



Respitality impact report 2025





Welcome to the 2025 Respitality impact report – a milestone year marking a decade of delivering meaningful, community-driven short breaks for unpaid carers across Scotland. This report presents the programme’s achievements against the targets and deliverables agreed with The Scottish Government, who fund and champion the national development of Respitality.

Respitality is a trusted social tourism programme in its tenth year, delivered nationally by Shared Care Scotland with the support of local carer organisations and an ever-growing network of hospitality, tourism and leisure partners. Together, we remove social, financial and emotional barriers by connecting carers with short breaks that are easy to access, close to home and tailored to what matters most to them. These breaks help carers feel valued, respected and re-energised, reinforcing the vital role they play in Scotland’s communities.

Our model has evolved significantly over the last decade. What began as a small number of donated breaks has grown into a nationally recognised model of social tourism in action, rooted in local relationships and strengthened by innovative approaches developed across Scotland. Increasingly, Respitality breaks are hyper-local, community-based and designed in partnership with carers themselves, reflecting what works, what’s accessible and what people genuinely need.

We are grateful for the long-standing support of The Scottish Government, our delivery partners and the many businesses, organisations and individuals who contribute to the programme. Their continued commitment ensures Respitality remains a sustainable, high-impact way of widening access to meaningful short breaks. As Scotland looks toward the implementation of a right to a break, this collaborative effort has never been more important.

Amy & Kerry
Respitality HQ

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Our valued guests: unpaid carers

Respitivity’s mission is to enhance the lives of unpaid carers across Scotland by providing meaningful short breaks through strong, sustainable partnerships with hospitality, leisure, and tourism businesses. We create moments of rest, joy, and connection when they are needed most, demonstrating how tourism can be a lasting force for good in our communities.

Unpaid carers are at the heart of everything we do at Shared Care Scotland. By championing and leading on Respitivity as a social tourism programme, we aim to

break down barriers that unpaid carers may experience when attempting to access breaks, whilst also changing perceptions on what a meaningful short break can look like.

2025 TOP HEADLINES



2,649

carers accessed a short break from their caring routine via Respitivity – a 25% increase from 2024!

Only **8% of breaks donated were unallocated.** Reasons for unallocated breaks include (but not limited to): transport barriers; lack of replacement care for unpaid carers that required it; short notice breaks not providing enough lead in time; and breaks not meeting carers’ needs.

