



Respitality impact report 2023





This report presents the findings of the Respitality initiative for 2023 against the targets and deliverables agreed between Scottish Government and Shared Care Scotland.

The initiative is supported at a national level by a Respitality Manager – a post which was established in January 2015 – and a Respitality Coordinator which is a more recent addition.

We would like to thank the Unpaid Carers Unit within the Social Care Directorate of Scottish Government for their financial and practical

support of Respitality. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the businesses who donate and promote Respitality, as well as the carer organisations and their staff who are Respitality delivery partners, all of whom have been instrumental in the success of the project.

What is the purpose of Respitality?

Respitality is needed because caring for someone can be mentally and physically challenging, and short breaks are vital for unpaid carers' mental and physical health.

Due to financial and care concerns, and limited time to even think about organising a break, carers often need help from a range of experts to access a break from their routine that is right for them. This can be achieved by connecting carers' organisations in Scotland with compassionate tourism, hospitality and leisure businesses.

The purpose of Respitality is to provide an energising and fun short break from their usual routine for unpaid carers of all ages in Scotland when they need it most. This is achieved by connecting carers' organisations with hospitality, tourism and leisure businesses who are able to donate breaks – at no cost – bringing benefits to the carers and businesses alike.



Guiding principles

Respitality's core values are reflected in everything the initiative does and demonstrated in the actions of all those involved – from delivery partners to donors:

Warmth and kindness

- ▶ Businesses can see it makes a real difference to people's lives.
- ▶ Respitality embodies the hospitality and warmth of welcome for which Scotland is renowned the world over.
- ▶ Many businesses can help to provide unpaid carers with a vital short break from routine that they so richly deserve.

Spark

- ▶ The short breaks provided are energising and fun for unpaid carers.
- ▶ Seeing the difference it makes to carers, makes it a fun and rewarding experience for the businesses and staff supporting the breaks.
- ▶ It's life-affirming for those involved: whether it's the carers themselves or the businesses and staff.

Proficient

- ▶ Delivered by carer organisations who truly understands the needs of unpaid carers.
- ▶ Responsive to carers' needs for a short break from routine.
- ▶ Continually improving and learning.
- ▶ Pioneering in Scotland.
- ▶ Enforcing and reflecting best practice in tourism and supporting unpaid carers.
- ▶ Understands and reflects the professional needs of tourism, leisure, and hospitality businesses.

Integrity

- ▶ Working together with carer organisations and hospitality/tourism/leisure businesses to make the short breaks possible and ensure they meet the needs of the carers.
- ▶ Treats all stakeholders, including carers and their families, with honesty and respect.

Understanding

- ▶ Everyone knows someone who is an unpaid carer and we all could find ourselves in this role one day.
- ▶ Carers can take a break alongside their caring role, and can bring the cared-for person on their break.
- ▶ Many people understand and appreciate the need for a short break from their routine.

But Respitality does not start and end with Shared Care Scotland alone. We have a host of networks both locally and nationally with whom we collaborate with to make this initiative the success it is today. We will talk more about their involvement within this report.





“We came away feeling that we had enjoyed ourselves and felt so relaxed... I felt pampered and it was nice to get dressed up and have a break, without worrying or having to cook the meals or do the dishes. I felt cared for!”

Impact of Respitality breaks on unpaid carers in Scotland

In 2023, we were able to support 1,807 carers to access a short break from their caring routine via Respitality; a 152% increase from the previous year.

The majority of carers accessing breaks in 2023 lived in Falkirk, Clackmannanshire, Edinburgh and Midlothian, accounting for 62% of break recipients.

In eight years, Respitality in Scotland has been able to support a total of 6,268 unpaid carers to take a short break from routine. Companions range from family members, friends, the cared-for person and support workers.

With the changing of perceptions around what a short break can be, we are seeing access to Respitality breaks becoming more varied and accommodation breaks becoming less of the norm. Days out at visitor attractions and sporting events emerged as the most common break choice through Respitality in 2023.

