



Disability Services

Information Sheet

Carers

Who are Carers?

Carers are people who give ongoing unpaid care and support to someone else who has a disability, is frail aged, or who lives with chronic mental or physical illness. A Carer may be a family member or friend.

What do Carers do?

The *Carers Recognition Act 2005* and the Carers Charter are key steps in recognising carers in their own right and for their valuable role in caring for others.

Carers support a person to undertake activities that they may not be able to do by themselves. Carers might help a person with their personal care needs or to attend appointments or social events. They often provide vital companionship to the person, who may otherwise become isolated from their friends and local community. Carers may carry out housework including cleaning, laundering, shopping and bill-paying.

The SA Carers Charter states that:

- ▶ Carers have choices within their caring role
- ▶ Carers' health and wellbeing are critical to the community
- ▶ Carers play a critical role in maintaining the fabric of society
- ▶ Service providers work in partnership with carers
- ▶ Carers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need specific consideration
- ▶ All children and young people have the right to enjoy life and reach their potential
- ▶ Resources are available to provide timely, appropriate and adequate assistance to carers.

Young Carers

A young carer is a carer under the age of 25 years.

If you would like to access information about young carer programs and services, call Carers SA on 1800 815 549 or you can find more information on the web at:

www.carersaustralia.com.au.

Carers SA can also send you a Young Carer Kit.



Other resources for Young Carers:

- ▶ Reach Out has a section on 'Being a Young Carer'. This informs you of your rights, suggests how you can look after yourself and also has a number of informative fact sheets: www.reachout.com.au
- ▶ The Young Carers website includes information on dealing with stress, keeping up with schoolwork and getting enough support: www.youngcarers.net.au
- ▶ Children of Mentally Ill Consumers (COMIC) provides education and resources, public speakers and links to other support services and support groups: www.howstat.com/comic or call 8221 5160
- ▶ Kids Helpline is a free, 24-hour, confidential counselling service specifically for young people aged 5 to 25: www.kidshelp.com.au or Freecall 1800 55 1800.

Ageing Carers

An ageing carer is a carer who is over the age of 65 years or, for Indigenous carers, over the age of 50 years.

Many ageing carers have found their caring role to be a long-term commitment, sometimes lasting decades. This length of caring can cause difficulties for ageing carers: physically, financially, socially and emotionally. At a time when others are enjoying retirement, ageing carers may feel anxious about what will happen to the person they support, once they themselves require assistance. Disability Services makes it a priority to assist ageing carers of people with disabilities.

Many other agencies are available to support Ageing carers, including:

- ▶ **Carers SA**
58 King William Road
Goodwood SA 5034
Telephone: 8271 6288 or 1800 815 549
www.carersaustralia.com.au
- ▶ **Seniors Information Service**
Ground Floor, 76 Waymouth Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Telephone: 8168 8776
www.seniors.asn.au
- ▶ **Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing**
Telephone: 1800 020 103
www.health.gov.au
- ▶ **Active Ageing Australia**
73 Wakefield St
Adelaide SA 5000
Telephone: 8232 9077
www.activeageingsa.net.au

Taking some time out: Respite

Carers are often dependent on family and personal networks to take time out to do many of the things most people take for granted.

The benefits of using respite

Respite gives carers a break from their daily routine, the opportunity to relax, revitalise and build up the personal resources necessary to resume their support role.

Initially, the benefits of using respite may not be obvious. It takes time for many carers to adjust and to feel able to relax and unwind.

Respite can also provide positive outcomes for the person who is supported by a carer, by providing different experiences and the opportunity to develop new contacts and a broader range of friendships.

Respite providers

For more information on respite (including eligibility criteria) contact your local Disability Services office or call Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on Freecall: 1800 052 222*. Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres are information centres for older people, people with disability and those who provide care and services. Free, confidential information is given on local support services.

See also the Disability Services information sheet: *Respite Care*.

Payments and Allowances for Carers

Centrelink assists carers by providing various payments and allowances.

Carer Allowance

Centrelink provides a Carer Allowance for a carer looking after someone who is:

- ▶ An aged or frail adult
- ▶ An adult or child who requires a lot of additional care in the home that they share with their carer.

The allowance will only be paid if the carer is giving a minimum of 20 hours per week daily personal support. The Carer Allowance gives the carer additional income because they cannot work full-time.

Carer Payment

A Carer Payment is paid by Centrelink to a carer who is providing constant care for a person with a severe disability or medical condition. The Carer Payment is the same amount as the Disability or Aged Pension and is paid to the carer because their caring duties mean they are unable to do any paid work.

Pensioner Education Supplement

This payment is given by Centrelink to people who receive the Disability Pension or Carer Payment and who are studying an approved course (full-time or part-time).

Please note that Centrelink information may change. For current information call Centrelink on 132 717.

Who supports Carers?

Community and Home Support SA – Disability Services

Disability Services has a number of programs to assist carers. Telephone 1300 786 117 for the cost of a local call or email: disabilityinfo@dfc.sa.gov.au.

Carers SA

Carers SA is the peak organisation representing all carers in South Australia. Freecall 1800 815 549* or you can find more information on the web at: www.carersaustralia.com.au.

Carers SA Carer Advisory and Counselling Service

Carers SA Carer Advisory and Counselling Service provides information and referrals to the National Carer Counselling Program which offers professional counselling on issues that are specific to carers such as depression, stress, grief, loss and coping skills. Freecall: 1800 242 636* or you can find more information on the web at: www.carersaustralia.com.au.

UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide: Carers Mediation and Counselling Service

The Carers Mediation and Counselling Service is a free service that assists families who have a family member with a long-term disability (including mental illness) and who qualify for Commonwealth or State Government Disability Support. Services include counselling, family mediation, and group support programs. Telephone 8150 7213 or email: cmacs@ucwesleyadelaide.org.au.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres are information centres for older people, people with disability and those who provide care and services. Free, confidential information is given on local support services. Freecall: 1800 052 222* or you can find more information on the web at: www9.health.gov.au/ccsd.

Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC)

EOC has information on caring responsibilities, identifying potential discrimination against carers plus a fact sheet on caring responsibilities. www.eoc.sa.gov.au/eo-you/what-discrimination/types-discrimination/caring-responsibilities

Lifeline

Lifeline is available 24-hours a day, seven days a week, to provide emotional and crisis support and to link people with care. Telephone: 13 11 14

Kids Help Line

Kids Help Line is a free, confidential and anonymous counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25. Freecall: 1800 55 1800*

**charges apply for calls made from mobile phones.*