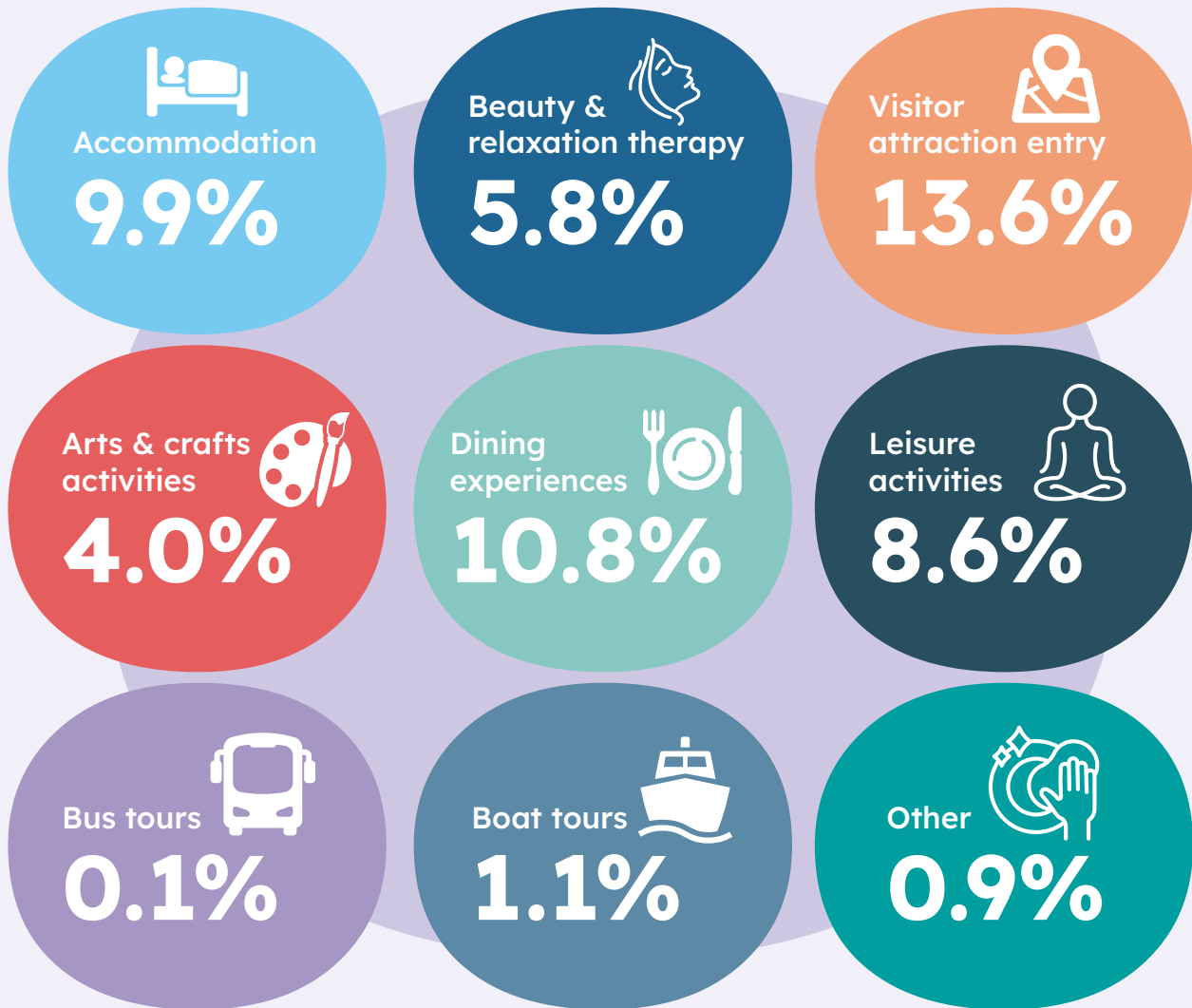


90%

of carers chose to take their Respitivity break in their own local authority area. We have observed a move towards breaks closer to home through our programme over the past two years.

Positioning Respitivity for young carers began as a long-term priority in 2025. We’re seeing early collaboration between delivery partners and organisations supporting young carers to make Respitivity a viable short breaks option. We will continue developing this work and share learning across the network in 2026.





Arts tickets

1.3%

Cinema tickets

8.3%

Sports tickets

20.1%

Theatre tickets

15.4%



The most accessed type of break was sporting tickets (20%), closely followed by theatre tickets (15%) and visitor attraction entry (13%). For the past three years, we have continued to see a consistent trend towards shorter, easy access ‘day out’ breaks through Respitality. This is reflective in what carers told us in our [‘Exploring unpaid carers experiences of short breaks and respite care survey’](#) in 2024. When asked their preference of the types of breaks they would like to access, nearly 40% of over 1,000 carers said they would prefer to spend their time attending events or entertainment, such as movies, concerts or museums.

DID YOU KNOW?

The top five regions that Respitivity breaks were taken in Scotland in 2025 were: Edinburgh (22%), Falkirk (18%), Perth and Kinross (15%), Dundee (8%) and Highlands (7%).