2023 Snapshot

Carers taking breaks

1,807



Companions

1,820

67%

in their own local authority area

Most popular break 
Visitor attractions

Respite breaks taken by carers in 2023

Accommodation
(overnight)

113 

Accommodation
(self-catering)

137 

Arts/crafts
activity

67 

Beauty therapy

71 

Visitor attraction

417 

Leisure
activity*

108 

Bus tour

11 

Dining

189 

Personal
development

1 

Housework

1 

Boat tour

27 

TICKETED DAYS AND NIGHTS OUT

Arts tickets
e.g. exhibitions

41

Cinema
tickets

27

Music
tickets

128

Sports
tickets

408

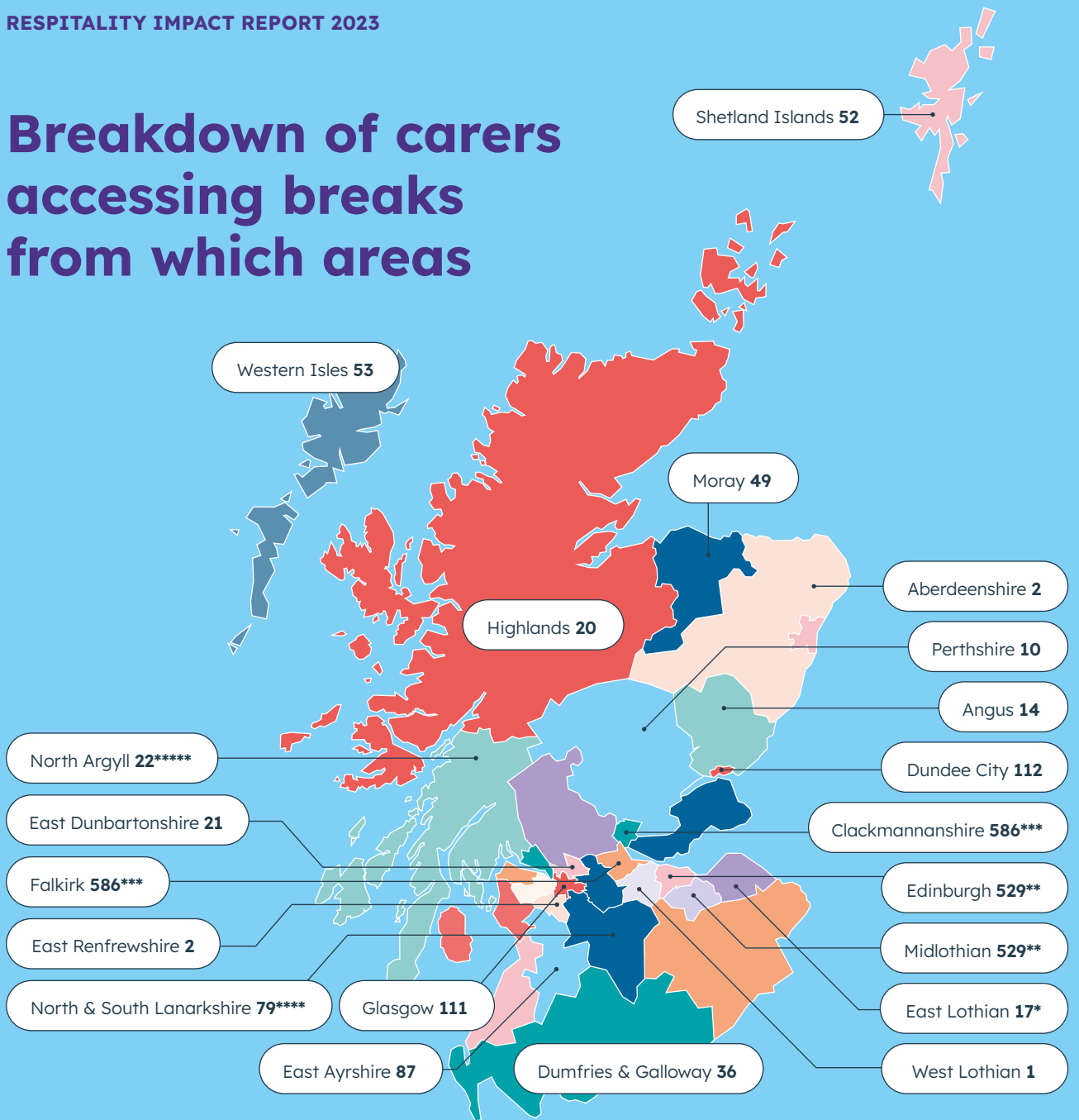
Theatre
tickets

61



* leisure activity includes breaks such as yoga sessions, mini golf, kayaking sessions, canyoning

Breakdown of carers accessing breaks from which areas



What we want to build on in 2024

- ▶ Increase carer breaks options in Scotland by recruiting a minimum of two local authority areas into the project as Respitality delivery partners.
- ▶ Provide regular communication, support, networking and training opportunities and practical assistance to our network of local Respitality delivery partners to enhance Respitality as a viable short breaks option.

* East Lothian are not a part of Respitality, but were offered tickets to help them test Respitality in their area
 ** We work with three organisations covering these two areas
 *** We work with one organisation which supports carers from both local authority areas
 **** We work with one organisation which supports carers from both local authority areas
 ***** We only cover one of the four territories of Argyll & Bute

Case Studies

“This break did both of us so much good. We laughed so much during our stay.”

Lizzie’s story

Brudolff Hotel gives a break from routine in Shetland

Lizzie* cares for her husband who has physical disabilities and mental ill-health. She also looks after two of her children, one who has a neurological condition and one who has autism. Lizzie had been feeling overwhelmed, fatigued, anxious and stressed due to her caring duties. She provides a lot of emotional support to her husband and does all the tasks needed around the home including cooking and cleaning, as well as working part-time. The carer applied for a Respite break and was awarded a two-nights weekend stay at Brudolff Hotels with breakfast included.

She said:

“I had a 2-night stay at the Lerwick Hotel. I cannot put into words how beneficial it was for me and my husband. It was so good getting away from everyday chores and being treated. We would not be able to afford this ourselves. Thank you so much.

