



What's New for Carers? October 2011

Welcome to the monthly e-bulletin from the Carers' Information Service - designed to keep the carers of Croydon, and the professionals who support them, up to date with events and services in between our bi-monthly newsletter, *Carers News*. If you find this e-bulletin helpful please pass it on to a friend or colleague who you think might benefit.

Best wishes

Helen Thompson
Manager
Carers' Information Service

Events and Activities

Croydon Question Time events enable you to talk to Croydon's decision makers such as councillors, the police and senior council officers. Come along on Tuesday 18 October from 7.30 – 9 pm to St John's Community Hall, Upper Selsdon Road CR2 8DD to raise any issues you have about life in Croydon. We urge carers to attend this session and help bring carers issues onto the agenda – from our recent enquiries we know that many carers are worried about charges for day care services, care package contributions (especially disability related expenditure), cuts to organisations that support carers, the standard of care agency provision locally and council housing provision for people with disabilities. The decision makers need to hear from you! To register your interest, please email communications@croydon.gov.uk or call 020 8726 6000. See also www.croydon.gov.uk/yourcroydonyoursay.

The Riots Communities and Victims Panel is holding a public meeting on Tuesday 18 October with local residents affected by the unrest. This Panel is separate from the Local Independent Review Panel that has been set up in Croydon. The Panel wants to hear from people who were affected by the riots to try and help understand why they happened in the first place and how to prevent any more in the future. Visits are already taking place in other parts of the country affected by the riots, with thousands of letters being sent to communities and organisations nationwide to ask people to come forward with their views. If you would like to speak to the Panel about your experience of the riots then come along to this open public meeting. It would be especially helpful to share whether the riots had any impact on your caring role. If you cannot attend the meeting and would still like to speak to the Panel, they can be contacted by email at riotspanel@communities.gsi.gov.uk or via twitter at @riotspanel, or post to Riots Panel, 6th Floor, Eland House, Bressenden Place SW1E 5DU. See the link below for more information

www.croydononline.org/lirp/independent-riots-communities-and-victims-panel.pdf

Headway South West London will be holding a carers event on 18 October 2011 from 10 am - 1.30 pm at Thompson's Solicitors, 22-24 Worple Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 4DD. The focus of the event will be coping with the first year after brain injury and includes various speakers and information to help you understand the path forward and the tools you'll need. The talks are followed by a relaxed lunch and time to meet with others who are experiencing similar things. This event is free but places are limited. Email: headwaycarers@gmail.com or call Rachel on 077 2286 1642.

National Autistic Society (NAS) Parent Support Group meetings will be held on Wednesday 19 October and Tuesday 29 November, from 10 am – 12 noon at Woodside Children's Centre, Morland Road, Croydon CR0 6NF. The new contact number for the support group is 07833 293263.

The POP Bus Service will be at IKEA on Tuesday 25 October from 10 am – 12 pm giving advice and information to older people. There will be a number of specialist advisors from Age UK Croydon, Croydon Disability Forum and Croydon Equipment Solutions Ltd, as well as a health visitor on hand to answer any questions. See the attached timetable to find out where else the bus will be this month.

The Rethink afternoon carers support group, for carers of an adult with a mental health problem meets on Tuesday 25 October from 2.30 - 4.30 pm at Courtyard House, 1d Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SG. For more details please ring Pauline Fisher on 020 8649 6294.

The MS Society will be holding an information morning for anyone affected by MS, on Thursday 20 October from 10 am - 12 noon at Christ Church Lounge, Christ Church, between 861 and 863 Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2BN. Contact Anne McDermott, MS Support Officer on 020 8656 2155 (weekdays 9 am - 5 pm only) for more details.

Support groups for carers of people with Parkinson's disease meet regularly in Croydon. 'The Other Half' is a group for people with Parkinson's, their carers and families residing in North Croydon. Meetings are usually held on the 3rd Thursday of every month from 2 pm - 4pm at Cornerstone House, 14 Willis Road, Croydon CR0 2XX. The next meeting will be on Thursday 20 October. For further information or help with transport please ring Monique Martial on 0208 653 2179 or Mavis Flynn on 0208 657 2495.