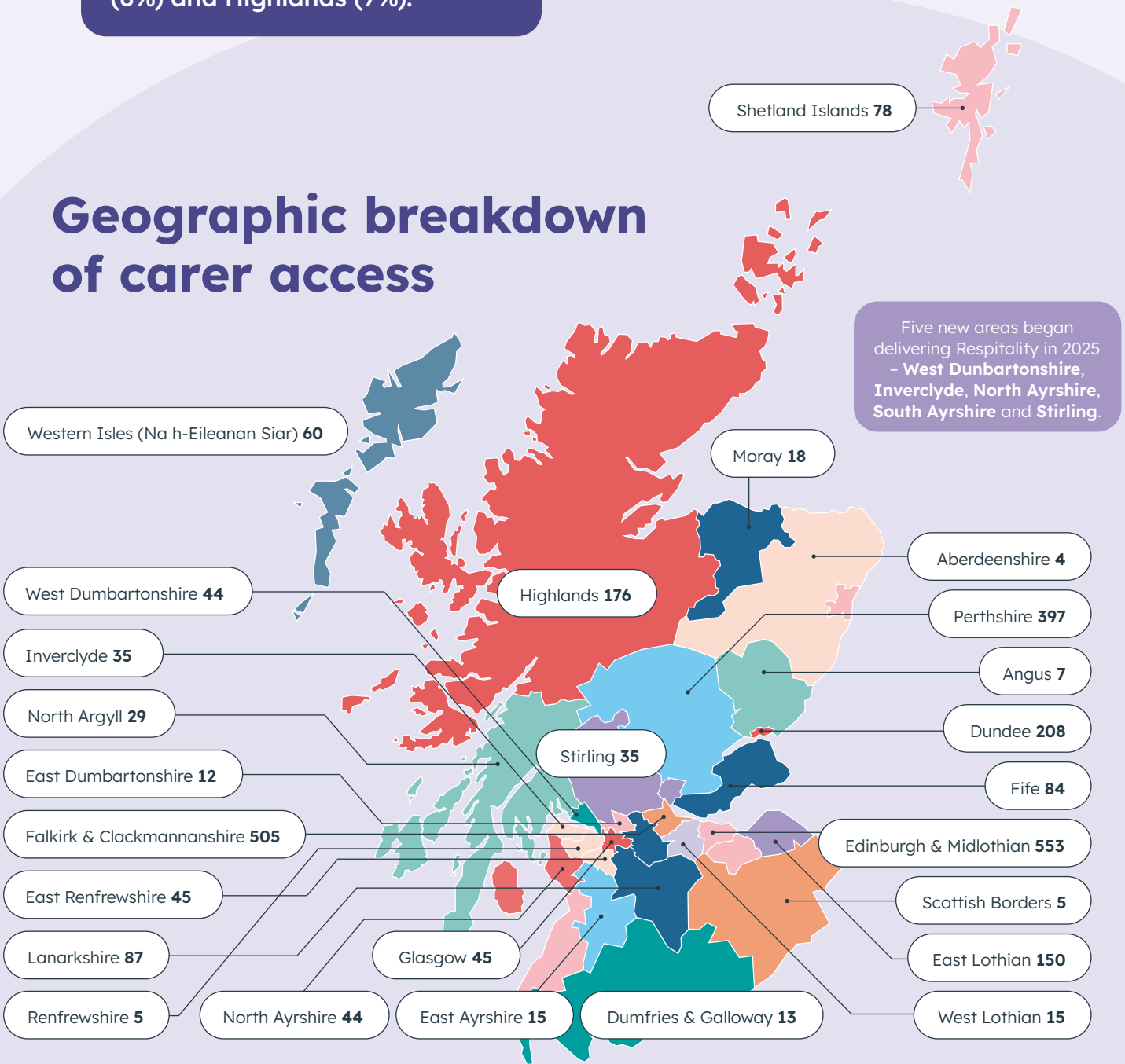
WE COMMITTED

to supporting 10,000 carers since our initial launch.

WE ACHIEVED

by supporting 10,964 carers!

Geographic breakdown of carer access



WE COMMITTED

to keeping unallocated breaks donated under 15% in 2025.

WE ACHIEVED

by keeping this under 8%!

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 3,000 Respitivity breaks were taken across Scotland in 2025.

Kickstarting a new hobby: Steven's story

Steven was offered the opportunity to attend Falkirk Football Club matches this season. He is a carer for his wife who has Parkinson's Disease. He had been caring for his wife for two years before seeking support from Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre. Before being offered breaks to the football, Steven said he felt stressed out and was becoming increasingly depressed. His wife's diagnosis had a significant impact on both of their lives and Steven found the changes very challenging.

Surprisingly, football was never a sport that Steven had ever been interested in, and whilst he had attended one or two football matches in the past, it was not something he considered doing more regularly. Steven had never been to a Falkirk Football Club match but when he was offered the tickets this season, he decided to give it a go. He went to his first Falkirk match on 26 October, and the rest is history. Steven is now a fan of the game, and he was delighted to be able to attend a number of matches across the 2024-2025 season. Steven said that he loved the atmosphere of the Falkirk matches, particularly the crowd and the drums being played during the games – this really added to the experience! By attending matches, Steven was able to meet new people who shared his new-found love for the game. He felt that this break was beneficial as it was something he could do for himself, where he could switch off and not worry about his caring responsibilities for a while: **“the pie and Bovril were good too”**. Steven said that after taking these breaks to Falkirk Football Club matches, he felt lifted. He could go to the Stadium and leave his worries and stresses behind. Steven said, **“If I'm honest, I enjoyed the football so much that I am really missing it now that the season is over”**.

Steven was thrilled to be able to attend the final match of the season where he watched the team he had grown to love win the championship. He said the atmosphere was incredible. He was so pleased that his team were being promoted to the Scottish Premiership that he has now purchased his very own season ticket so he can head to every match for the 2025-2026 season!

After a fantastic season, Steven is thoroughly looking forward to next year. This opportunity has truly made a massive difference to his life in such a short space of time. The offer came at just the right time and not only has it given him breaks throughout the season, but it has opened doors for the future as he now has a regular hobby that he truly enjoys. Steven has also been attending the under 18's matches to support one of his family members who plays for them, which provides even more opportunity to take a break away from his caring role. Steven said: **“I am so thankful for what Falkirk Foundation do for the community – they probably don't realise the difference they are making.”** He feels that by donating these breaks to carers they are having a huge impact.



Our partners: local delivery network

For Respite to be personalised and integrated into local communities, we work with a network of local delivery partners. We recruit and support local delivery partners, all of whom have a role in offering information

and support to local unpaid carers, including short breaks. Our local delivery partners also have a role in developing and maintaining positive relationships within their local tourism sector.

2025 TOP HEADLINES



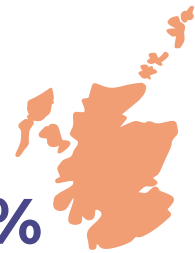
We supported 31 delivery partners to **deliver Respite across more than 29 regions.**



We welcomed **five new regions** to the Respite network.

94%

of all breaks taken where sourced locally by the network – the highest percentage we have observed in the 10 years of Respite.



LEARNING, COLLABORATING AND IMPLEMENTING

We created meaningful opportunities for the network to share learning and support one another's development.