This break did both of us so much good. We laughed so much during our stay. With the everyday stresses of life and caring for him and my family, it’s hard to have fun together and make time for each other. It did us so much good, getting away from home and we were both more relaxed and happy.

After my break I felt more able and motivated to carry on with daily tasks. My husband was also feeling the benefit of getting away from home, as he doesn’t get out much.”



*Names have been changed

“Had a lovely chilled ‘rest-cation’ with my partner and dog at one of the beautiful Brucefield Estate Schenbothies....Absolutely everything about the bothy including the shower was brilliant! The little extras are very well thought-out. We enjoyed the tranquillity and chill time.”



Finn's story

Rest-cation at Brucefield Estate in Falkirk

Finn* is caring for their children with ASD and contacted Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre as they were experiencing high stress levels and struggling more with the demands of the caring role.

Finn was supported to complete an update of their Adult Carer Support Plan and it was identified that the caring role was having a substantial impact on many areas of their life and they needed a break from the caring role. In conversation with the Carers Centre it was clear that Finn felt emotionally torn at having a break without their children but after several discussions, they were supported to explore the possibility of a break away with their partner at the Brucefield Estate.

This fitted the bill perfectly: a rural retreat which was not too far from home where they could relax with their partner and their pet.

Finn was supported to book a date that was special for them and ensured that they could take their beloved dog too. Arriving

on the Friday afternoon they was met by the welcoming staff who guided them to their tranquil Schenbothie. Brucefield Estate provided a welcome hamper which included locally sourced products which Finn found to be an overwhelmingly beautiful gesture. They had a relaxing first night, where they lit the wood burner within the Schenbothie and relaxed with a few games of cards. Finn and their partner had a fantastic sleep in the luxury bed before setting off on for local adventure walks with their dog. They even managed an afternoon nap which was a luxury for them. They were able to have a fantastic, relaxing break and was able to switch off from the demands of life with no TV, no social media, or any other demands. Finn explained that Brucefield Estate was only 20 minutes from their home but felt as though they could be a million miles away. This did alleviate their concern of any issues with their children, as they knew they were only a short distance away in an emergency.



