



Midlothian

Short Breaks Service Statement



2023

Time off from Caring



Short Service Break Statement 2023

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1. Background

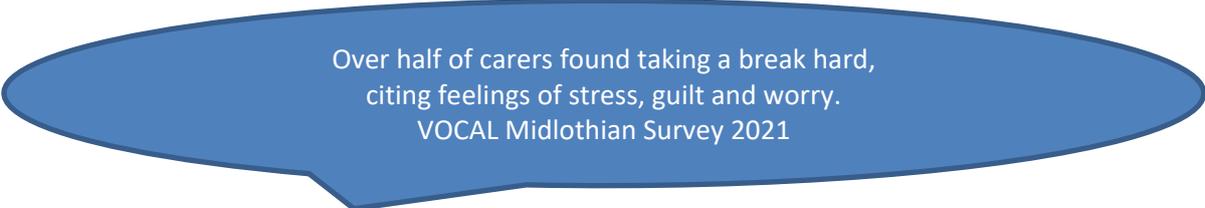
This Short Break Service Statement (SBSS) is for adult carers and young carers who are providing unpaid care for someone living in Midlothian.

The statement aims to explain:

- What short breaks are?
- Who can access them?
- What short breaks are available in Midlothian and across Scotland?
- How to access short breaks and find further information?

Information about short break opportunities can be found on the [weebreak.com website](http://weebreak.com).

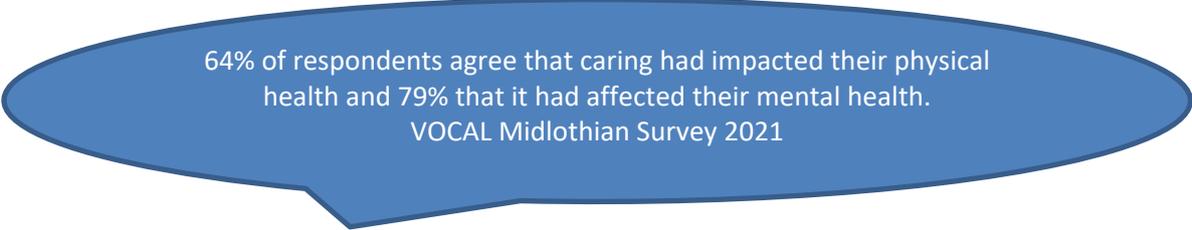
Who is a carer? - The Carers Scotland Act 2016, a 'Carer' is an individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual. An **'Adult Carer'** is a carer who is at least 18 years of age and is not a 'young carer'. A **'Young Carer'** is a carer who is under 18 years of age or is 18 and still in school.



Over half of carers found taking a break hard, citing feelings of stress, guilt and worry.
VOCAL Midlothian Survey 2021

The 2011 census outlined that 9.9% of the Midlothian population were unpaid carers, which was in line with the Scottish national average at the time. Based on an estimate of approximately 94,680 residents, the number of unpaid carers in Midlothian is likely to be in the region of 9,373.

There are estimated to be 29,000 young carers in Scotland, which is 4% of all carers (Scotland's Carers 2019). Specific number of young carers in Midlothian is not currently available within census data, but based on the Scottish average, this would equate to approximately 375 young carers in Midlothian.



64% of respondents agree that caring had impacted their physical health and 79% that it had affected their mental health.
VOCAL Midlothian Survey 2021

The purpose of this Short Break Services Statement is to provide information to unpaid carers and the people they support so that they can identify what a short break means for them, and how they can be supported to meet their needs and achieve the right break for them.

Midlothian Council is committed to supporting unpaid carers and fully appreciates the important role they play in supporting health and social care services in Midlothian. Our commitment to supporting and improving carer's day-to-day lives is set out in our [2022-25 Carer's Strategy](#).

We recognise that caring can be a difficult role, can put a great deal of stress on the carer and the caring relationship and that ***Time off from Caring*** is necessary in order to ensure that the carer can sustain their caring role.

Midlothian has a dedicated short breaks service and website which provides up to date information on the resources and support that is available to help carers get a break from their caring role.

