Adult Social Care Services

The Carers’ Breaks and Opportunities (CBO) Fund

www.reading.gov.uk/carers
We know that most carers are totally committed to providing the care the person they look after needs and would not have it any other way.

However, always putting someone else’s needs above your own can be very demanding so it is important that you get the support you need to help reduce your stress.

This is where the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Fund (CBO Fund) comes in.

What is the CBO Fund?

The CBO Fund is money which has been set aside to help adults who provide unpaid care to other adults (18 years and over) dependent on them for support.

How does the CBO Fund work?

We ask you to complete a Carers self-assessment form which asks about your caring responsibilities and the impact this has on your life.

We will review your assessment to decide if you are eligible for CBO Funding and, if so, how much you are entitled to.

We will give you this money as a CBO DIRECT PAYMENT - you decide how to spend this money to get the support you feel will help reduce your stress and restore some balance to your life.
Caring for someone can have a big impact on your own health and well being - breaks from caring give you the chance to recharge your batteries and take care of yourself. This could be:

- Regular short breaks - a few hours each week or a day or two off when you need it. You could use the time to take part in your hobby, take a course, get a massage, join a gym or have a regular night out with friends.

- Occasional longer breaks (e.g. a weekend or longer) if you need to take a holiday and have a complete break from your caring responsibilities.

You can use your Direct Payment to pay for:

- a carer to look after the person you care for while you take time out and/or
- the activities you choose to do during your breaks from caring.

What other options are there?

You don't need to take a break - you may prefer to spend your CBO Direct Payment on more practical things that will help reduce the day-to-day stress of caring and improve the quality of your life. For example:

- One carer chose to learn to drive - being able to get out and about with the person she looks has greatly improved both their lives.

- One carer chose to buy a tumble dryer which has removed her constant worry of being able to get bed linen dry.
One carer bought a shed which allows him to garden in all weathers and get time to himself without actually leaving home.

The Breaks and Opportunities Fund is flexible. It offers you choice about how you get the support you need and puts you in charge of the money so you can get what you need, when you need it.

**Spending a CBO Direct Payment**

**Are there any restrictions?**

Yes - you can only use your CBO Direct Payment for goods or services that will ease the strain of caring for you.

You CAN'T use your CBO Direct Payment

- to pay your bills or other household expenses or to buy clothes
- For anything illegal or inappropriate (like gambling or drinking)
- to buy care and support services provided by Reading Borough Council.
- to buy extra hours of respite care for the person you look after as this is part of their support plan - if you feel the respite cover currently provided isn’t adequate please talk to your social care worker

**Could I pay for a friend to come with me on a trip?**

Yes. Many carers would prefer to take a trip with another person rather than alone. So long as you benefit from the outing, others can benefit too.
Could I use my Direct Payment to take the person I care for out for a meal?

Yes, a meal out is not treated in the same way as your weekly grocery bill. But this must be something you feel gives you a bit of a break too.

Could I give my Direct Payment to charity?

No - a CBO Direct Payment may only be used to help you as a carer.
Am I eligible for a CBO Direct Payment

The Carers Breaks and Opportunities Fund is for anyone who provides ‘regular and substantial’ care.

We ask you to compete a Carers Assessment form to help us understand the impact that Caring has on your life and decide:

- If you are eligible for a CBO Direct Payment and, if so,
- How much you are entitled to

Don't I need to provide care for at least 35 hours a week to qualify?

No. This is the amount of care you need to provide to qualify for Carers Allowance from the Department of Work and Pensions.

What if I don't live with the person I care for?

Living at a different address won't affect your eligibility. A lot of caring takes the form of helping to manage someone’s support arrangements or being ‘on call’ as well as direct hands-on support.

Do I have to live in Reading?

No - as long as the person you care for lives within Reading Borough.

*If you live in Reading but care for someone outside the Borough you will need to contact their local authority to apply for any carers support they provide.*

Does the person I care for have to be receiving support from Reading Adult Social Care Services?

No.
Is the CBO Fund means tested?
No. The amount you receive is based entirely on the impact that caring has on your life regardless of your income and savings.

What if I’m not related to the person I care for.
This doesn’t affect your eligibility - anyone who takes on a caring role is entitled to apply for a CBO Direct Payment.

What if the time I spend on caring varies?
Many carers find that the needs of the person they care for vary and that their caring responsibilities change accordingly.
Use your Carers Assessment to tell us about the impact caring has on your life at the times you are needed most. If you sometimes have less to do, or have someone else who takes over occasionally to give you a break, that won’t automatically disqualify you.

What if I share caring with someone else?
Explain this on your self-assessment form so we’re clear about the care you provide. Each carer is entitled to their own separate assessment.

What if I get paid for part of the care I provide?
Even if you get paid to provide some hours of care/support to the person you look after you can still apply for a CBO Direct Payment for any unpaid care you provide.
How to apply

You will need to complete a Carers Assessment:

- visit www.reading.gov.uk/carers to complete our online form
- call 0118 937 3747 to ask us to send you a form
- ask your social care worker for a form

You can do this on your own or with support from a friend, adviser from a voluntary organisation or a social care worker.

Can I apply more than once?

Yes - if your last assessment was more than a year ago or your circumstances have changed.
We normally only make one payment a year to each carer.

Contact Us

Reading Adult Contact Team (ReACT)
Tel: 0118 937 3747
Email: react.spoc@reading.gov.uk

Complaints
Customer Relations Team, Reading Borough Council, PO Box 2624, Reading RG1 7WB.
Tel: 0118 937 2905
Email: socialcare.complaints@reading.gov.uk

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