Christine's story

The benefit of sleep at Scarista House, Western Isles

Christine* cares for her husband who is living with dementia and has suffered a stroke. His dementia is advanced and caring for him can be a challenge most days. Christine has had her own health issues over the years and regularly has interrupted sleep.

She has carers helping her each day and also day respite but not residential respite. Even when carers come in to allow her to get a night's sleep inevitably she is woken when her husband wakes. She is mentally and physically exhausted.

When she was offered her a break at Scarista House she welcomed the opportunity of a break away from the house, leaving family in charge of her husband. After her break, she said she could not put into words how marvellous it was.

“I was only there a night but it was so relaxing, I felt as if I had been away for a week. It was magic from start to finish. My friend who came with me thoroughly enjoyed the break as well. We had good weather, so started with a long walk along the beach – it was care free. We were totally chilled.

We had beautiful views and the place was so comfortable with crisp white sheets! I slept all night long and the bed was amazing: I can't remember when I last had an undisturbed night's sleep. We felt so relaxed and the staff were so lovely to us.

The food was amazing, presentation was excellent and the portion sizes were ideal for me. Supposing you had given me a thousand pounds to spend on myself, it couldn't have matched that night. I came back home so relaxed, I found my caring duties much easier, as I had a new lease of life. I am so thankful for my break and I have wonderful memories to reflect upon.”

“Supposing you had given me a thousand pounds to spend on myself, it couldn't have matched that night [...] I had a new lease of life.”

*Names have been changed

Delivering the breaks – introducing our local network

Respitality in Scotland operates as a social franchise. Social franchising involves packaging up a proven service delivery model and providing carefully selected delivery partners with the training, systems, materials and ongoing support they need in order to run the service to a defined standard. We recruit and support local delivery partners, all of whom have a role in offering information and support to unpaid carers, including short breaks. Our local delivery partners also have a role in developing and maintaining positive relationships within their local tourism sector.

The benefit of the social franchise model means that Respitality can be scaled upwards and downwards to fit into local carer need and organisational capacity. Therefore, the levels of engagement and development for local Respitality varies across the country.

“I feel very supported by the Shared Care team and by the peer support provided by the other delivery partners. It has helped me boost my confidence and come up with new ways to try to source local breaks.”

Administrative decisions such as (but not limited to) how the delivery partner process referrals, methods of communication, criteria to access Respitality based on age, frequency etc are determined by the delivery partner.

We believe this model is an effective way to replicate Respitality across Scotland where local resources and expertise are needed, but a close relationship between Shared Care Scotland and the delivery partner ensures Respitality is delivered consistently and to a high standard.



“The meetings have been very beneficial in providing us with inspiration – for example, new approaches for donations and donations we hadn’t even considered.”

Within our yearly survey with delivery partners, they rated the ongoing support and communication offered by SCS highly, and felt that the collective knowledge of the network of workers was extremely valuable. The average confidence level in delivering and promoting Respitality over 2023 was 4.19 out of 5.

In 2023, Connecting Carers, covering the Scottish Highlands, joined Respitality. As of December 2023, Respitality is operating across 22 local authority areas in Scotland, co-ordinated by 21 carer organisations. (We also work with North Argyll, one territory of Argyll and Bute, however we cannot include this as a full region in our figures). Three further regions are projected to join Respitality in 2024.

“My first year as a delivery partner has been educational and exciting. I love everything we stand for and to help carers have that much needed break has become a huge passion for me. The support and guidance received from the SCS team has been invaluable. I look forward to continue working together and have another successful year.”

Working Smarter

Over the course of 2023, we witnessed some fantastic ways the local delivery partners implemented using Respality alongside other short break options to give carers the best chance to access breaks that are suitable for them.