"I have had my bike now for a few months and it has been an absolute joy. This was the first time we have been out together like this, so it meant A LOT"



3. What is a short break?

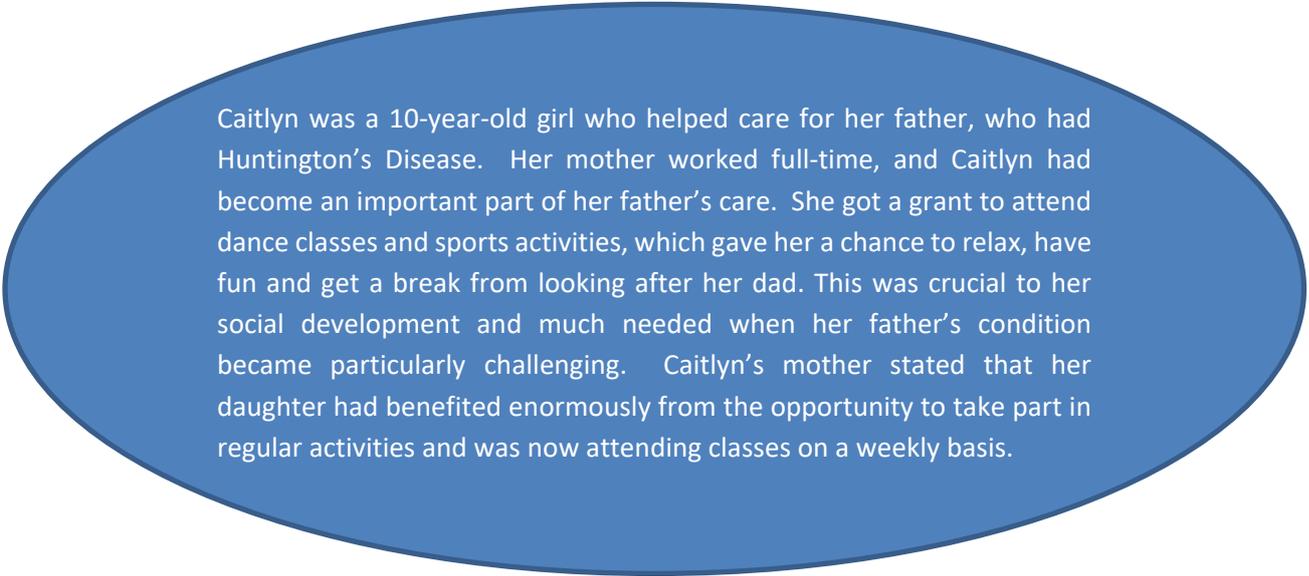
Midlothian Council has adopted the Shared Care Scotland description of what constitutes a Short Break:

“A short break is any form of service or assistance which enables the carer(s) to have periods away from their caring routines or responsibilities”.

The purpose is to support the caring relationship and promote the health and wellbeing of the carer, the supported person, family members and other people affected by the caring situation.

Your breaks from caring may:

- be an informal arrangement, with carers organising their own break from caring and cover for their caring role, if necessary.
- involve support to access grants through the Short Breaks Fund and other charities and trust funds.
- be for short or extended periods of time.
- take place during the day or overnight.
- involve the person with support needs having a break away from home allowing the carer time for themselves.
- allow the carer a break away with replacement care in place, if required.
- take the form of the carer and the person they care for having a break together, with assistance, if necessary, to provide a break from the demands of their daily caring routines.



Caitlyn was a 10-year-old girl who helped care for her father, who had Huntington’s Disease. Her mother worked full-time, and Caitlyn had become an important part of her father’s care. She got a grant to attend dance classes and sports activities, which gave her a chance to relax, have fun and get a break from looking after her dad. This was crucial to her social development and much needed when her father’s condition became particularly challenging. Caitlyn’s mother stated that her daughter had benefited enormously from the opportunity to take part in regular activities and was now attending classes on a weekly basis.

Emergency situations

It is important for people to have access to emergency support if they need replacement care or support at very short notice. To minimise any stress on the carer and the person they support an [Emergency Plan](#) can be prepared in advance to ensure that alternative arrangements can be put in place quickly and efficiently.

