



COMING HOME GUIDE

Adult Carer Support Plan: help for you, as a carer in Scotland

A family guide
For Scotland

Version 1 • October 2026. Next review: April 2027

About this guide

This guide is correct at October 2026, version 1. We've written it in good faith as general guidance to help carers and families. It isn't legal, financial or medical advice. Rules and rates change, so before you act, please make sure you have the latest version of this guide and look at the official sources: GOV.UK, Social Security Scotland, nidirect and your local council. To the extent the law allows, we can't accept liability for any errors or omissions, or for decisions made on the strength of this guide. In a medical emergency call 999. For urgent advice, contact NHS 111.

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How to use this guide

Version 1. October 2026. Next review: April 2027. Information read on 4 October 2026. We review this guide every April, and straight away if the law or the official guidance changes in Scotland.

Who this guide is for: you, if you look after someone in Scotland and caring is affecting your own life. It might be your mum or dad, your partner, your child, a brother or sister, or a friend. You don't have to live with them, you don't have to care for a set number of hours, and you don't have to call yourself a carer. This guide explains the Adult Carer Support Plan: your right to one, how to ask, how to get ready, and what can happen next. It's for Scotland only. If the person you look after lives in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, see [our guide to the carer's assessment](#).

How to use it: read only the part you need. Sections 1 to 3 explain what the plan is, who can have one and how to ask. Sections 4 to 7 help you get ready, with a list and a letter you can copy. Sections 8 to 12 cover support, breaks, reviews, disagreeing and your rights in the Carers' Charter. Every fact has a source and a date, and the full list is in "Sources" at the back.

Guidance, not advice. This guide explains how Adult Carer Support Plans work, in plain words. It can't tell you what support you'll be offered. Only the council can decide that. For advice about your own situation, talk to your local carers' centre or one of the free advice services in section 14.

If you're worried about their health, contact their GP or NHS 111. In an emergency call 999.

01

What an Adult Carer Support Plan is



An **Adult Carer Support Plan** is a written plan, made with you by your council, about **you** as a carer. It sets out what matters to you (the law calls these your "personal outcomes"), the support you need, and the support the council will give you (legislation.gov.uk, [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016, section 6](#)).

mygov.scot says the plan is a written record of (mygov.scot, [Get an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement](#), updated 12 Sep 2025):

- your caring role
- your physical, mental and emotional needs
- whether you're able or willing to carry on caring
- what services the council will provide to you
- an emergency care plan, for example who'll provide care if you're ill

It's the Scottish version of what England, Wales and Northern Ireland call a carer's assessment. It's about you, and it's separate from any assessment of the person you look after.

02

Who can have one



You count as a carer

Under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, you're a carer if you provide, or intend to provide, care for another person. It doesn't count if you care as your job, under a contract, or as voluntary work ([legislation.gov.uk](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/10/section-1), [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016, section 1](#)).

The Scottish Government's Carers' Charter says you can be caring for someone for **any number of hours**. You don't need to give a substantial amount of care on a regular basis ([Scottish Government, Carers' Charter, chapter 1, published 23 Mar 2018](#)). "Intend to provide" means you can ask before caring starts, for example when someone is about to come home from hospital.

Adult carers and young carers

- **Adult carers** are carers aged 18 or over who have left school. They have the right to an Adult Carer Support Plan (Carers' Charter, chapter 1).
- **Young carers** are under 18, or 18 and still at school. They have the right to a **Young Carer Statement** instead. A Young Carer Statement carries on after age 18 until an Adult Carer Support Plan is made ([Scottish Government, Carers' Charter, chapter 3](#)). See [our guide to looking after yourself, section 5](#).
- **Kinship carers** of a child can count as carers too, as long as the care isn't simply because of the child's age (Carers' Charter, chapter 1).

The council's duty

If the council thinks you're an adult carer, it **must offer** you an Adult Carer Support Plan. If you ask for one, it **must** prepare one (Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 6(2) to (4)). There's no test of your income or savings to get a plan.

The council responsible is the one **where the person you look after lives**, even if you live somewhere else ([Scottish Government, Carers' Charter, chapter 2](#)).