Expanding donation offering

- ▶ Combining Respality breaks with Time to Live funding (to provide financial support for food, travel costs etc) or with another Respality break (e.g. a hotel stay with a day visit to a local attraction).
- ▶ Sharing breaks with the wider Respality network if unable to fully allocate locally.

Tourism engagement

- ▶ Purchasing breaks with funding, and using this as leverage to gain donations for Respality.
- ▶ Engagement with local Chamber of Commerce groups, local authority tourism departments and regional tourism partnerships.
- ▶ Securing donations by connecting in with other local and national campaigns such as Carers Week and Young Carers Action Day.
- ▶ Collaborating with tourism charitable arms for additional donations (for example, partnering up with Itison Us).
- ▶ Adding information about Respality to Carers Charter that businesses sign up to.

Media coverage

- ▶ Connecting with businesses on LinkedIn and creatively using social media to promote breaks available to carers.
- ▶ Identifying successful Respality stories as opportunities to raise profile in local, national and trade media.

Carer engagement

- ▶ Asking carers what breaks work for them and securing breaks that are more personalised.
- ▶ Making sure Respality is on the monthly agenda with their team so workers are actively including Respality during support visits to carers.



What we plan to build on in 2024

- ▶ Rebuilding the delivery network area on our website to enhance the user experience, automate more data collection and therefore reduce manual processes for our delivery partners.
- ▶ Development and support of localised peer support groups.
- ▶ Further work with our Time to Live team at SCS to identify opportunities for collaboration regarding training, communication and development opportunities.
- ▶ Provide a strong and resourceful training and networking programme throughout the year for our delivery partner network to access and benefit from.



“There are some hotel guests who quietly touch our hearts and inspire us [...] where one is quietly looking after the other, perhaps at the start of a long good-bye or making a final trip together to revisit a place with special memories. Realising that you have been entrusted to be part of that experience is such an honour.”

Social tourism in practice – our relationships within the tourism industry

In 2023, we received donations from 236 businesses, which is a 103% increase on 2022 figures. Of these, 60% were first time donors, which we see as a positive reflection of the efforts to promote Respality both locally and nationally. Included in the donations was the continued exclusive use of the Ben Society’s one bedroom self-catering property in Pitlochry, Perthshire for the entirety of 2023.

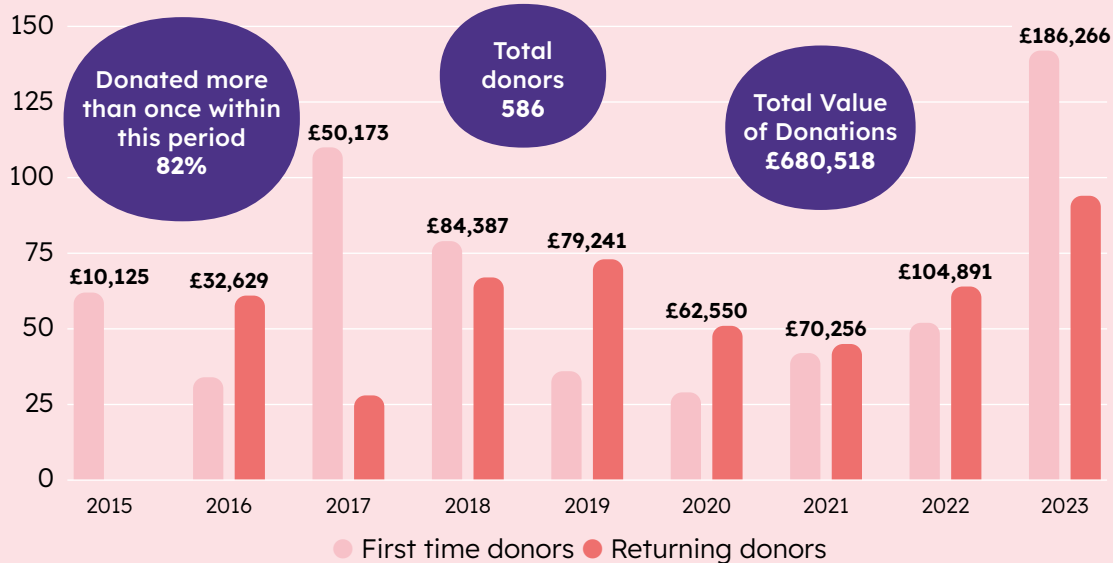
The majority donating to Respality in 2023 continue to be independent businesses (89%). Additionally, we observed that 69% of breaks

