.

If you have been assessed as needing Personal or Nursing Care services for yourself, these should also be free.

If you are not satisfied with your Adult Carer Support Plan, or how long you wait to be assessed, you can use the council's complaints procedure.



For information on local rules about who qualifies for help, how to complain, or for contact details for your local carers' centre, call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

Benefits for carers

The main benefit for carers is **Carer's Allowance**. This can be claimed by carers who:

- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person who receives Attendance Allowance, Adult Disability Payment daily living component, Personal Independence Payment daily living component, Disability Living Allowance care component at the higher or middle rate, Armed Forces Independence Payment or Constant Attendance Allowance
- are not earning more than £132 per week (2022/23); income from an occupational pension is not taken into account as earnings

Carer's Allowance and other benefits

The links between Carer's Allowance and other benefits are complicated.

If the amount you receive for your State Pension is higher than the current Carer's Allowance rate, you won't be paid any Carer's Allowance, as the two benefits **overlap**. However, it is still worth applying, because you may have an **underlying entitlement** to Carer's Allowance. If you get a letter saying this, it could increase the amount of any means-tested benefits you get (such as Pension Credit), or could give you an entitlement you wouldn't otherwise have.

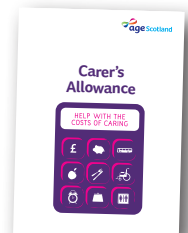
Claiming Carer's Allowance may stop the person you care for from getting the **Severe Disability** amount. They may also stop receiving any reduction in Council Tax. Get advice if you are considering making a claim.

If you are over State Pension age, receiving a disability-related benefit yourself doesn't prevent you from claiming Carer's Allowance.

If you are part of a couple who both receive disability-related benefits, and provide 35 hours per week or more of care for each other, you may both be able to claim Carer's Allowance.

In Scotland, people who receive Carer's Allowance payments also receive an automatic 6-monthly payment from the Scottish Government, called **Carer's Allowance Supplement**. This is currently £270.50, paid in June and December (the qualifying dates are in April and October).

To find out how Carer's Allowance interacts with other benefits in your specific circumstances, call our helpline on **0800 12 44 222** and ask for a benefit check. You can also read more about Carer's Allowance in our **Carer's Allowance** guide, available from our helpline or on our website at www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/benefits/carers-allowance.



Carer's Credit

If you are of working age you may be entitled to Carer's Credit if you are caring for someone for at least 20 hours a week. Carer's Credit helps cover any gaps in your National Insurance record due to time missed at work while caring for someone. These gaps may otherwise affect the amount of State Pension you will receive in future.

Other benefits for older people include:

- **Pension Credit** for people who are living on a low income
- **Adult Disability Payment** for people under State Pension age who need care or supervision, or who have mobility problems (this is replacing Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance for people who live in Scotland)
- **Attendance Allowance** for people who have reached State Pension age and need care or supervision, and are not already receiving Adult Disability Payment, Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance
- **Universal Credit** for people of working age. You may be able to receive an increased amount of Universal Credit as a carer. Get advice before you claim as this may affect the benefits of the person you care for.



For more information about benefits call the **Age Scotland helpline** or see Age Scotland's **Benefits Maze** guide.



Employment and caring

You do not need to tell your employer you are caring for someone. However, if they know you are a carer you may be able to ask for flexible working arrangements that fit in with your caring responsibilities. Telling your employer may also help them to understand better if you need time off in an emergency.



Get advice about your employment rights from your local **Citizens Advice Bureau**, or see their advice website www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland.

Looking after yourself

Caring can affect you physically, mentally and emotionally, but when you are looking after someone else it is easy to overlook your own needs.

The things you can do to look after yourself are common sense, but you may forget if your focus is on looking after someone else. You might feel you don't have the time or energy to think about yourself.

You will be better able to continue your caring role if you:

- eat properly
- get enough sleep
- have some time for yourself
- do something you enjoy, either by yourself or with the person you care for
- accept the support that is offered by other people; you don't have to do everything yourself
- ask for help: see the sections in this guide on care needs assessments and carer assessments

If you feel that caring is affecting your health, speak to your GP or practice nurse. They may be able to help by:

- discussing ways to help you look after your health
- arranging appointments for you and the person you care for at the same time
- arranging for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy or home
- making sure you are involved in discussions about the person you care for
- letting you know about the support for carers available locally, including options for having breaks from caring and having more time for yourself

If your GP practice knows you are a carer, they are more likely to understand why you need a home visit if you have to ask for one.