- ▶ **Full network meetings** are a space for our national network to provide updates, share practice, and discuss forward planning.
- ▶ **Regional meetings** focus on local strengths, challenges and opportunities, helping partners identify region-specific trends and form new collaborative connections.
- ▶ **Drop-in meetings** offer informal and flexible support throughout the year, giving a clear picture of real-time operational challenges and practical solutions.
- ▶ **Network-wide training programme** which included building and maintaining donor relationships, as well as online sessions on how to utilise social media to promote Respite.



Respitality delivery in practice

As part of the reporting process, we ask deliver partners to report on Respitality delivery in practice.

REWARDING

The network told us what some of the most enjoyable aspects of Respitality delivery are:

“I absolutely love the high of being donated tickets to something (especially when it’s something you’d love to go do yourself) and picturing someone getting to enjoy the event! This is such an incredible job for highlighting the power of just asking! It’s funny because some of the donations I’ve asked for, people have come back and offered more than I would have even imagined.”

“When you match a carer to their ‘perfect break’ and they tell you what a wonderful time they had and what a difference it made to them and/or their families! This makes all the hard work worthwhile.”

CHALLENGING

Some of the challenges shared by delivery partners when delivering Respitality include:

- ▶ **Time required to develop and deliver Respitality**, from initial planning to managing each break.
- ▶ **Respitality being deprioritised** when staff must focus on funded work or projects with higher organisational priority.
- ▶ **Limited capacity**, as Respitality is often absorbed into an existing role with little dedicated time.
- ▶ **The need to build strong local donor relationships and maintain them**, which is time-intensive and requires ongoing attention.
- ▶ **In some areas, only one team member is responsible for short breaks**, reducing overall capacity and slowing delivery.
- ▶ **Administration**, including the systems and processes required to coordinate, record, and report on Respitality delivery.

COLLABORATIVE

Building a break is a concept we have seen mainly in conjunction with Time To Live funding, but we are beginning to observe more examples of other ways breaks are being built:

- ▶ Spa vouchers purchased with a monetary donation to be specifically spent on Respitality breaks.
- ▶ Respitality stays and tickets combined with a grant to cover spa, meals, and fuel.



- ▶ Two Respitality donations provided a full dinner, B&B, and café visit on Harris for a carer.
- ▶ Mother and daughter used a microgrant and a donated 'dine at home' voucher.



“One break that stands out to me involves a carer we’ve supported for several years who works in one of our local hotels. During a conversation with her, she kindly offered to donate three overnight stays with breakfast for two. This gesture was particularly meaningful because it came from someone who deeply values the support she has received from us over the years. It was wonderful to see how much she wanted to give something back to other carers in our community. For us, this example really captures the spirit of Respitality – creating connections and moments of kindness that make a real difference”.

DID YOU KNOW?

Respitality was first launched in Fife as a pilot back in 2014, before officially launching with five other regions in 2015.



“I’m particularly proud of successfully setting up Respitality in our area. It’s something that had been on our radar for a long time, but previous management hadn’t had the opportunity to take it forward. As soon as I was given the chance, I was determined to dive right in. Despite not having a dedicated Respitality worker and balancing this alongside my other responsibilities, I’ve managed to secure generous donations in a short space of time. Seeing the programme come to life and begin making a difference for carers has been a real highlight for me.”



The evolution of Respitality short breaks

Thanks to the creative and motivated network, we have seen Respitality evolve further within the short breaks area. Break donations from the tourism sector remain our main source of breaks, however we are seeing an increase in other ways that breaks are being merged and created. We see the evolution of these breaks as an exciting opportunity to provide extra flexibility for carers, and a way to include more supporters from other sectors.

A small proportion of the support we received were not direct donations to Respitality in the traditional sense, but more **‘in the spirit of’**. These included:

- ▶ Monetary donations from businesses and individuals help fund support for unpaid carers through their local carer organisations. In some cases, these donations have been used to provide carers with breaks within the tourism sector.
- ▶ ‘Paying it forward’ where breaks are provided after cancellations are made by paying customers.
- ▶ Breaks donated through other programmes such as Itison Us, that can result in businesses supporting Respitality in the future.

We have many companies and individuals that are keen to support Respitality, but do not own or manage a tourism business to offer a break donation, so they have been able to provide **alternative donations**.

- ▶ The business owner of [Taylor Made Kilts](#) in Falkirk donated two tickets for a concert in Glasgow, requesting that these are offered to a young carer.
- ▶ A monetary donation from [Thermo Fisher Scientific](#) was used to purchase several breaks for carers including wellbeing/ beauty therapy treatments and vouchers for a local garden centre.
- ▶ Monetary donations from [Bakkafrost Scotland](#)’s Community fund has offered various short break opportunities for carers including cinema tickets and overnight stays.

DID YOU KNOW? In 2025, we piloted a series of joint meetings bringing together both Respitality and Time to Live partners. These sessions enabled us to explore different approaches to strengthening the short breaks toolkit and to identify areas of shared learning and collaboration.



