



COMING HOME GUIDE

Sharing the caring: a family guide for brothers, sisters and everyone who helps

A family guide

For England, with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

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 any nation.

Who this guide is for: brothers, sisters, partners, grandchildren, friends and neighbours who share the care of someone, or want to. It covers starting with what the person wants, holding a family meeting, making a rota, money and fairness, the rule that only one person can claim Carer's Allowance for someone, and what to do when it goes wrong. It covers England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

How to use it: read section 1 first, then the parts that fit your family. Section 5 has a weekly rota to fill in. Every fact has a source and a date, and the full list is in "Sources" at the back.

Guidance, not advice. This guide explains the rules in plain words. It can't take everything into account. For advice on your situation, contact Carers UK, Citizens Advice, Age UK or Independent Age (section 12).

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

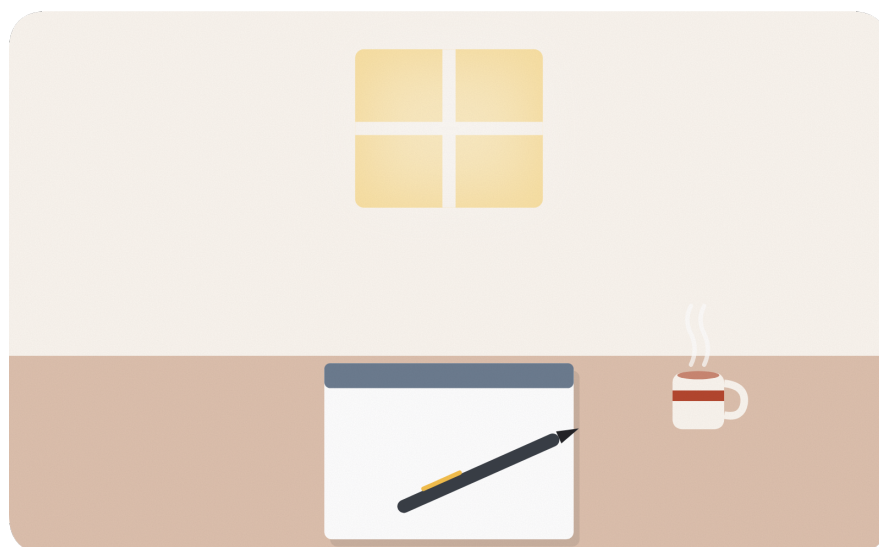
01

Sharing rarely means equal

In most families, caring falls more on one person: whoever lives nearest, has fewer other demands, or simply started first. Others may live far away, work long hours or have young children. That's ordinary family life, but it can build up into tiredness on one side and guilt or distance on the other.

Sharing the caring doesn't mean splitting every job down the middle. It means:

- everyone knows what's needed
- everyone does something that fits their life
- the person doing most gets real breaks
- decisions are made together, with the person being cared for at the centre



02

Start with what they want



Before the family plans anything, ask the person you care for what matters to them. Who would they like help from? What would they rather keep doing for themselves? Are there things they'd find awkward to have a son, daughter or grandchild help with?

If they can make their own decisions, the decisions are theirs, even when the family disagrees. If they're finding decisions harder, involve them as much as you can. Our power of attorney guide explains how someone can choose now who will decide for them later ([Coming Home, Power of attorney](#)).

03

A family meeting

A planned conversation usually goes better than a row in a hospital corridor. It can be round a kitchen table, on a video call or both.

Before the meeting:

- Agree a time that works for the people who live furthest away.
- Ask the person you care for whether they'd like to be there. Usually they should be.
- Write a short list of what you want to talk about, and share it in advance.