03

How to ask

- **Ask the council's social work or social care department, or your local carers' centre** (mygov.scot, Get an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement). In many areas, the council asks the carers' centre to do the plan for it (Carers' Charter, chapter 2).
- **Ask in writing** if you can, so there's a record. Section 7 has a letter you can copy.
- **If they're in hospital**, tell the ward you're the carer. The health board must tell you about the plan to discharge them as soon as reasonably practicable, ask for your views, and take them into account (legislation.gov.uk, [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016, section 28](#)). See [our guide to coming home from hospital, section 3](#).
- **If they're terminally ill**, say so when you ask. The council must have its first full conversation with you within 5 working days of you asking or accepting, or on another date you ask for that suits the council. In that first conversation it must look at anything you need straight away (legislation.gov.uk, [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016 \(Adult Carers and Young Carers of Terminally Ill Persons: Timescales for Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements etc.\) Regulations 2021, regulations 3 and 4](#)).

For everyone else, there's no set timescale in force yet. The Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 says Scottish Ministers must set one in regulations, and that part of the law has been in force since 7 January 2026, but no timescales had been made by 4 October 2026 (Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 6(5A); legislation.gov.uk, [Care Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025 \(Commencement No. 1\) Regulations 2025](#)). If you're waiting a long time, ask the council when to expect it.

04

What the plan covers

The law says your plan must include information about (Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 9; legislation.gov.uk, section 9):

- the care you give, how much of it, and how caring affects your wellbeing and day-to-day life
- how far you're **able** and **willing** to give care
- whether there are arrangements for care in an emergency, and for the future
- the personal outcomes that matter to you
- the support you need, or that you don't need any
- support available locally for carers and the person you look after
- support where you live, if that's a different council area
- what support the council will give you, whether or not your needs meet its local eligibility criteria (see section 8 of this guide)
- whether support should take the form of a **break from caring**
- when the plan will be reviewed

The council must also think about how any protected characteristic you have, such as age, disability, race, religion or sex, affects you as a carer (legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 8).

You don't have to keep caring. Being asked whether you're willing to carry on is part of the law. You can say what you can do, and what you can't.

05

Getting ready

You don't need to prepare much, but a few notes help.

- ☐ Write down what a usual day and night look like, including the things nobody sees
- ☐ Note how often you're woken at night, and how much sleep you get
- ☐ Note how caring affects your own health, physical and mental
- ☐ Write down what happens with your job, studies or plans to work
- ☐ List the things you've given up or can't do any more
- ☐ Note who else helps, and how often
- ☐ Think about what would happen if you were ill or couldn't carry on, so you can make an emergency plan
- ☐ Think about the future: what you'd want if their needs grow
- ☐ Decide what would make the biggest difference to you, including time off
- ☐ Decide who you'd like with you, if anyone

06

The conversation



- **Who does it.** Someone from the council, or an organisation such as a carers' centre doing it for the council. They'll agree with you when and how the conversation happens (Carers' Charter, chapter 2).
- **How it's done.** mygov.scot says they'll speak to you and may visit you to understand your situation (mygov.scot, Get an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement).
- **You're part of it.** The council must involve you in working out your needs and how support is given ([Scottish Government, Carers' Charter, chapter 5](#)).
- **Bring someone.** A friend, a relative, or someone from your carers' centre. Independent advocacy can help you have your say; ask your council or carers' centre what's available locally.
- **Say how things really are.** Talk about a hard week, not a good day.

07

A letter you can copy

Copy this into an email or letter to the council's social work department, or your local carers' centre. Change the words in square brackets.

Subject: Request for an Adult Carer Support Plan

Dear social work team,

I'm writing to ask for an Adult Carer Support Plan under section 6 of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

I look after [name], who is my [mum, dad, partner, brother, sister or other] and lives at [address]. I help with [for example, meals, medicines, appointments and being there at night]. Caring is affecting [for example, my sleep, my health, my job].

[Optional: [Name] is terminally ill, so I understand the first conversation should take place within 5 working days.]

Please tell me when and how the conversation will happen, and who will contact me. Please send me a written copy of my plan afterwards.

The best way to contact me is [phone or email]. The best times are [times].

Thank you,

[Your name]

[Your address]

[Date]

Keep a copy, and write down the date you sent it.



08

Local eligibility criteria and support

Each council sets its own rules. In Scotland there's no single national threshold. Each council must set **local eligibility criteria**, after consulting carers, and use them to decide which of your needs it must meet (legislation.gov.uk, [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016, section 21](#)). Ask your council for a copy of its criteria, or look for them on its website.

