

Carer Gateway FAQs

Carer Gateway is an Australian Government initiative providing a mix of free in-person, phone, and online supports, services and advice, for family carers in Australia.

In addition to resources available through the national Carer Gateway website, dedicated in-person supports and services are being delivered throughout the states and territories through a network of Carer Gateway Service Providers. For Western Australia, Carers WA is leading the delivery of these in-person services, in partnership with our delivery partner, HelpingMinds.

Resources available through the national Carer Gateway website include:

- Online skills courses
- Online peer support forum
- Online self-guided coaching
- A national phone counselling service

Services available to WA carers through Carers WA and delivery partners:

- **Carer support planning** - capturing a holistic picture of a carer's individual circumstances and developing a tailored and personalised action plan of supports and services to alleviate areas of strain.

- **In-person peer support** - a free, facilitated, peer support program offering carers an opportunity to connect.
- **In-person and phone counselling** - available through Carers WA and HelpingMinds' team of qualified and accredited counsellors.
- **Carer Directed Support** - funding for practical supports to assist the carer in their caring role and ability to access or maintain employment or education. Examples of practical supports that may be explored include domestic and in-home supports, transport to medical appointments and planned respite.
- **Respite care** - available in the form of Emergency Respite or Planned Respite. Emergency respite is available for carers who are experiencing an urgent, unplanned and imminent event that temporarily restricts their ability to continue caring when no other services are available. Planned respite may be available as part of Carer Directed Support to provide scheduled time away from the caring role.

Carer Gateway services within WA are provided by Carers WA, in partnership with HelpingMinds

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Q: Am I eligible to receive Carer Gateway services?

A: Carer Gateway services are available to all carers who provide unpaid personal care and support to another individual due to disability, a long-term medical condition (including terminal or chronic illness), mental health challenge, substance dependency or frail age.

Additionally, eligibility applies to carers who are:

- Overseas visitors, permanent residents and others who are not Australian citizens – there are no citizenship, residency or specific visa requirements.
- Receiving free board/lodging in return for providing care (but are otherwise not paid or employed to care for a person), providing they meet the other eligibility requirements.
- Recipients of other government supports. (including Centrelink, My Aged Care and NDIS).
- In a situation where their caring role has ended in the last 6 months (this is an approximate timeframe and dependent on the individual circumstances).

Q: I am new to Carer Gateway or have a question regarding the services available, where do I start?

A: Here are a few simple steps to follow to learn more about Carer Gateway:

1. Visit www.carergateway.gov.au to learn more about the online and in-person services and supports that may be available to you.
2. Read this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for answers to the most common questions we receive from carers.
3. Call the national Carer Gateway phone line 1800 422 737 and press 1 to speak to your local Carer Gateway Service Provider (which is Carers WA for all Western Australian carers). Your call will be transferred through to Carers WA's Carer Gateway team.
4. Speak with our Carer Gateway team about your requirements - they will provide you information to answer your question or book in a Needs Assessment to explore what supports and services you may be able to access through Carer Gateway.

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Q: Who answers the Carer Gateway line?

Carers WA has a dedicated team of Carer Gateway Planners and Services Officers who are available Monday-Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm. When a carer calls Carer Gateway (1800 422 737) during operating hours, the call is diverted to Carers WA's dedicated team in Perth. When a carer calls Carer Gateway outside operating hours, their phone call will be answered by an Australian based call centre. The after-hours service is available to facilitate requests for respite care if required. Callers can also leave their name and details for follow up. Carers WA's Carer Gateway team will then contact the caller on the next business day.

Q: What process will I need to go through to access support through Carer Gateway?

To determine eligibility and access supports through Carer Gateway, carers must undergo the Carer Support Planning process including:

1. Registration and Needs Assessment

booking – When a carer calls Carer Gateway, their basic information will be registered on our system and a time will be booked to complete the Carers Star

Needs Assessment over the phone with a Carer Gateway Carer Support Planner.

- 2. Carers Star Assessment** – A Carer Gateway Carer Support Planner will call the carer at the predetermined time to complete the Carers Star Needs Assessment. Typically, the assessment takes between 30-60 minutes to complete. During this phone call, the Planner will ask the carer a series of questions to understand their situation, and develop a targeted action plan of supports and services to assist them in their caring role.
- 3. Action Plan confirmed** – After the Needs Assessment, the action plan the Planner has developed will be sent to the carer for their approval and sign off. No supports or services will be booked until the carer has approved their action plan.
- 4. Action Plan implemented** – Once the action plan is approved, the Carer Gateway team will commence booking and arranging any necessary supports and services.