4. What difference can a short break make?

Some carers will identify and arrange their own break from caring, while others will benefit from funding or support to achieve the break that is most suited to them. The benefits of a break will be personal to each carer and the person they support, but may result in the following outcomes:

- Having more opportunities to enjoy a life outside/alongside the caring role.
- Feeling better supported.
- Improved confidence (for example, more confident as a carer).
- Increased ability to cope.
- Reduced social isolation and loneliness, for example increasing social circles, connections and activities.
- Increased ability to maintain the caring relationship - and sustain the caring role.
- Improved health and wellbeing.
- Improved quality of life.

These outcomes can be identified as part of a good conversation with a carer support worker or social worker, who will look at the carer's situation as a whole as well as the need for and potential benefit of a short break. These conversations can form part of an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) or a Young Carers Statement (YCS) and act as a written record of the carer's needs, personal goals (personal outcomes) and any support that they may require to fulfil their caring role.

The personal outcomes relating to an ACSP or YCS and the particular benefits of the short break will be reviewed. A member of staff will help the carer to reflect on the impact of their break, as well as identifying any areas of improvement or any outstanding issues that still need to be addressed. Anyone who considers themselves to be an unpaid carer has the right to request and be offered an ACSP or YCS, but these are not always necessary in order to receive support with a short break.

Anyone wishing to complete or find out more about [Adult Carer Support Plan](#) should contact VOCAL Midlothian 0131 663 6869 or Midlothian Health and Social Care Adult Community Care Team on 0131 271 3900 for an initial chat. For information relating to a [Young Carers Statement](#) contact Midlothian Council Young Carers Team on 07880 473876 email on youngcarer@midlothian.gov.uk



5. Types of breaks

Breaks from caring come in many forms and can be planned around the particular needs and circumstances of the carer and the person(s) they care for. Some carers may choose to have a break that allows them to get away for a few days, others may prefer to attend a club, leisure activity or social outing on a more regular basis, while some carers may want to purchase a piece of equipment which will make their caring role easier or more manageable.

Carers are encouraged to think creatively and organise breaks that are most beneficial to them and compliments their caring situation.

Carers can be supported in a range of ways including practical advice and support to secure financial support through the Short Breaks Fund or other charities or trust to plan and design a break that is most suited to their needs.

Carers in Midlothian have been very creative over the past few years and have planned and organised a whole range of different breaks, including the following:

- Individual or family holidays
- Weekends away with friend or cared for
- Spa treatments, massage or alternative therapies.
- Gym membership or participation in leisure and recreation activities.
- A shed to further gardening interests or provide some personal space.
- Equipment to pursue a hobby or activity i.e., computer, musical instrument, fishing rod.
- Driving lessons to enhance and support the caring role.
- Attend a club, outing or play scheme.
- Befriending, buddy support or sitter services.
- There are also a range of opportunities for breaks available through free or discounted holidays, outings and activities and these can be used to allow carers to get a break from caring.

Linda was a 30-year-old lone parent with a 5-year-old son, who was diagnosed with autism, could be unresponsive and had difficulty communicating. She received a package of support through a Scottish Government short breaks fund to allow her son to participate in a range of social and recreational activities on a 1-1 basis with a support worker, which enabled her to go out for a relaxed lunch with her mum and spend some quality time with her daughter. Linda reported a significant improvement in her son's speech and behaviour, and she felt much more relaxed and less isolated in her caring role.

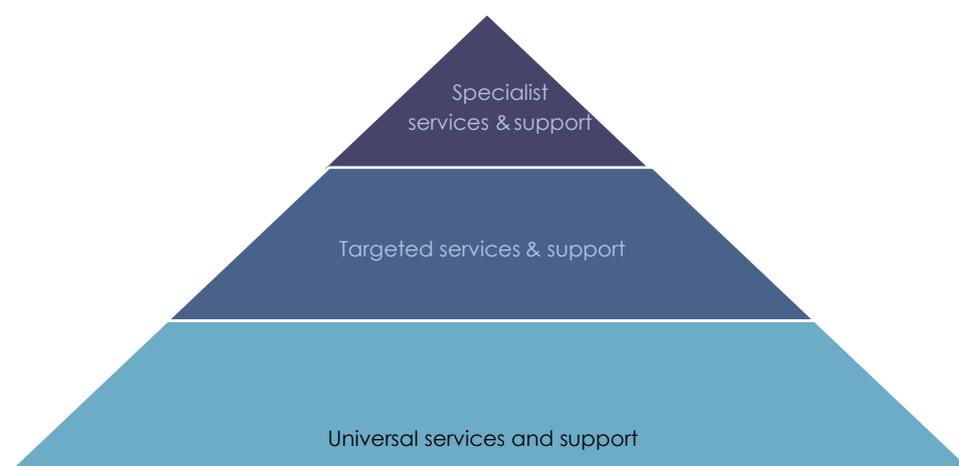
6. How will I know I can access a short break?