The Carers Group meets on the 2nd Monday each month from 10 - 11.30 am at Courtyard House, 1d Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SG. The group warmly welcomes all carers and past carers of people with Parkinson's. The group offers friendly chat and discussion over a cup of tea or coffee, sometimes with a speaker arranged. Forthcoming meetings will be held on 14 November and 12 December. For further information please contact Jean Brightwell on 020 8654 5484

Early November Dates for Your Diary

The next Hear Us Open Meeting will be held on Tuesday 1 November from 1 pm at CVA Resource Centre, 82 London Road, Croydon CR0 2TB. These meetings are free to anyone with an interest in mental health, including service users, carers, staff and care co-ordinators. The meeting will focus on welfare benefits as well as information about volunteering and how people with mental health problems can be supported to access meaningful employment. Refreshments and live music will be provided. Guest speakers include Mind in Croydon Employment Support Service, Status Employment, Croydon Community Opportunities Service (CCOS), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus and the SLaM Welfare Benefits Department. See the flyer attached or call 020 8681 6888.

You can help Hear Us to raise essential funds for these meetings by voting for them in the NatWest Community Force Scheme, which could see them awarded £6,000 if they receive enough votes. See the link at www.hear-us.org for details.

Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) offers free group, face to face or telephone support to help make family life more successful. A series of workshops on the topic of understanding children's behaviour will be run in November. Contact them on 020 8655 2402 for more information.

Club Soda is running free arts based workshops at Croydon Clocktower on Monday nights from 5 - 7pm. Workshops run until Monday 12 December. All workshops are designed to include participants of all abilities and are delivered by artists with and without learning disabilities. To find out more, email info@clubsoda.org.uk or call 020 8253 1037.

Local News

Carers' Information Service Consultation

We are interested to find out about the experiences of carers who access services at Croydon University Hospital and have the following questions that we are particularly keen to hear responses to:

- Have you ever been admitted to accident and emergency and needed alternative care for the person you look after? Who helped you to achieve this?
- Has the person you care for been an in-patient? Were you consulted, included and recognised as that person's carer?
- Have you been included in hospital discharge discussions?
- Did you become a carer for the first time following a hospital admission? What was your experience?
- Have you received information about sources of support for carers from Croydon University Hospital?

We are pleased to be working with Croydon University Hospital and the Patient Assembly to help raise awareness of the issues affecting carers and we welcome your input. Help us to get it right by calling, emailing or coming to meet with us to share your experiences so that we can help build on good practice and make concrete suggestions for improvement. Contact Helen Thompson on 020 8649 6284, or helenthompson@carersinfo.org.uk.

Consultation on school places for children with SEN

Croydon Council is exploring ways of increasing the number of places available in the borough for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) from September 2012. They have worked with local schools to look at funding and options available and are now seeking the views of parents, children and young people and voluntary sector groups working with these families on their proposals. They are looking to establish two new schools and consolidate provision or make changes in three schools; they are also suggesting working with 10 other mainstream schools to develop specialist resource bases. A more detailed plan can be found at:

www.talk2croydon.co.uk/files/SEN_Consultation_Letter_5-10-11.pdf

There will be open meetings on the following dates:

17 October at Bensham Manor School, Ecclesbourne Road, Thornton Heath CR7 7BN at 6 pm.

19 October (7.00pm) and 21 October (10.30am) at Red Gates School, Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon CR2 8HD.

You can also share your views on the plans by completing the Consultation Form and Equalities Monitoring Form at www.talk2croydon.co.uk/node/4700 and sending it to school.org@croydon.gov.uk by 5 pm on 11 November.

Caring for Someone with a Learning Disability (LD)?

Do you care for someone with a learning disability and are you over 60? Croydon Mencap's carers' service carries out Carer's Assessments on behalf of Social Services. A Carer's Assessment gives carers an opportunity to discuss their needs and the caring role that they carry out. This can result in needs being identified for carers and access to other services. If you have not had a Carer's Assessment in the last year or if your circumstances have changed please call Tanya Fitzgerald on 020 8684 5890.