“We secured funding from a fish farm to pay for Respitality breaks. This fund was used to provide self-catering accommodation for a carer and his two children, as there was nothing available on the portal which met their needs. He was also given a voucher for a café in that locality, so they could enjoy a meal together. It brought a lot of satisfaction to us to be able to provide a break tailored to his needs, as he was going through a particularly difficult time with his caring role. His caring role had impacted significantly on his financial situation, due to hospitalisation on the mainland of the cared-for person.”

Peace, nature, and a book: Melissa's story

Melissa was offered a two-night stay at Brucefield Estate in March 2025. This break was a cancellation which was offered to her last minute. Melissa could not believe her luck as she happened to be on annual leave the week of the break. This Respitability break came up at the perfect time and she felt it was just meant to be.

Melissa cares for her two parents whilst working full time and her caring role takes up most of her free time outside of work. Before being offered the break, Melissa was very stressed as her caring role and also her work can be very emotionally draining. She felt she was on the road to burn out and this break was just what she needed.



“I had taken time off work to try and re-centre when I was informed of the break – perfect timing.”

“A break like that does wonders for me mentally, and I truly feel refuelled. I honestly can't thank you enough for giving me this opportunity. Thank you so much!”

Staying at Brucefield Estate was an amazing experience for Melissa. She said it was a beautiful location and extremely relaxing. She enjoyed the peace and quiet of the Schenbothy, enjoyed being in nature and **“just spending time with a book! A rare luxury.”**

Melissa said that the staff were friendly and helpful which made her break even better. The location itself was so peaceful, and she had lovely weather while staying at Brucefield Estate, allowing her to spend time out in the fresh air.

Brucefield Estate is pet friendly, and so, she was able to take her dog with her to enjoy the break together! Melissa felt this was a very refreshing experience.

Donating the breaks: our supporters and donors

By partnering with Respitality, private and public sector tourism play a vital role in demonstrating how their respective sectors can be a force for good – creating positive social impact, strengthening communities and supporting the wellbeing of unpaid carers across Scotland.

“It’s a win-win situation. It costs us little to let someone stay in a room which would otherwise be empty and we are more than happy to donate the cost of dinner and look after someone who rarely gets a break. Before we were asked to take part in the Respitality scheme, we had always hoped to be able to offer respite to carers in some way or other. The scheme couldn’t be more perfect for us. I don’t think you need to do anything to improve the experience for the businesses.”



2025 TOP HEADLINES



We were supported by **346** businesses, organisations and individuals to create break opportunities.



77% of previous donors donated again in 2025, which is a great indication of relationships between donors and our network being strong and positive.



This year, **63%** were first time donors, which we see as a positive reflection of the efforts around promoting Respitality both locally and nationally.

£231,880

is the estimated value of breaks donated this year, the highest ever donation rate the programme has received.

Collaboration beyond breaks

Despite a positive shift towards more localised and sustainable break offers, we have also seen many successful collaborations nationally in 2025, supporting the movement across all regions. Some examples include:

- ▶ [Dewars Aberfeldy Distillery](#) offered cask tasting tours and lunch throughout the year. We initially seen this offer being taken by local carers and those staying at the Ben property in Pitlochry, however we have seen many other carers travelling from further away to visit. The feedback we receive is very much about how inclusive and accessible the Dewars team make it for those attending.

“The staff at Dewars were so kind, really made me feel welcome and special. They knew my name and knew I was there on a Respitality break, the table for lunch was reserved in a lovely area and they just generally made me feel special. The whole experience was relaxed, informative, tasty and welcoming! I would definitely recommend this as an attraction to visit.”

- ▶ [Hostelling Scotland](#) provided Respitality with 20 nights of overnight stays in any hostel across Scotland. They are extremely keen to provide experiences for carers that are meaningful and eagerly ask for feedback on how to tailor their support. They also provide us with complementary meeting spaces for our networks to benefit from.

“The children and I are so grateful for the wonderful holiday we had in Aviemore. The hostel was excellent, and we were very lucky with the weather. It was such a great break for us all. My [six year old] son said he had one of the best days of his life!”



- ▶ [Hut of Wellbeing](#) who offer various nights stays for our Tayside, Fife and Angus carers. Their hut is off grid and is part of a growing movement towards ‘hutting’ as a way to support those with chronic illnesses. The Hut of Wellbeing team see the benefit of offering breaks to unpaid carers and expanded their criteria to include them via Respitality. To allow the local network to see the site first-hand, the participating partners from the network were invited for a visit to look at the Hut and its surroundings.

“We had a carer who had a break here, they loved it so much they are desperate to come back... I can really imagine the benefits of carers having a break here.”

- ▶ [Kind Holidays by IDILIQ](#), who provided week long stays in self-catering lodges in Perthshire. They also took part in our Respitality Reflections’ podcast series, and regularly promote their support of us when encouraging other hoteliers to take part in programmes like Respitality.

“The programme has been amazing. It’s touched the hearts of literally everyone in our organisation. [Unpaid carers] are the most wonderful, grateful guests you could ever imagine...it’s a complete pleasure to get to know [them] and to bring a little of joy and solace to.”

