Respite literally means ‘a short break’ and Respite Care usually refers to providing care for an older person or a person with a disability so that their carer can take a short break, a holiday or a rest. It can range from a few hours to a longer arrangement so that the carer can take a holiday.

Who Provides It?
Respite care may be based in the community or in an institution. In practice, respite care is provided to a varying degree around the country by the local Health Service Executive (HSE) office, by local or national voluntary organisations and by private home care companies, like Home Instead Senior Care.

Respite Care from the public health system is organised by the local public health nurse or family doctor. Children with disabilities may be placed with another family temporarily whereas institutional care tends to be provided for older people. The person being cared for may be admitted to a HSE nursing home for a period of two weeks (if a bed is available.)

Home Instead Senior Care provides private Respite Care with their professionally trained and Garda vetted CAREGivers available to give a family carer a break for as long as is required.

Respite Care Grant
The Respite Care Grant is an annual payment made to carers by the Department of Social Protection. Carers can use the grant in whatever way they wish – they do not have to use it to pay for respite care. The grant is automatically paid each June to carers getting the Carer’s Allowance, Carer’s Benefit, Domiciliary Care Allowance or Prescribed Relative’s Allowance from the Department. It is not taxable. Only one Respite Care Grant can be paid for each person getting care. This year (2013), the Grant is reducing from €1,700 to €1,375 for each person receiving care.

The grant can also be paid to certain other carers providing full-time care – if they are not getting one of the above payments, they must be:

- aged 16 or over
- ordinarily resident in the State
- caring for the person on a full-time basis
- caring for the person for at least six months - this period must include the first Thursday in June
- living with the person being cared for or, if not, be contactable quickly by a direct system of communication (for example, telephone or alarm)
- not working more than 15 hours per week outside the home
- not in receipt of an unemployment payment or signing on for unemployment credits;
- not living in a hospital, convalescent home or similar institution.

If someone is caring for more than one person, a grant is paid for each of them.

www.homeinstead.ie
How to Apply for a Grant:
Application forms for a Respite Care Grant can be obtained from the local Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre. Application forms are also available from the Department of Social Protection leaflet request telephone line. Local 1890 20 23 25.

For further information on all Carers’ payments and benefits, see www.citizensinformation.ie

Other Respite Services:
• Some private nursing homes offer private Respite Service to families. Check with the local Public Health Nurse or GP for details in the local area.
• The National Home-Sharing & Short Breaks Network supports host families who welcome people with disabilities into their homes. They offer 3 different services – a Short Breaks scheme, Contract Family Schemes and Home-Sharing Services. For details - www.nhsn.ie
• The following organisations also offer Respite Care services:
  • Enable Ireland www.enableireland.ie
  • RehabCare – contact 01 205 7200 www.rehab.ie
  • The Alzheimer’s Society – 01 207 3800 www.alzheimer.ie care