Each carer's level of support will be different, dependent upon their personal circumstances. Some carers may be able to access support through informal arrangements or universal services, others may require more targeted support designed to their needs, while those with the highest level of need may require specialist support and funding from the HSCP.

Short breaks should be planned as part of an outcome-focused conversation, which may result in an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement being produced. This will help to identify:

- The impact of caring on your health, wellbeing, employment and ability to socialise.
- Your relationship with the person you care for (or the wider family) and if it is becoming difficult.
- The amount of time spent caring each week.
- How long it has been since you last had a break.
- If you are the only person caring and if you care for more than one person
- Your ability to make arrangements for a short break with support.

When completing an ACSP/YCS eligibility criteria will be used to make sure fair, transparent and consistent decisions are made about the level of support required and who is eligible to receive individualised support.



Universal services are those which are provided to the public generally, including social and leisure opportunities; support groups; neighbourhood networks; local health services and education; peer and family support; community and local youth groups; local carer centre; advocacy; supported self-care; income maximisation or emergency planning.

Targeted support can come in the form of resources, support or funding, which is designed to meet the particular need of the carer and the person(s) they support. This might include a gym access/pass; 1:1 or groups support for health and wellbeing; counselling; mediation services; access to school breakfast club; referral to careers advisor or Communities & Lifelong Learning worker; referral to young carer's support group, as well as short break grants and free/discounted trips and outings.

Specialist services are designed for people whose needs cannot be met through access to universal or targeted support, their outcome needs meet Eligibility Criteria, and may involve direct financial support from the Council. This might include respite/a break from caring; replacement care to allow a break from caring; travel costs; equipment or improvements to the home; support to reduce carer stress, for example funding to enable the carer to pursue an interest which reduces the impact of caring on their relationships.



7. Individualised support

A carer who has 'remaining' needs for support from an ACSP; needs which cannot be provided by access to universal or targeted services (e.g., carer respite) and meet the Carers Eligibility Criteria at critical or substantial levels, may be eligible for a budget for individualised support from the local authority to arrange support through self-directed support (SDS). SDS gives carers options about the level of choice and control they want over their support. If the 'remaining' needs do not meet the eligibility threshold the local authority can decide whether discretionary powers to provide support should be used.

Self-Directed Support budgets may enable support to be purchased or provided in a variety of ways, including residential or non-residential care support options for the cared for person (enabling the carer to have a break), or as a service directly to the carer. Carer respite (residential or non-residential) and direct carer support will usually be non-chargeable dependent on their being 'remaining needs', eligibility criteria being met, as well as costs remaining within any annual budget or allocation. Personal care services are non-chargeable. More information about Midlothian carers eligibility criteria can be found [here](#).

It's best for carers to speak with Midlothian HSCP Council Social Work staff or a carer support practitioner to find out more about the level of individualised support that might be available to them. There is a comprehensive list of examples of the different ways that breaks can be provided or supported through the use of respite care attached as an Appendix to this statement. When an individualised plan is agreed, carers can choose from four options. This includes the following:

Option 1 – you take a direct payment.

The local council will decide how much money can be spent on your support. You take this money and arrange your own support, employ care staff or buy a service from a care organisation. This way you have the most choice and control. You also have the most responsibility for arranging things.

Option 2 – you decide, and the local council arranges support.