RESPITALITY



- ▶ This year also saw our long-standing arrangement with [The Ben](#) to provide accommodation in Pitlochry – exclusive to Respitality – come to an end. This was due to various issues outside of our control including an aging building, and increasing costs to both Shared Care Scotland and The Ben to maintain the property. We are extremely grateful to The Ben for their support over the past eight years in providing the accommodation and allowing hundreds of carers an opportunity for a short break. Our relationship remains strong with The Ben and we hope to find future collaboration opportunities when they arise.

WE COMMITTED
to generating £1m in donations by the end of 2025 since our initial launch.

WE ACHIEVED
over £1.1m in donations by the end of 2025!



DID YOU KNOW?
Respitality was a concept created in the USA in the 1990s.

“I’m particularly proud of sustaining and strengthening our relationship with Morton in the Community over the last six months. Their decision to re-donate 20 tickets per home game for this season is a direct result of the trust and collaboration we’ve built. This ongoing partnership means carers can continue to access meaningful breaks that bring joy and connection, and it demonstrates how community relationships can lead to long-term impact rather than one-off gestures.”





From receiving help to paying it forward: Donny's story

The Western Isles Community Care Forum represents voluntary care organisations throughout the islands, serving as many as 450 carers and service users. Its Respite programme aims to provide vital short breaks from routine for unpaid carers when they need it most.

The Forum was nominated for the community funding by Bakkafrost Scotland's Donny Macdonald, who has first-hand experience of how invaluable its support can be.

Donny, Bakkafrost Scotland's Broodstock Site Manager at Langass Hatchery on North Uist, said: **"My partner Claire suffered a stroke last year and was taken to hospital in Glasgow.**

"We have two young children and it has been a tough time, both emotionally and financially. The Forum helped us with travel and accommodation costs and we are very grateful.

"We think it's important unpaid carers take some time for themselves, where they can just switch off for a while."

"When you are faced with a situation like that, every penny counts. What the Forum does is really worthwhile and I'm pleased Bakkafrost Scotland has been able to help them."

Peggy Mackay, Co-ordinator for the Forum, said: **"What we try to do with the Respite Project, particularly for our younger carers, is give them a bit of time off, whether that is through tickets to go to the cinema or a meal at their local hotel.**

Bakkafrost Scotland's Community Fund offers support for projects that promote health and wellbeing, stewardship of the natural environment or economic development within the communities it serves.



Respitality turns 10



“Delivering Respitality across Glasgow has been a rewarding journey. It’s a privilege to support unpaid carers – many of whom rarely prioritise their own well-being – with meaningful moments of rest and connection. [...] Together, we’re making space for carers to breathe, reflect, and create memories. Here’s to another decade of difference-making! Happy 10th Birthday, Respitality!”



This year marked a decade of Respitality in full operation since its official launch in 2015. To celebrate, we decided to do various local and online events. In doing so, our hope was to respectfully share the stories of everyone who has been a part of the Respitality journey, and to thank them for their support. We also utilised the opportunity to celebrate whilst raising awareness of carers’ needs, and the importance of short breaks provision.

► ‘Respitality Reflections’ Podcast

We launched a limited podcast series called ‘Respitality Reflections’. The themes of the episodes centred around how Respitality began in Scotland; the motivation behind businesses donating; how it is delivered by local carer organisations; and the positive impact on carers. These episodes are now great resources for our local network and supporters to learn more about our history, values and ambitions.

► Scrapbook of memories

An online scrapbook where Respitality stakeholders were encouraged to share memories, photos and quotes from the last 10 years.

► Celebrating 10 year impact report

The publication of our 10 year impact report, highlighting important milestones, meaningful stories and our ambitions for the future, which were promoted across our website, social media channels and shared by various tourism ambassadors.

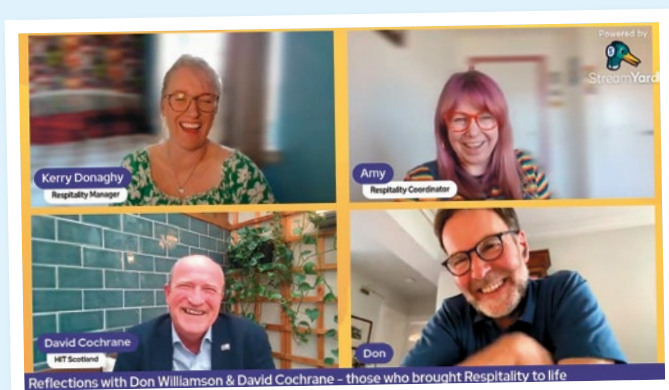


► Hybrid network meetings

In 2025, marking Respitality’s 10-year anniversary, national sessions were delivered in a hybrid format, enabling delivery partners to join both in person and online. We extend our thanks to **VOCAL** and **Lanarkshire Carers Centre** for hosting these events.