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Note: In situations where a carer requires emergency respite, the Carer Gateway team will assess the need for emergency respite and in eligible situations, work as quickly as possible to arrange the appropriate support. The above Carer Support Planning process will not be undertaken until after the emergency situation has been resolved.

Q: Will I have to repeat my details each time I contact the Carer Gateway number?

A: Once you are registered, (registration will be taken the first time you contact Carer Gateway), your details will be kept on our secure information system that each Carer Support Planner has access to.

Q: I do not have time to spend more than thirty minutes on the phone. How will I complete my Needs Assessment without a long conversation?

A: We will work with what is convenient for the carer and can arrange multiple short conversations when the carer is available. We will collate the details from each call and have it securely stored in our information database so the carer does not need to repeat themselves each time.

Q: Do I need to register for Carer Gateway if I am already registered with Carers WA?

A: Carers who have completed a registration with Carers WA do not need to undergo a new registration with the Carer Support Planning team, however, carers will need to call Carer Gateway to book their Needs Assessment and undergo the Carer Support Planning process to access services. When a carer calls to book their Needs Assessment, the Carer Gateway team may ask for additional information to ensure their profile is up to date.

Q: Does the Carer Gateway fund planned respite?

A: Yes, planned respite may be available to carers through Carer Gateway, however, eligibility for this support is subject to the Carers Star Needs Assessment. During the Needs Assessment, the Carer Support Planner will assess whether respite care is an appropriate support for the carer's situation and, if it is deemed appropriate, planned respite may be included as part of a Carer Directed Package. It is important to note, respite is not a guaranteed inclusion in every carer's action plan and it cannot be

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funded retrospectively. Alternatively, respite for people with care needs can be organised through My Aged Care if the person is aged 65 or over (or aged 50 or over for Aboriginal people) or through NDIS if the person is eligible for an NDIS plan.

Q: Are there specific companies used by Carer Gateway for respite?

A: Carer Gateway does not have a list of 'preferred' respite providers, however, when respite is included in a carer's action plan, respite will only be booked through well-established and local care providers, depending on the circumstances.

Q: Will you be finding the respite provider for carers and providing the details?

A: Carer Support Planners will work with carers to find and book suitable respite services, only in instances where we have agreed to fund emergency respite, or have included planned respite in a carer's action plan.

Q: When are carers able to receive a Carer Directed Package?

A: Carer Directed Support (financial payment or package) is just one of many supports Carer Support Planners will explore during the Carer Support Planning process and Needs Assessment. Financial support is not a guaranteed inclusion in every carer's action plan, and a Carer Directed Package may only be allocated if it is identified as a necessary support. Carers must undergo the Carers Star Needs Assessment to determine their eligibility for this support.

Q: What if you are receiving a package from another program or service?

A: Eligible carers have access to Carer Gateway services regardless of other available funding and supports. Our team of Carer Support Planners will work with the carer to understand their circumstances and situation, taking into account the supports and services they currently have in place and develop an individualised plan from there.

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Q: If I already have some respite, but it is not enough, can I receive additional respite funding through a Carer Directed Package?

A: Carer Support Planners will work with the carer to understand what formal and informal supports they already have access to and may explore which additional supports may be of assistance. In some circumstances, the planner may include additional respite support as part of a Carer Directed Package, on top of respite available through other funding sources, however this is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Q: How much funding will I receive in my Carer Directed Package?

A: If it is identified that a Carer Directed Package is a suitable support, the amount of funding provided will be determined through the carer support planning process and will differ person to person based on the results of the planning session.

Q: Are there limits on how often you can access a package?

A: Yes, once per year based on the carer's Action Plan.

Q: If I register with Carer Gateway will I receive Centrelink carer payments?

A: No, registering with Carer Gateway does not mean a carer will automatically receive financial help through Centrelink. A carer must register with Centrelink separately. Carer Gateway Support Planners do not have access to a carer's Centrelink record and cannot provide advice about an individual's payments. Information on financial assistance is available from the Carer Gateway website.

If you have a question that has not been answered, please let us know.

Email: info@carerswa.asn.au

Call: 1800 422 737.

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