If your needs meet the criteria, and they can't be met by services for the person you look after or by services open to everyone locally, the council **must** give you support to meet them (legislation.gov.uk, [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016, section 24](#)). This should be done in a way that gives you as much choice and control as you'd like ([Scottish Government, Carers' Charter, chapter 4](#)). That includes the options for Self-directed Support, such as a direct payment. See [our guide to arranging care, section 4](#).

If your needs don't meet the criteria, the council can still give you support. That might be information and advice, or support in your community (section 24(4)(b); [Carers' Charter, chapter 4](#)).

Breaks. When the council decides what support to give, it must think about whether it should include a break from caring. Breaks can be regular or now and then, of different lengths, and the council must bear in mind that planned breaks are best (legislation.gov.uk, [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016, section 25](#)). Section 10 explains a new right to breaks that isn't in force yet.

No charge for your support. The council must not charge you for support it gives you under section 24 of the Carers Act (legislation.gov.uk, [Carers \(Waiving of Charges for Support\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2014, regulation 2](#)). Care given to the person you look after, for example while you have a break, can come under their own care arrangements, so ask the council how it works.



09

Your copy, reviews and changes

A written copy. The council must give you the information in your plan as soon as practicable, and give it to anyone else you ask it to ([legislation.gov.uk](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/11/section-11), [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016, section 11](#)).

Reviews. Your plan must be reviewed if ([legislation.gov.uk](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/11/section-11), [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016 \(Review of Adult Carer Support Plan and Young Carer Statement\) Regulations 2018, regulation 2](#)):

- you move to a different council area
- the person you look after moves into a care home or other accommodation arranged by the council
- anything else changes that the council thinks makes a real difference to the care you give

If things change, for example they need more care, your own health changes or your job changes, ask the council for a review.

10

The right to breaks: coming, not yet in force



The Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 adds a new **right to breaks** to the Carers Act. When it starts, the council must count being able to take sufficient breaks as one of your personal outcomes, and give support if you can't take them (legislation.gov.uk, [Care Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025, section 8](#)).

On 4 October 2026, this part of the law was **not yet in force**. The Scottish Government consulted on how it should work until 22 May 2026, and says incoming Ministers will decide the details and the start date after the 2026 Scottish elections ([Scottish Government, Unpaid carers: right to breaks and timescales for support plans, consultation, 27 Feb 2026](#)). We'll update this guide when it starts. Until then, the duty to think about breaks, explained in section 8 of this guide, still applies. See [our guide to looking after yourself, section 3](#).

Shared Care Scotland, a charity, has information about short breaks ([Care Information Scotland, Support for carers, updated 6 Jul 2021](#)).

11

If you disagree



If you disagree with your plan, the support offered, or how things were done, you can complain:

1. **Talk to the council first.** Ask for the reasons in writing. Sometimes a review sorts it out.
2. **Make a complaint.** Most public services in Scotland use a two-stage complaints procedure. At stage one they'll try to sort it out within 5 working days. At stage two they look in more detail, and you should get a final decision within 20 working days, unless there's a good reason for needing longer ([SPSO, How to complain about a public service](#)).
3. **Go to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)** if you're still not happy. It's free and independent, and it's the final stage for complaints about councils, including social work services. You normally need to go to the SPSO within 12 months of becoming aware of the problem ([SPSO, How to complain about a social work service](#)). Call free on 0800 377 7330, or complain online ([SPSO, Contact us](#)).

The Public Service Ombudsman (called the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman until 1 October 2026) doesn't deal with Scottish councils. In Scotland, the SPSO does.

12

Your rights in the Carers' Charter

The Scottish Government's **Carers' Charter** sets out your rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 in plain words ([Scottish Government, Carers' Charter, published 23 Mar 2018](#)). In short, you have the right to:

- an Adult Carer Support Plan, or a Young Carer Statement for young carers
- support to meet needs that meet your council's local eligibility criteria
- be involved in working out your needs and how support is given
- have your views taken into account when the council looks at the needs of the person you look after
- be involved in planning carer services in your area
- be involved when the person you look after leaves hospital

It's worth keeping a copy, or the link, to hand when you talk to the council.

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How Coming Home can help



Coming Home: Family Care is an iPhone app for families looking after someone. It's coming soon. It helps you organise. It isn't financial, legal or medical advice, and it doesn't replace the council, your carers' centre or the person who prepares your plan.