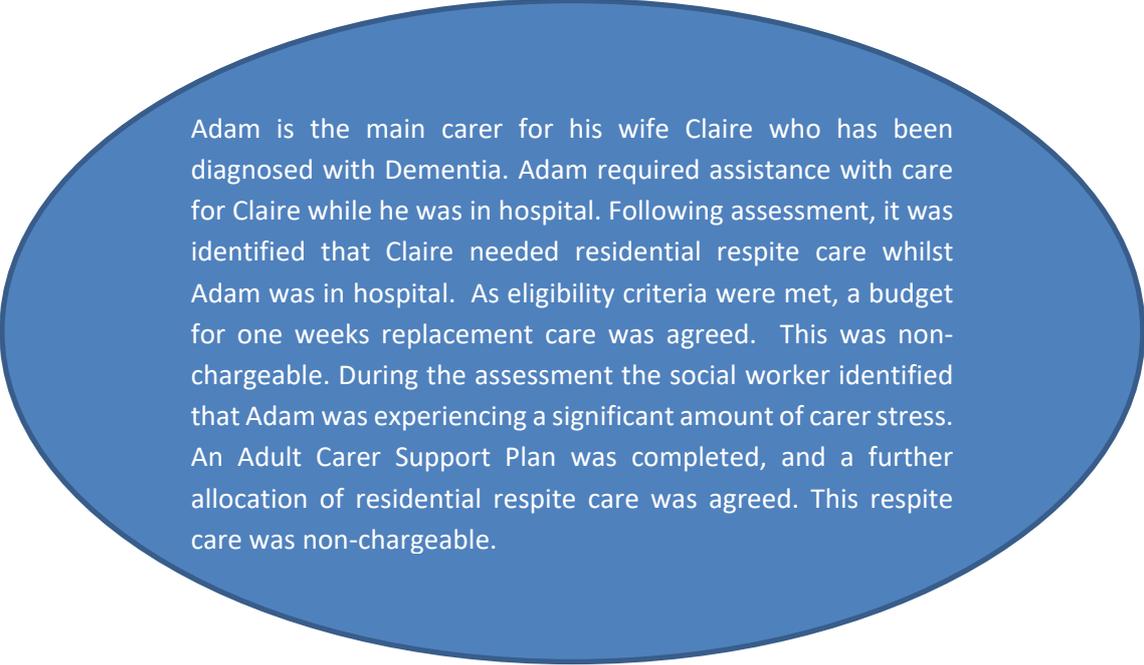
The local council will decide how much money can be spent on your support. You can choose a care organisation that you want to provide your support and the local council will arrange it for you. You and the care organisation can then work to help you achieve the things that are in your support plan. This way you have choice and control, but you do not have to manage the money in your account.

Option 3 – after talking to you, the local council decides and arranges support.

The local council will decide how much money can be spent on your support. You ask the local council to choose and arrange the support that it thinks is right for you. With this Option you have the least responsibility for arranging things, but you also have less choice and control over what support you get.

Option 4 – you use a mixture of ways to arrange your care and support.

Some people will want to control some parts of their care and support but not other parts. Option 4 lets you pick the parts you want to decide about and what parts you want to leave to the council.



Adam is the main carer for his wife Claire who has been diagnosed with Dementia. Adam required assistance with care for Claire while he was in hospital. Following assessment, it was identified that Claire needed residential respite care whilst Adam was in hospital. As eligibility criteria were met, a budget for one weeks replacement care was agreed. This was non-chargeable. During the assessment the social worker identified that Adam was experiencing a significant amount of carer stress. An Adult Carer Support Plan was completed, and a further allocation of residential respite care was agreed. This respite care was non-chargeable.

8. Support available

There are a range of agencies which can provide information about short breaks services and support that is available in Midlothian or further afield. These include the following:



[The Wee Break Midlothian](#) is a joint initiative between VOCAL Carers Centre and Midlothian Council/HSCP. Visit the Wee Breaks website for up-to-date information and news about short breaks services and support in Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland and further afield. Telephone 0131 663 6869



[VOCAL](#) (Voices of Carers Across Lothian) supports and empowers unpaid carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian through individual support, information, training and access to services. Telephone 0131 663 6869



[Midlothian Council website](#) also has information about support for unpaid carers. Anyone wishing to find out more should contact Midlothian Health and Social Care Adult Community Care Team on 0131 271 3900.