taken with Respality in 2023 had been sourced by our local delivery partners (69%). This is a very positive outcome as it demonstrates that our social franchise model is sustainable and works in practice. This also creates opportunities for breaks to become more personalised based on local needs.

In the last seven years, we have received donated breaks from 584 businesses.

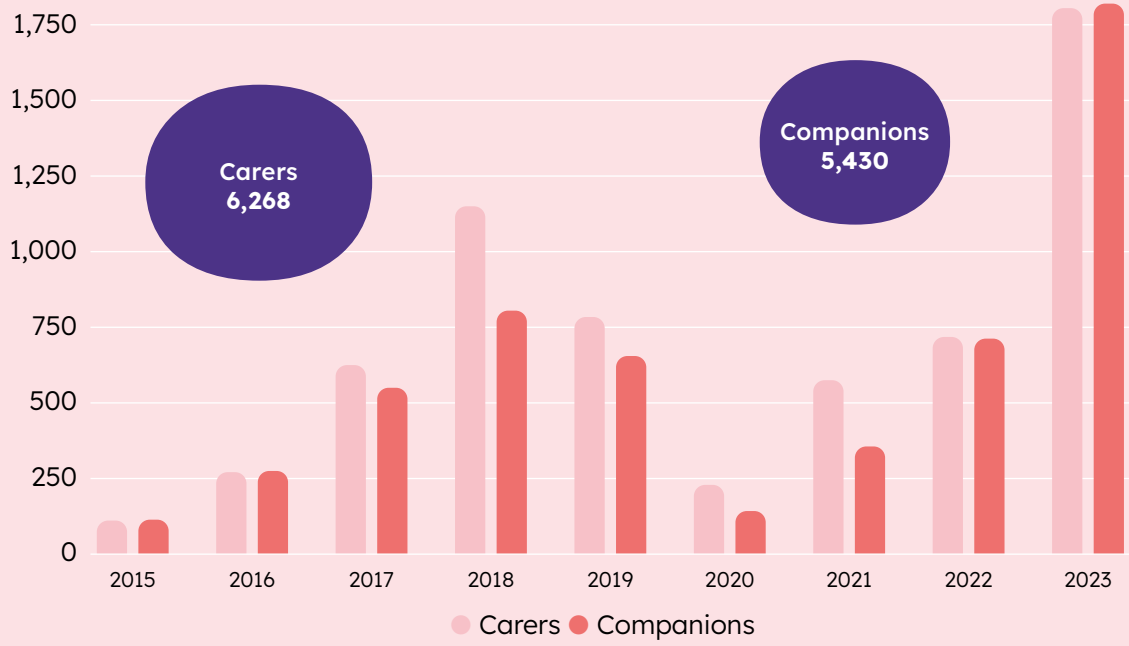


Value of Breaks donated to Respitality 2015-2023



In 2023, we received break donations valued at £186,266, which is a 78% increase in comparison to the value of breaks in 2022. Furthermore, this year’s total is the highest Respitality has ever received.

Unpaid Carers and Companions taking a Respitality Break 2015-2023



Due to cancellations, short notice breaks, postponements or suitability to carers’ needs, only 16% of these donations went unallocated. This is the lowest record since we launched Respitality, and is all thanks to the hard work of the local delivery partners in sourcing suitable breaks, building local systems that incorporate Respitality into

their short breaks offerings, and the rapport built with unpaid carers. This means they are in a strong position to match unpaid carers to breaks that are best suited to their needs. Some of the cancellations/ postponements were also down to individual carer circumstances, including family illness and adverse weather conditions.