The care circle brings the family, friends and neighbours who help into one place, with shared notes, tasks and a calendar. It can show who does what, which helps when you explain your week and make an emergency plan.

The family care diary helps you note what you did and when, which can help you get ready for your plan or a review.

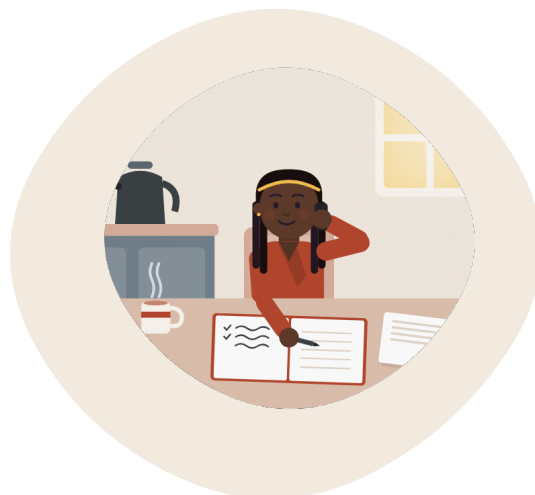
To hear when Coming Home is ready, join the waitlist:

www.cominghomecare.app/?ref=guide-carer-support-plan

Built by people who know home care.

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Who to call



- **Your council's social work or social care department**, to ask for a plan. mygov.scot lists every council's contact details (mygov.scot, Get an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement).
- **Your local carers' centre**, for a plan, information, advice and support. Care Information Scotland says carers' centres are the main source of local information and advice (Care Information Scotland, Support for carers).
- **Care Information Scotland**: 0800 011 3200, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. It can tell you about support groups in your area (Care Information Scotland, Support for carers).
- **Carers UK Helpline**: 0808 808 7777, for carers in all four nations (**Carers UK, Helpline and other support**). Carers Scotland is part of Carers UK.
- **Age Scotland Helpline**: 0800 12 44 222, for older people and their carers (**Age Scotland, Helpline**).
- **MECOPP**, a charity that supports Black and minority ethnic carers in Scotland (Care Information Scotland, Support for carers).
- **SPSO**: 0800 377 7330, if a complaint isn't sorted out (SPSO, Contact us).

If you're worried about their health, contact their GP or NHS 111. In an emergency call 999.

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Sources

All read on 4 October 2026 unless another date is given. Dates in brackets are the page's own published, updated or reviewed date.

Scotland: the law

- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 1:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/1
- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 6:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/6
- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 8:
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- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 9:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/9
- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 11:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/11
- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 21:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/21
- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 24:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/24
- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 25:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/25
- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, section 28:
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/28

- legislation.gov.uk, Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 (Adult Carers and Young Carers of Terminally Ill Persons: Timescales for Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements etc.) Regulations 2021, regulation 4:
www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/133/regulation/4/made
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www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/65/regulation/2
- legislation.gov.uk, Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025, section 8 (not yet in force): www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2025/9/section/8
- legislation.gov.uk, Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 (Commencement No. 1) Regulations 2025: www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2025/388/made

Scotland: government and official information

- Scottish Government, Carers' Charter, chapters 1 to 5 (published 23 Mar 2018): www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter/pages/2/
- Scottish Government, Unpaid carers: right to breaks and timescales for support plans, consultation (27 Feb 2026): www.gov.scot/publications/right-breaks-timescales-support-plans-unpaid-carers/
- mygov.scot, Get an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement (updated 12 Sep 2025): www.mygov.scot/help-for-carer/carers-support-plan
- Care Information Scotland, Support for carers (updated 6 Jul 2021): www.careinfoscotland.scot/topics/support-for-carers/

Complaints

- SPSO, How to complain about a public service:
www.spsso.org.uk/how-to-complain-about-public-service
- SPSO, How to complain about a social work service (leaflet):
www.spsso.org.uk/sites/spso/files/leaflets/InfoSocialWork.pdf
- SPSO, Contact us: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Helplines

- Carers UK, Helpline and other support:
www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/helpline-and-other-support/
- Age Scotland, Helpline: www.agescotland.org.uk/how-we-help/helpline

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Changelog

Version	Date	What changed	Why
1	October 2026	First published	Information read on 4 October 2026

The next review is due in April 2027, or straight away if the law or guidance changes, including when the right to breaks starts. The latest version is always at www.cominghomecare.app/guides/carers-assessment-scotland



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