Your local carers' centre will understand how hard it can be to look after yourself whilst being a carer, and they can provide advice and support.

You can find more information about looking after yourself in Age Scotland's guides **Eat Well: A guide for older people in Scotland** and **A guide for carers: Mental health and wellbeing in later life**.



Other support for you and the person you care for

There are services which can help you with practical problems:

Care needs assessment

You can contact your council for a care needs assessment which will look at support for the person you care for. They will tell you whether the help will be free or what it would cost. You should also have some choice about how the care is provided. Under the rules for Self-Directed Support, care may be arranged and provided by the council or health board, or you and the person you care for may be able to arrange some or all of the care yourselves.

The care needs assessment will take into account the care you currently provide. It is important to be honest about the care you are able and willing to provide going forward, and also about what you cannot do.

If the person you care for does not want to have their care needs assessed, you can still ask for an assessment of your support needs as their carer.

Self Directed Support Scotland can advise you about the options for how care is provided and put you in touch with local support. You can find information on their website www.sdsscotland.org.uk.

Call the **Age Scotland helpline** for advice or see our guides **Care and Support at Home: Assessment and Funding** and **Care and support at home: practical help**.



Fire Safety

The **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service** can visit the person you care for at home for a free Home Fire Safety Visit and can make sure their home is as safe as it can be. Call **0800 0731 999** or see their website **www.firescotland.gov.uk**.

Care and Repair Services

Care and Repair Services operate in most areas of Scotland. They offer independent advice about, and assistance with, housing repairs and adaptations. This service is available to homeowners, private tenants and crofters aged over 60 or who have a disability. For details of your local service call **Care and Repair Scotland** on **0141 221 9879** or see **www.careandrepairsotland.co.uk**.

Home Energy Scotland

Home Energy Scotland can give advice about benefits, grants and schemes which may help you make your home more energy efficient and improve your heating. Call **0808 808 2282** or see their website **www.homeenergyscotland.org**.

Technology support

Technology known as telecare and telehealth can help the person you care for to be safer at home, for example by reminding them about medicines or making it easier to let someone know if they are in difficulty.

The Disabled Living Foundation has information about telecare and telehealth. Call **0300 999 0004** or see their website **www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk**.

The Scottish Government and **NHS24** have created an online Telecare self-check tool. You will be asked a few simple questions about your situation, and it will give you advice and information about telecare based on your answers. Access the tool at **www.telecareselfcheck.scot**.



Travelling

If you need to travel by bus with the person you care for, and they qualify for free travel, you may be entitled to free travel as their companion if they receive a benefit such as Attendance Allowance. They will need a National Entitlement Card that allows them to travel with a companion. For details see **www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/60plus-or-disabled**.

Financial help

Some charities have money set aside to give grants to people in need. This could be to help with financial problems or with the purchase of equipment such as mobility aids. Grants may also be given for household repairs, respite breaks and essential household items.

Often they are available to specific groups who have something in common, such as an occupation, a health condition or having served in the Armed Forces.

Turn2Us is a national charity that can carry out free grant searches based on your personal circumstances and background. Call them on **0808 802 2000**, or search for a grant online at **www.turn2us.org.uk**.

Specialist advice

Specialist advice is available from many charities which focus on the needs of people living with a particular health issue or condition, such as dementia, diabetes, autism or stroke.

Disability Information Scotland has details of hundreds of disability organisations and support groups, both local and national. To search online visit **www.disabilityscot.org.uk** or contact their helpline on **0300 323 9961**.

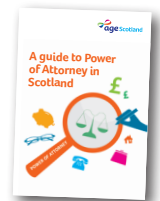
Power of Attorney and Guardianship

If the person you care for has the mental capacity to make their own decisions, they may want to consider granting Power of Attorney to the person or people they would like to make decisions on their behalf if they lose this capacity.

A Continuing Power of Attorney gives someone the right to make decisions about another person's finances, including property and investments. This can be set up to take effect only if they become unable to make their own decisions, or straight away if they can make their own decisions, but would like some help.

A Welfare Power of Attorney allows someone to make decisions about another person's health and care. It can only come into effect if they no longer have the ability to make the decisions themselves.

If the person you care for has appointed you as their Attorney, you will have legal responsibilities to them as well as caring responsibilities. You can find information about Power of Attorney in our **Guide to Power of Attorney in Scotland**.



If you do not have Power of Attorney for the person you care for, you have no automatic right to make decisions about their life or to help them manage their money, which can cause problems if they lose capacity to do this themselves. If someone loses capacity without appointing an attorney, you may need to apply to the Sheriff Court for a Guardianship Order, so you can act on their behalf. The process involved in becoming a Guardian can be costly and may take some time.