Midlothian Council's Young Carers Team support young carers and provide activities and assistance that is personalised to their needs, including targeted group work, preparing young carers statements and support with short break. To contact the team, call 07880 473876 or email youngcarer@midlothian.gov.uk



This [website](#) contains a searchable directory of short breaks. Anyone wishing to list a short break service can log in to do so. The website also provides information on 'Time to Live', a programme of 12-month small grants available to carers in every Local Authority area, along with a database of funding sources for short breaks, including the 'Take a Break' fund. Telephone 01383 622462

9. Feedback and further information

Feedback - This statement will be reviewed in collaboration with VOCAL Midlothian to ensure that the information contained within the document is relevant and up to date.

We will have ongoing engagement with carers, the people they care for and agencies that provide support in order to ensure that everybody's voice is heard and short break services in Midlothian continue to develop.

This will be done through regular meetings of the Carer Action Midlothian (CAM) and also a bi-annual carers survey, which will give carers the opportunity to influence and shape carer services in Midlothian.



Further Information - If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything within this statement in more detail please contact:

VOCAL Midlothian Carers Centre
30/1 Hardengreen Estate
Dalhousie Road
Dalkeith
EH22 3NX
Telephone: 0131 663 6869
Email: info@vocal.org.uk

Carers Planning Officer
Fairfield House
Lothian Road
Dalkeith
EH22 3AA
Email:
Shelagh.Swithenbank@midlothian.gov.uk

10. Appendices/useful links

Appendix 1

Examples of respite care arrangements:

Alternative breaks - Increasingly, with the development of Self-Directed Support and small grants, more people are finding creative ways to take a break that don't necessarily involve external services. For example, they might get another family member, friend or neighbour to provide some replacement care to enable them to attend a social event, activity or go away for a short period of time. You can read some example '[Short Break Stories](#)' .

Supported access to clubs, interest or activity groups - These opportunities might focus on a particular activity (e.g., sports clubs, leisure activities) and may be based in a community building. These generally take place over a few hours perhaps once or twice a week or, in the case of disabled children, they may be planned over the school holidays. The availability of adapted equipment or trained workers can help people with support needs to enjoy these activities. Click here for examples from the [Shared Care Scotland Directory](#).

Befriending schemes where volunteers provide short breaks - Befriending involves a paid worker or volunteer assisting someone with care and support needs to have access to activities, for example going to the cinema, meeting friends, shopping, swimming and other such leisure pursuits. Befriending can be on a one-to-one basis or as part of a group. Click here for examples from the [Shared Care Scotland Directory](#).

Holiday breaks - Opportunities for people to have a short break together, or independently. These breaks can be supported in different ways – through an agency specialising in breaks for people with particular needs; in adapted accommodation; or in ordinary hotels and guest houses, perhaps with additional equipment. More mainstream breaks may also be possible with the support of a paid carer or companion. Click here for examples from the [Shared Care Scotland Directory](#).

Breaks in specialist/dedicated accommodation - The accommodation, which is only used for short breaks, might be guest houses, community flats, purpose-built or adapted accommodation. Depending on the group catered for, facilities may be able to offer specialist care. Click here for examples from the [Shared Care Scotland Directory](#).

Day care - Day care is typically based in a community building and provided by a local authority or voluntary organisation. The degree of flexibility varies; most have fixed opening hours on particular days; some offer a drop-in service whereby people can attend for part of the day only. Day care is not generally provided for short break or respite purposes but services which offer more flexible arrangements, designed around the needs of both the client and carer, can achieve this purpose.

Breaks provided at home through a care attendant or sitting service - This includes individual support provided in the home of the cared-for person for periods of a few hours or overnight. The purpose may be to provide support while the carer is away, or to support the carer in

other ways, e.g., by enabling the carer to have an undisturbed night's sleep. Click here for examples from the [Shared Care Scotland Directory](#).

Hospital/hospice-based break - This type of break is for people who need medical supervision because of complex or intense health care needs. Some facilities are designed in such a way to create a more homely environment with guest bedrooms, lounges and activity programmes. Some short-term hospital-based care provides a break for the carer.

Breaks in care homes (with or without nursing care) - Some care homes may offer respite beds if they have available rooms. Any care home should provide activities for short-term guests to meet their interests as well as meeting their individual needs. Click here for examples from the [Shared Care Scotland Directory](#).

Useful Links:

[Midlothian Council Self Directed Support Carers Charter](#)

November 2023