Things to talk about:

- ☐ what help is needed now, day by day and week by week
- ☐ what each person can offer, honestly, including time, travel and money
- ☐ who will be the main contact for the GP, the council and any care agency
- ☐ how you'll share news, for example a weekly message or call
- ☐ how the main carer will get regular breaks
- ☐ money: what's being spent, by whom, and how it's recorded (section 6)
- ☐ what happens in an emergency, and who's on call
- ☐ when you'll meet again to see how it's going

During the meeting, let everyone speak, including those who can't do much. Listen for what's behind a "no": it might be work, money, health or something harder. Write down what you agree and send it round afterwards.

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Who does what



Caring is many jobs. Some need someone close by, but many can be done from anywhere.

Close by	From anywhere
Visits, meals and company	Phone calls to the GP surgery, council and agencies
Lifts to appointments	Ordering repeat prescriptions online, where the surgery allows
Staying over after a hospital stay	Bills, benefits forms and paperwork
Shopping and errands	Researching care options and help
Being on call for emergencies	Regular calls to keep them company
Giving the main carer a break	Paying for help, if you can and want to

If you live far away, our guide to caring from a distance has more ideas ([Coming Home, Caring from a distance](#)).

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Your rota

A shared rota shows who's doing what each day, and makes gaps easy to see. Fill this one in together, and keep a copy where everyone can see it. This is the same rota as in our caring from a distance guide.

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Who's on call
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Tips for a rota that lasts:

- Build in time off for the main carer, not just cover when things go wrong.
- Include jobs done from a distance, so everyone's part is seen.
- Review it every month, and after any big change, such as a hospital stay.

06

Money and fairness

Money is often where families fall out. Being open early helps.

Costs of caring. Travel, food, parking and phone bills add up. Agree who pays for what, and whether anyone should be paid back. Keep receipts.

Your parent's money. If someone helps run your parent's money, everyone should know how, and records should be kept. If a family member is a property and financial affairs attorney under a lasting power of attorney, GOV.UK says they must act in the person's best interests, keep the person's money separate from their own (unless they already share an account), and keep records of the person's assets, income and spending. They can claim only expenses needed to carry out the role, such as travel and phone calls, and must keep receipts ([GOV.UK, Manage a lasting power of attorney, updated 29 Oct 2024](#)).

Gifts. Unless the lasting power of attorney says otherwise, an attorney can give gifts only on occasions such as birthdays, and must make sure the person can afford them. Other gifts, such as letting someone live in the person's home without paying market rent, need the Court of Protection's approval (GOV.UK, [Manage a lasting power of attorney](#)). Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own rules. Our power of attorney guide has the details for each nation.

Paying a family member to care. Paying a relative from your parent's money can affect benefits, tax and any care funding. Talk about it openly first, and get advice from the Carers UK Helpline or Citizens Advice before you agree anything (section 12).

If you're worried about how money is being handled, talk to the person first if it's safe to. In England and Wales, you can report a concern about an attorney or deputy to the Office of the Public Guardian ([GOV.UK, Report a concern about an attorney, deputy or guardian](#)). That page also links to the services for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

07

Carer's Allowance: only one of you can claim

Only one person can get Carer's Allowance for the same person. GOV.UK says you can't get it if you share the care of someone and the other carer already gets Carer's Allowance, Carer Support Payment or the carer element of Universal Credit for them. If you want to claim instead, speak to the other carer about changing their benefits. If they don't want to, you can still apply, and the Department for Work and Pensions decides who gets it ([GOV.UK, Carer's Allowance: eligibility](#)).

To get Carer's Allowance, you must spend at least 35 hours a week caring for the person ([GOV.UK, Carer's Allowance: eligibility](#)). So it usually makes sense for the person who does most of the caring to claim, but talk it through: the earnings limit and other benefits matter too. Our Carer's Allowance guide explains the rules ([Coming Home, Carer's Allowance](#)).

- **In Scotland**, Carer Support Payment has the same one-carer rule ([Coming Home, Carer Support Payment](#)).
- **In Northern Ireland**, nidirect lists "someone else who cares for the same person claiming Carer's Allowance instead of you" as a change you must report ([nidirect, Carer's Allowance](#)).
- **Before anyone claims**, ask an adviser whether it would affect the benefits of the person you care for. Our Carer's Allowance guide explains why.