For more information about the Power of Attorney application process and costs contact the **Office of the Public Guardian in Scotland**. Call them on **01324 678 300** or visit their website at **www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk**.



If you care for a younger person

If you are looking after a younger family member who has care needs, it is a good idea to plan for how they could be looked after if you were no longer able to meet their needs in the future. You may need to consider whether their care needs are likely to increase.

Your local carers' centre will be able to talk you through the things you may need to think about. You should involve the person you care for in these discussions if they are able to make decisions about their care. It is also a good idea to contact specialist charities who have expert knowledge of the condition of the person you care for.

You could ask the person you care for about:

- who they would like to help them if you could not support them all the time
- who they would trust to deal with official agencies for them if you could not do this
- where they would like to live if you could not look after them anymore.

You could work with them to make a record of the care you provide, including describing a normal day, their likes and dislikes, what they like to do for themselves and what they find difficult, and how they can be supported to manage difficult situations.

You should ask a solicitor how to make sure the person you care for would be provided for if you were no longer around to care for them.

When your caring role changes

There may come a time when you can no longer provide the help the person you care for needs. This may be because your circumstances or health have changed, or perhaps because theirs have.

If things have changed, you can ask for an updated care needs assessment for both yourself and the person you care for, to make sure you both continue to get the support you need.

If you are considering whether a care home would be the best way to meet the needs of the person you care for, you may have a lot of questions and some conflicting emotions.



Our care guides aim to answer some of the common questions people have about care at home and care homes. You can request free copies of any of our guides by calling our helpline on **0800 12 44 222** or view them online at **www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/care-and-support**.





Bereavement

If the person you care for dies, it may be a very difficult and emotional time for you. If you have been spending a lot of your time caring for someone, the whole structure of your day may change, and you may lose contact with the other people involved in their care.

It is important to give yourself the time you need to come to terms with your feelings, and the changes that bereavement brings. It can be a good opportunity to re-establish links with family and friends if you have become isolated, and allow yourself time to pursue your own interests. There might be a hobby you used to enjoy but haven't had much time for lately, or you might decide you'd like to try something new, or to expand your social circle.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve, but if you are finding it hard to cope, speak to your GP to talk about the support that is available locally.



The Scottish Government have information about coping with grief and details of bereavement support organisations on their website, at **www.mygov.scot/bereavement-support**. You can also call the **Age Scotland helpline** for information, advice or a chat with a friendly adviser.



Useful organisations

Age Scotland helpline 0800 12 44 222 provides information, friendship and advice to older people, their relatives and carers.

If you need an interpreter call 0800 12 44 222 and simply state the language you need e.g. Polish or Urdu. Stay on the line for a few minutes and the Age Scotland helpline staff will do the rest.

Carers Trust is a charity working with a network of local carers' centres. They offer support to carers, including information and advice, respite breaks and training. Tel: **0300 772 9600** / **www.carers.org**.

Carers UK is a charity that provides advice and information to carers, as well as support through local carers' groups.

Tel: **0808 808 7777** / **www.carersuk.org/scotland**.

Care Information Scotland is a Scottish Government website that provides information and advice if you look after someone, need care yourself or are planning for your future care needs.

Tel: **0800 011 3200** / **www.careinfoscotland.scot**

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland brings together carers' groups and individuals to enhance the support available to unpaid carers and raise awareness of the issues they face. They have produced detailed information about your rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act, available on their website: **www.carersnet.org**.

You can call Scotland's **Citizens Advice helpline** on **0800 028 1456** for advice or for details of your local bureau, or see their website **www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/about-us/get-advice-s**.

Disability Information Scotland provides information about services and support available for people living with a disability in Scotland.

Tel: **0300 323 9961** / **www.disabilityscot.org.uk**

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial and in helping people access their rights and entitlements, it can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- ▶ Call **03330 15 14 60**
- ▶ Visit **age.scot/donate**
- ▶ Text **LATERLIFE** to **70085** to donate £5.*



Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help Age Scotland to continue being there for vulnerable older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

* Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Let's keep in touch



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today by visiting **age.scot/roundup**



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



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[@age_scotland](https://www.instagram.com/age_scotland)



[/Age-Scotland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Age-Scotland)

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

Contact us:

Head office

0333 323 2400

Age Scotland helpline

0800 12 44 222

Email

info@agescotland.org.uk

Visit our website

www.agescotland.org.uk

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