Promoting and celebrating Respitality

Across 2023, our local delivery partners have done a fantastic job in promoting their Respitality progress in local and trade media in Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Falkirk, and Western Isles to further raise their profile and encourage donations, as well as identify carers in need of a short break.



Throughout 2023, we attended various tourism events and meetings to network and engage with our Tourism Ambassadors. These resulted in leads for donations, as well as increasing our network of tourism connections. Additionally, throughout the year, we promoted our work through quarterly newsletters and regular social media posts to encourage engagement from potential donors and unpaid carers in need of a break.



Our most prominent area of national promotion was thanks to the support of Falkirk Foundation and Falkirk Football Club, who committed to a full season of home tickets and food/drink vouchers for carers via Respitality. This fantastic story was featured by BBC Scotland on TV, radio and online. This extensive coverage has resulted in developing relationships with other football clubs and charity foundations who want to contribute to their local community via Respitality.



“Over 2023, 1,403 carers and their families and friends attended a Falkirk Football Club home match whilst taking a break from their caring role.”

The relationship nurtured between the local delivery partner (Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre) and Falkirk Foundation has resulted in carers and their families accessing many of the community programmes on offer that focus on mental wellbeing, social inclusion and education.

“This was a such a good thing – it allowed my child to attend a football match with his father and grandfather. This helped them to make a special memory together before his grandpa passed away.”

Breaking down financial barriers to breaks: Falkirk Foundation

“We wanted this generous donation of our fans to be targeted at those who would most benefit from a day out and so partnering with Falkirk & Clacks Carers Centre through Respitality was the obvious choice. We know that many unpaid carers can find it difficult to cover the costs

of attending a football match and hope that this initiative may ease that concern and allow them to enjoy a family day out. The reward for us is that we’ve already heard about the positive impact it has had both on the community and the families who have enjoyed some time together.”

What we want to build on in 2024

- ▶ Further develop our internal systems to streamline how we consistently engage and nurture our relationships with first time and returning donors.
- ▶ Expand beyond ‘in kind’ donations, by developing corporate partnerships in the private sector who share similar values to ours.
- ▶ Building an infrastructure where we can offer breaks outside of Scotland and the UK.

The importance of community: Isle of Harris Distillery

“We have always taken pride calling ourselves the Social Distillery. It is of utmost importance that everything we do involves and considers the community of the Islands. If it wasn't for the community support we would not be here, doing what we are doing and we hope what we are doing will be sustainable for the future, serving the people and the Islands.

One of our company values is 'For, With and From the Isle of Harris', and we have always been about giving back to the community and when we were approached to get involved with Respitality, there was no question about it.

Living in smaller communities, it is evident to see when people do so much to care for their loved ones to allow them to live normal lives in the comfort of their homes. We knew we could provide a warm welcoming space here at the Distillery, and to give a slight distraction for a couple of hours.



Doing the Distillery tours with Respitality clients, out with the season, gives us more time with the guests and hopefully will allow them to feel very relaxed and allow them to ask what questions they have.

It is of utmost importance that everything we do involves and considers the community of the Islands.

We welcome thousands of visitors through our doors during peak season, it is lovely to see the people in the Islands getting to enjoy the Distillery out of season and it is extremely rewarding knowing that we are helping out in a little way.

We would hope that this is something we can get involved with every year.”

“Our involvement in the Respitality Global Network spearheaded by Shared Care Scotland has been an invaluable resource. Not only does it provide an opportunity to exchange ideas around the world but it also re-energises our passion and commitment to supporting individuals and families in our community”.



Influencing Respitality beyond Scotland

During 2023, we were honoured to see the Respitality model showcased and celebrated with the publication of ‘Connected by Care’, a research report by Professor Lynn Minnaert of Edinburgh Napier University. Professor Minnaert has many years experience researching tourism around the world, including social tourism. During the process, Professor Minnaert interviewed unpaid carers, donors and delivery partners to understand how the model works in practice. The research helped us to celebrate what makes Respitality so unique and beneficial to everyone involved.