Carer's assessments. Each carer can ask the council for their own carer's assessment, not just the main carer ([Coming Home, Carer's assessment](#)).

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Talking to services

- **Choose a main contact** for the GP surgery, the council and any care agency, so messages don't get lost. Tell each service who it is.
- **Agree what's shared.** With the person's agreement, the main contact can pass on updates to the rest of the family.
- **Write things down:** visits, phone calls, what was said and any changes. It helps when someone new steps in.
- **If they go into hospital,** our hospital discharge guide explains how to coordinate the family ([Coming Home, Hospital discharge](#)).

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When it goes wrong



Even close families fall out over caring. Common flashpoints are one person feeling left with everything, disagreements about care homes or money, and old family tensions coming back.

Some things that help:

1. **Say how you feel, early**, before resentment builds. "I'm exhausted and I need two evenings a week off" is easier to hear than years of silence.
2. **Stick to what's needed**, not who's to blame.
3. **Bring in someone neutral**. A carers' centre worker, a social worker or an adviser can help a family meeting stay calm.
4. **Ask for a carer's assessment** for the person doing most. It can look at breaks and support, and it puts their needs on record.
5. **Accept that some people won't help**. You can't make a brother or sister care. Put your energy into the help you can get, including from the council.
6. **Get advice** if the disagreement is about money, a power of attorney or where someone should live.

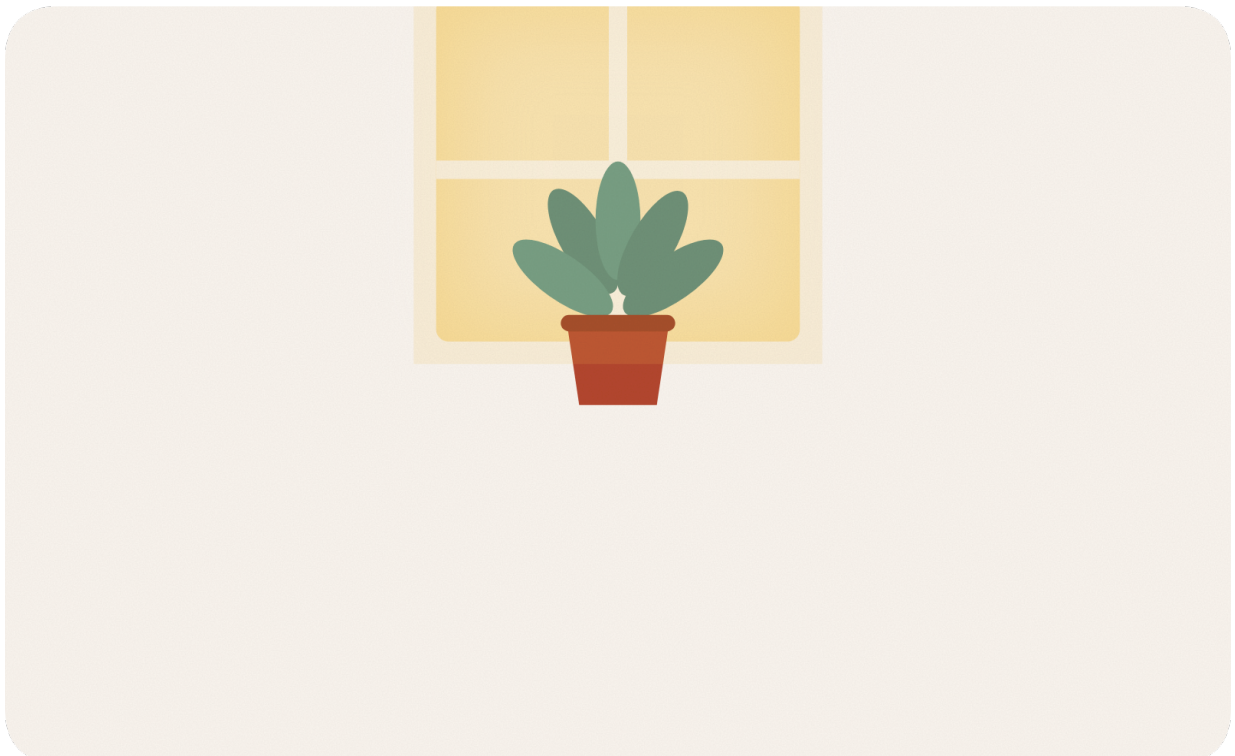
If you think the person you care for is being harmed or neglected, by anyone, contact the council's adult social care team (the Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland). If they're in danger, call 999.