► Respitality and the global network webinar

Shared Care Scotland hosted an international webinar showcasing how Respitality supports unpaid carers globally. Speakers from Canada and England shared their experiences delivering similar programmes, highlighting international approaches to Respitality and the value of a global network in strengthening local delivery.





‘Carer Days Out’

We felt it was appropriate to use this milestone as an opportunity to create additional short break opportunities for carers across Scotland through ‘Carer Days Out’. These new opportunities were made possible through the dedication and collaboration of our valued local network partners and donors.



Glasgow Carers Partnership and [Mackintosh at the Willow](#) hosted a tour, workshop and morning tea for carers residing in Glasgow.

“I had a happy, relaxing time and met many lovely people.”

“It was so good to be prioritised as being ‘special’. In my family situation, my needs come last over others.”

In partnership with Fife Voluntary Action [Dunnikier Park Community Golf](#) hosted a ‘Resptali-TEE’ park golf and lunch event for carers. A day full of fun, socialising and being outside in nature.

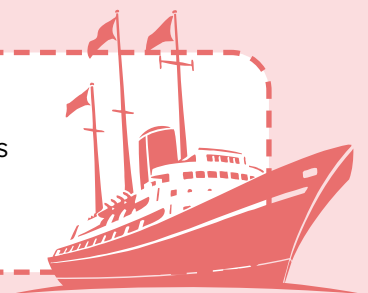


Forever
Edinburgh

Residents in the EH postcode were offered donated and heavily discounted days out during Carers Rights Day, thanks to a national partnership we formed with the [Forever Edinburgh](#) team.

“Big thank you [...] on the tour of the Royal Britannia Yacht today, what a wonderful and beautiful experience. Glad to see the yacht is well maintained and superb condition, lots of very interesting information, well worth the visit.”

A tour of the [Royal Yacht Britannia](#), accessible for carers across Scotland during the October school holiday period.





V&A and Dundee Carers Centre hosted a tour and refreshments of their latest exhibition for carers residing in Dundee, along with a crafts workshop.

“This is something I would never get the chance to do, it’s amazing...I genuinely think this has been one of my best days out!”

“We’re proud to support Respitality and feel truly honoured to play even a small part in such an inspiring initiative. As Scotland’s Design Museum, we believe in the power of creativity to offer moments of rest, reflection and connect. It’s a joy to help celebrate the incredible milestone of 10 years of Respitality and all the positive impact it continues to make.”

“Got exercise on the walk and learned things about the city that I would never have found out otherwise.”

For carers who are passionate about Scottish history, Invisible Cities hosted an Edinburgh walking tour.



Foxlake, Jaybirds Larder and Carers of East Lothian hosted a water assault course day out for thrill seekers.

“I had an amazing time. I felt the fear and did it anyway with the encouragement of my carer pals”.

“It got me out of the house. It was a change of pace [and] something new [to do]...[Spending] time with other people who are experiencing the same life as me [and] seeing friends and catching up. Just being able to talk and laugh together makes all the difference.”

Scottish Crannog Centre and PKAVS Carers Hub hosted a VIP day for carers residing in rural Perthshire with workshops and lunch.



International learning: our global network



Our global network continue to carry out learning exchanges with one another, and we have started to develop the network as a shared responsibility, with partners based in the wider UK and Canada hosting different sessions to share their learning. We are delighted to see the network sharing responsibility over the learning and operation of the group and feel this is creating a very

positive and passionate dynamic that will inspire future collaborations and opportunities.

We have also built a strong relationship with Carers Leeds in providing them with consultancy support to their West Yorkshire Carers Consortium, as they launched their [Caring Kind Project](#) pilot – their own social tourism programme.

Q&A with Gemma Povey, Project Manager of The Caring Kind Project

What has been achieved in 2025 regarding carers supporting, relationships in the tourism industry formed?

“The Caring Kind Project was launched in 2025 by a consortium of five local carer organisations across West Yorkshire, at a time when resources for carer breaks have been steadily diminishing – and in some areas funding has been lost entirely. The creation of a structured, sustainable break-gifting model, based on Respitality’s model, has been inspired.

In establishing a reliable pathway through which unpaid carers can access meaningful breaks again, it’s helped to restore a sense of optimism among local carer organisations, who are working in an environment of continued budget restrictions.

Alongside this, we have successfully built new relationships across the hospitality, leisure, tourism and cultural sectors. With a clear brand and simple proposition, we have engaged local businesses as Giving Partners and demonstrated that supporting carers can be straightforward, flexible, and rewarding.

Importantly, all Giving Partners onboarded in 2025 have continued their commitment into 2026. This continuity suggests that the process works well for businesses as well as carers – which gives us further optimism for long-term sustainability.”

What in particular with the consultation work with SCS has helped develop The Caring Kind Project?

“The generosity of the Respite team from the idea stage – talking to Don and then to Kerry, gave us the confidence to go with this idea and to replicate the model on a West Yorkshire footprint. Kerry shared learning from the Respite experience and helped us think through what would work in West Yorkshire. Her support on the bid was invaluable, and her guidance throughout the project setup helped the project get off the ground quickly – from staff recruitment, project design and commissioning the digital platform.