National News

Siblings Network

Rethink Mental Illness Sibling Network is for anyone whose brother or sister has experienced mental illness. You can get information and advice on coping with mental illness in the family, read sibling stories, and find support as a young sibling, adult sibling, parent or professional. See www.rethink.org/siblings.

Does your child have a mental health condition?

www.puzzledout.com is a new online tool, which gives children and young people an accessible place to speak about their experience of mental health services. Their views will help influence the services they get from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

RNIB Make Money Talk Campaign

For 80 per cent of the public, getting cash out from a cash machine is the fastest and most convenient way to obtain cash, but this still isn't the case for the vast majority of blind and partially sighted people. The RNIB has published a report which marks the beginning of a campaign to make Britain's

ATM network accessible to blind and partially sighted people. See the report below:
www.rnib.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/yourmoney/Documents/Make_money_talk.pdf

Time to Get Your Flu Jab

Although the main priority groups for the flu vaccination campaign are people with an underlying condition, pregnant women and people over 65, we believe that carers should also be included in this group. However, the decision to offer the flu jab to carers is left entirely at the discretion of each surgery. So, if you think it would be helpful to have the vaccination, contact your surgery and explain your situation – let them know what the impact on your caring role would be if you were ill with the flu.

See the following articles for more information:

www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/get-flu-protected/

www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/yourself/takingcareofyourself/Pages/flujobsforcarers.aspx

Concessionary Fares Scheme Axed

Unfortunately the Government has announced that the half price coach ticket scheme which currently provides up to half price travel for over 60 year olds and disabled people will cease on 31 October 2011 as part of its spending cuts programme.

Impact of Caring Report

Of the UK's approximately six million carers, around half are aged over 50 and 1.5 million of these are carers over the age of 60 alone. A new report by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers (PRT) found that 70% of older carers say caring has had a devastating impact on their health. Read the full story on the PRT website at www.carers.org.

Free Benefits Calculator for Older People

Click on the following link to see if you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to: www.ageuk.org.uk/money-matters/claiming-benefits/

Caring for a Child with an Undiagnosed Condition?

SWAN UK (syndromes without a name) is a project run by Genetic Alliance UK, offering support and information to families of children with undiagnosed conditions. You can join their community and register for their newsletter here: www.undiagnosed.org.uk.

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM)

EDCM is a consortium campaign run by four of the leading organisations working with disabled children and their families: Contact a Family, the Council for Disabled Children, Mencap and the Special Educational Consortium. Between them, the campaign partners represent over 770,000 disabled children and young people in the UK and campaigns to get rights and justice for every disabled child. See their website for the latest news on their campaign: http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/news-1/latest_news1.aspx

Transition Support

Progress is a transition guide for 13 to 25 year olds with special needs, published three times a year by Care Choices and also available as an e-book at: www.progressmagazine.co.uk. Also available is My Child & Me – a new magazine for parents of children with special needs, which includes in-depth guidance on a range of specialist topics. Further information from www.mychildmagazine.com.

Email Support for Carers of People with Down's Syndrome & Dementia

The Down's Syndrome Association has set up an email group for 'Family Carers of People with Down's Syndrome and Dementia'. To join the group, please email stuart.mills@downs-syndrome.org.uk

Coming Soon...

Carers Information Day

There will be a free information and advice day for carers on Wednesday 16 November 2011 in the Arnhem Gallery, Fairfield Halls, Croydon CR9 1DG from 10 am – 4 pm. This event offers carers a unique opportunity to meet representatives from all the different services in the borough that can support them, including Croydon Council, NHS Croydon and voluntary and community organisations. There will also be free refreshments and information packs to take away.

With over 50 organisations represented, you can't afford to miss this day!

For more details contact the Carers' Information Service on 020 8649 9339, option 1 and see the flyer attached.