The main benefits carers get from Respitality breaks are:

- ▶ A break from routine and opportunity for new experiences
- ▶ A chance to relax and be taken care of
- ▶ An opportunity to foster relationships
- ▶ A sign of appreciate from the community
- ▶ Being able to return to the caring role with renewed energy

The research also helped to explore the barriers carers may face when attempting to access short breaks in Scotland, and what inspires donors to support Respitality.

As well as celebrating what the model does well, it also provided Shared Care Scotland with feedback on recommendations, which we will consider as part of our 2024-2025 planning. The main points raised were:

- ▶ Continuing the keep the process simple and lean, particularly on a local level so that paperwork doesn’t become a barrier for carers accessing breaks or for delivery partners being able to deliver the breaks
- ▶ Additional training and advice for delivery partners specifically around donor engagement
- ▶ Introduction of procedures for emergencies and risk mitigation

This research will also enable us to support and influence other organisations internationally to consider adding Respitality to their short breaks offering for unpaid carers.

During 2023, we attended and hosted a workshop at the International Short Breaks Association conference in Wroclaw, Poland. The aim of the conference is for countries across the world to understand what the landscape of short breaks looks like in different countries, and any learning we can take and implement in our own country. We were also joined by various other organisations from Scotland who support unpaid carers. The main theme of our Respitality workshop was how we encourage

the tourism industry to support us, and how we maintain strong relationships with them.

Additionally, we led on and developed our Respitality Global Network, with membership in Canada, England and Wales. This consists of quarterly virtual meetings to share resources and learning from our respective organisations. We were also part of various discussions with organisations in Wales, England and Australia to showcase Respitality, and how a similar model can be replicated.

What we plan to build on in 2024:

- ▶ Continue to work closely the Respitality Global Network individually and collectively to share our learning and influence the development of this concept in other parts of the world with quarterly meetings, hosting a virtual platform and offering 1:1 conversations and support
- ▶ Plan a 10th anniversary celebration event with our stakeholders to look back on our achievements with Respitality, and what our plans are for the years ahead.

“[Since 2022], 105 unpaid caregivers have received a chance to rest and rejuvenate through the generosity of over 40 donors! Shared Care Scotland’s support and mentorship during our development stage and throughout implementation has been invaluable. We cannot thank them enough for sharing their expertise with us and for spearheading the Global Respitality Network to allow for continuous collaboration and shared learning.”



“Getting [...] out of the house allowed [the young carer] to be less isolated being around other children. It let her be a child again. It gave her the ability to switch off, and know that the world won't fall apart if she's not at home.”



Summary

Hitting new records of donor support and carer access in 2023 has been an amazing achievement for Respitality, despite all the potential barriers the social care and tourism sectors have faced, and continue to face. In light of this, we remain pragmatic in our approach.

Recruitment and retention of staff, replacement care availability and stretched budgets are just some of the issues the social care sector face, which will continue to impact on the progress our delivery partners will have in growing and delivering Respitality locally. In the tourism sector, we are already beginning to see the impact of new short term let regulations in Scotland, with donors unable to commit to donations, or selling their businesses. Forecasts from the sector have also indicated that many tourism businesses have low or short-term cash reserves, which may also impact on their future plans to invest in social tourism support.

Despite the risks identified, we continue to stay ambitious and optimistic about what 2024 brings. Investing in our network of delivery partners is at the heart of our future plans – the wealth of skills, knowledge and passion they hold is what makes this model such a success. And one of the strengths of our model identified in the Connected By Care research was our ‘personal touch’ with donors, making Respitality all the more appealing to support with ease and joy, which we will continue to build upon.

Finally, as well as our ‘business as usual’ activity, we are fast approaching our double digit birthday, therefore we plan to devote time in 2024 to evaluate where Respitality has been, where it needs to go and what we need to do to get there. We have some exciting development plans to get started on.





Unit 2, Dunfermline Business Centre
Izatt Avenue
Dunfermline
KY11 3BZ

01383 622462

respitality@sharedcarescotland.com

respitality.sharedcarescotland.org.uk

#MakeACarersDay



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Registered charity SC 161033