The support from Shared Care Scotland ensured that when the project and the website launched, they were operational. The consultation streamlined the route to success, helping us map the process, build the project’s infrastructure, manage the break allocation and distribution through the website. This allowed us to avoid early missteps that could have damaged credibility or resulted in the carer having a bad experience. Without the Respite team’s insights, we would likely have spent significantly longer refining processes – potentially risking donor confidence in the early stages.

Being able to talk about the consultation from Respite, has also provided

strategic reassurance to new leads and potential partners. Demonstrating that we are replicating a model with a proven 10-year track record gives confidence to our stakeholders – and to ourselves as a small team of two!”

Any particular quotes from carers/donors or yourselves on the difference having a project like this in your area has made?

Carer quote:

“The experience was beautiful and dignified. After the massage, I was left with a warm towel; it was so relaxing. The communication was great, and I felt so tuned in and so relaxed. The staff even commented on how different I was when I left. I felt more patient with my dad afterwards; it just felt different. This was something I just wouldn’t have done for myself, but as it was all taken care of, I made the time and literally came out walking on air!”

Anything else that you think is relevant?

“Ultimately, this has been a perfect example of sharing best practice within and across the social service sector. In addition, having the opportunity to be a part of the Global Respite Group helps us feel more grounded and less isolated in the work we do. Knowing that there are people facing simpler challenges, but also being motivated by the same outcomes, is a great support.”

DID YOU KNOW? The positive impact of a social tourism programme includes improved family relationships; increased confidence in those taking part; general wellbeing has elevated as a result of memory making; and even longer-term learning and positive behaviour change.



A family's first holiday: Mary's story

Mary is a devoted mother who provides care for her 16-year-old daughter, who has Down Syndrome and requires significant emotional, personal, and practical support, including assistance with daily tasks such as toileting.

In addition to her caring responsibilities, Mary also works full-time and is raising two other children. Life at home is understandably hectic, and the constant demands placed on her have been a source of mounting stress. Financial pressures have only added to the strain on Mary and her family.

The family had never experienced a holiday together – something that could offer not just rest, but also meaningful bonding time. Recognising the emotional toll this was taking, the family's support worker identified that a short break could make a real difference, a chance for Mary to rest and recharge, and an opportunity for the whole family to create joyful memories and enjoy time together.

In response, the support worker reached out to the Respitality Coordinator, who recommended a short family break at Duchally. To help ease the financial burden, an application was also submitted to the Time to Live fund to support the family with travel and food expenses.



A few days into their break, Mary got in touch: **“Hi, just to say thank you so much for making this holiday happen. We arrived safely to this beautiful home and everyone is having the best time ever. The service is amazing and staffs very responsive when we need help. The kids are exploring different places, had swimming yesterday, plays football, Jane played chess, enjoys food at the cafe and still expecting much more in the coming days. God bless you a million times.”**

After the break, Mary got back in touch: **“Hi, we returned safely to Glasgow yesterday and as a family, we are saying a big thank you to you for making us have such an amazing experience. Everything was beautiful – the house, the food was so fresh, first timers in swimming pool were so excited, and the bouncy castle was the best for Jane. If not for you, we will not have such opportunity. God bless.”**



Conclusion

A clear theme from this year’s work is the power of local. 90% of carers accessed breaks close to home, and 94% of all breaks taken were sourced from local businesses and community partners. This reflects a growing recognition that localised short breaks can be equally as restorative. They simply need to be accessible, dignified, and shaped around individual lives.

Across the network, innovation is flourishing. Teams are designing flexible, personalised breaks that respond to carers’ real-world circumstances, building multi-layered offers, and weaving together donated stays, microgrants, and in-kind support. These approaches show how social tourism can evolve to meet diverse needs while strengthening the communities in which carers live.

At the same time, this success highlights a pivotal moment for the wider short breaks landscape. Demand for meaningful, accessible opportunities is rising, particularly as Scotland moves closer to implementing the right to a break for unpaid carers. Many local delivery partners are reaching capacity, operating with limited resources despite clear evidence that Respite delivers exceptional outcomes, connection, and early-intervention value. The programme is well-positioned – trusted, established, and already delivering at scale – but maintaining this impact will require ensuring local areas have the stability needed to keep pace with momentum.

“I’m really proud that we now have businesses who donate regularly. Even if the donations are small, they always show up and genuinely appreciate the Carers Centre and the work we do. I’m very grateful for these connections and collaborations – they mean a lot to us and to the project.”

Looking ahead, our ambitions are bold and grounded. We will continue strengthening and expanding our network, deepening relationships with supporters, developing international partnerships, and refining our model so that it remains accessible, dignified, and impactful. Above all, we will continue championing the voices and lived experiences of unpaid carers, ensuring their needs shape every evolution of the programme.

Respite has never been just about providing breaks. It is about community, compassion, and the belief that carers deserve more than recognition – they deserve time, space, and the chance to feel valued.





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