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Look after each other

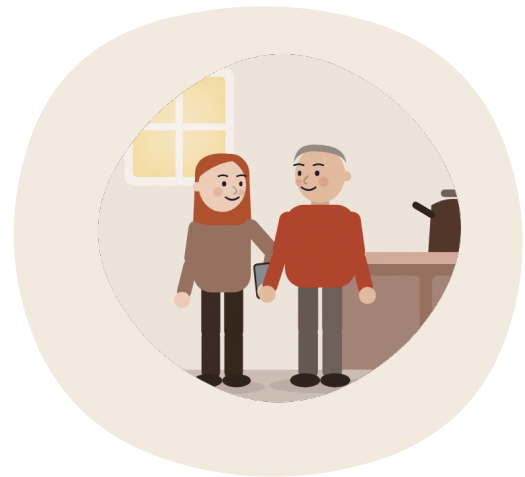
The main carer needs breaks, sleep and a life of their own. Others in the family may need support too, including young people who help. Our looking after yourself guide covers breaks, carers' centres and your own health ([Coming Home, Looking after yourself](#)).

Say thank you. Notice what each person does. It goes a long way.



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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 medical, legal or financial advice.

The care circle brings the family, friends and neighbours who help into one place, with shared notes, tasks and a calendar, so everyone can see who's doing what.

The family care diary keeps visits, calls and notes in one place, so the person stepping in knows what's been happening.

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

www.cominghomecare.app/?ref=guide-sharing-the-caring

Built by people who know home care.

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Who to call



- **Your council's adult social care team** (England, Wales and Scotland) or **your Health and Social Care Trust** (Northern Ireland), for assessments, care and concerns about someone's safety.
- **Carers UK Helpline:** 0808 808 7777, for carers in all four nations (**Carers UK, Helpline and other support**).
- **Age UK Advice Line:** 0800 678 1602 (**Age UK, Advice Line**).
- **Independent Age Helpline:** 0800 319 6789 (**Independent Age, Contact the Helpline**).
- **Citizens Advice:** www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

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.

Benefits

- GOV.UK, Carer's Allowance: eligibility: www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility
- legislation.gov.uk, Carer's Assistance (Carer Support Payment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023, regulation 5: www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2023/302/regulation/5
- nidirect, Carer's Allowance: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/carers-allowance

Power of attorney and money

- GOV.UK, Manage a lasting power of attorney: attorney records and duties (updated 29 Oct 2024): www.gov.uk/manage-lasting-power-attorney/records-duties
- GOV.UK, Manage a lasting power of attorney: property and financial affairs attorneys (updated 29 Oct 2024): www.gov.uk/manage-lasting-power-attorney/property-financial-affairs
- GOV.UK, Report a concern about an attorney, deputy or guardian (updated 5 Aug 2019): www.gov.uk/report-concern-about-attorney-deputy-guardian

Helplines

- Carers UK, Helpline and other support:
www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/helpline-and-other-support/
- Age UK, Advice Line: www.ageuk.org.uk/services/age-uk-advice-line/
- Independent Age, Contact the Helpline:
www.independentage.org/get-advice/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. The latest version is always at

www.cominghomecare.app/guides/sharing-the-caring



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