

CAREERS NEWS

Informing carers in Croydon

January/February 2011

Recognised, valued and supported

The previous Government published a carers strategy in 2008, *Carers at the heart of 21st-century families and communities*. This set out a vision that by 2018 carers would, amongst other things, be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role, and not be forced into financial hardship as a result of being a carer.

With the change of Government last year the future of the carers strategy looked uncertain as the Coalition set about trying to reduce Britain's budget deficit through widespread public spending cuts. However, Paul Burstow, Minister of State for Care Services, said that the new Government wanted to retain the vision of the original strategy, but due to the current economic climate the strategy would need to be 'refreshed'. Following a short consultation *Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy* was published in November 2010.

Recognised, valued and supported identifies four priority areas:

1. Identification and recognition

Supporting those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves as carers at an early stage, recognising the value of their contribution and involving them from the outset both in designing local care provision and in planning individual care packages.

- £1 million will be available to patient-led and condition-specific voluntary organisations to enable them to focus on supporting carers through a Reaching out to Carers innovation fund.
- £6 million to train GPs to increase carer awareness and understanding of carers needs.

2. Realising and releasing potential

Enabling those with caring responsibilities to fulfil their educational and employment potential.

- Consultation to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees. Followed by legislative changes as necessary.
- The Department for Education, through the Early Intervention Grant, is providing local authorities with £800 million over four years to fund short breaks for families with disabled children.

3. A life outside of caring

Personalised support both for carers and those they support, enabling them to have a family and community life.

- By April 2013 all local authorities should provide those who are eligible, including carers, with a personal budget, preferably in the form of a direct payment.

4. Supporting carers to stay healthy

Supporting carers to remain mentally and physically well.

- £400 million to support carers to take breaks from their caring responsibilities over the next four years.
- A new mental health strategy will be published in early 2011, which will include details on the development of talking therapy services.

We will let you know in future editions of *Carers News* as soon as we know more about how the above will affect carers at a local level.

For more information on *Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy* visit www.dh.gov.uk and put 'recognised valued supported' in the search box. If you don't have Internet access you could call Carers UK's advice line on 0808 808 7777 (Wednesday and Thursday, 10 am - 12 noon and 2 - 4 pm).



Make Sure You're Counted

The UK holds a census (count of the population) every ten years and the next census will be held on Sunday 27 March 2011. On that day every household in England and Wales will be expected to complete their census questionnaire. This is particularly important for households where there is a carer and/or someone with a disability. The data gathered from a census helps local and national government to plan future services, and if you don't make sure you are counted as a carer, Croydon Council won't know you are there and won't factor you in when planning funding and support.

The 2001 census was the first to ever ask whether people provided unpaid care to a family member or friend - and the feedback supplied the first detailed picture of the amount and level of caring in England and Wales. This invaluable information raised the profile of carers, and enabled organisations to campaign more effectively for carers' rights.

So, when you receive your census questionnaire in March, make sure you fill it in - especially those sections on disability and caring - you owe it to yourself and your fellow carers!

For more information about the 2011 census visit www.2011.census.gov.uk or call Census Customer Services on 01329 444 972. From Friday 4 March a dedicated Census helpline will be open (number to be announced) and a range of support for people with disabilities or language difficulties will be available over the phone and online.

DLA Reform

As part of their programme of welfare benefit reform the Coalition Government is proposing to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The Government plans to introduce PIP in 2013/14 when it will begin reassessing people of working age (16-64) who currently receive DLA to see if they qualify for the new benefit. No decision has been taken as yet on whether to also reassess children and people aged 65 and over.

PIP will be similar to DLA in that it will remain a non-means tested, non-taxable cash benefit to help people with disabilities meet the extra costs of living with a disability (to spend as they see fit). PIP will continue to be available to people regardless of their employment status and will not be dependent on National Insurance contributions. PIP will also be comparable to DLA in that it is made up of two components: Mobility (based on the individual's ability to get around) and Daily Living (based on the individual's ability to carry out other key activities necessary to participate in every day life). However, there will only be two rates for each of these components, unlike the three rates for the DLA care component.

There are, however, some significant differences between DLA and its proposed replacement, PIP:

- Applicants will have to qualify for PIP for six months, and be expected to qualify for a further six months, before an award can be made.
- Automatic entitlements for those with certain conditions will cease (but the special rules for people diagnosed with terminal illness will remain).
- The assessment process will focus more on the impact the disability has on the day to day life of the applicant rather than the disability itself; with a greater emphasis on what people can do rather than what they can't
- Greater account will be taken of aids and adaptations people use.
- Most applicants for PIP will have a face-to-face meeting with an independent health professional, allowing a more objective, in depth analysis of an individual's circumstances.

The Government is currently holding a public consultation on these proposed changes to DLA, and is asking people with disabilities, disability organisations and other interested parties to share their views. To take part in the consultation visit www.dwp.gov.uk/dla-reform where you can also read the reform proposals in full. If you do not have internet access you can call the DLA Reform Team on 020 7449 7688 and leave a message with your name, address and phone number asking them to send you a consultation document. The closing date for comments is Monday 14 February 2011.

More DLA News

From 11 April 2011 people under 65 'with the most severe visual impairment' will qualify for the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). From November 2010 to March 2011 the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will phone people currently receiving the lower rate mobility component of DLA whose main disabling condition is recorded as sight loss to see if they qualify for the higher rate. If the DWP is satisfied the person meets the criteria their award will be changed so that payment of the higher rate will start in April 2011. For more information about these changes to DLA call the Royal National Institute of Blind People on 0303 123 9999.

State of Caring

Carers UK has launched a major new survey to assess carers' health, wellbeing and finances and the support received from health and care services, and their employers if they juggle work and care. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete and will help Carers UK to update a range of previous research and ensure it has a fresh picture of the state of caring in 2010-11. To participate in the survey go to www.surveymonkey.com/stateofcaring. We also have some paper copies of the survey in the Carers' Information Service office so call us on 020 8649 9339 if you would like us to send one to you.

Family Fund



The Family Fund helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children and young people aged 17 and under by providing grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable for the disabled child and their family such as holidays, computers and driving lessons. The Fund helps around 45,000 families in England each year and receives almost all its funding from central government.

In December 2010 the Government announced that the Family Fund in England will receive at least £27 million pounds a year over the next four years. This is fantastic news for families who rely on the Fund to give their children the choices and opportunities in life they might not otherwise have.

To apply to the Family Fund go to www.familyfund.org.uk and download an application pack, or call 0845 130 4542.

Warm Front Scheme

The Government-funded Warm Front Scheme installs insulation and heating measures up to the value of £3,500, or £6,000 if oil central heating or other alternate technologies are recommended, to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient. Warm Front is available to people on certain disability or income related benefits, who either own their own home or rent from a private landlord.

All funding for the Warm Front Scheme for this financial year has already been allocated, which means that the scheme is not accepting any new applications at the moment. This is only a temporary measure and sometime in the new financial year (after 1 April 2011) the scheme will re-open to new applications. Warm Front is not able to hold applications on file in this interim period. All existing applications to Warm Front will be honoured, and as far as possible works will be completed by the end of March 2011. For more information about Warm Front, and to check when the scheme re-opens, visit www.direct.gov.uk and put 'warm front' in the search box, or call 0800 316 2805.



The Results Are In...

A big thank you to everyone who completed our survey. Your feedback will be vital in helping us secure funding and plan for the future. Congratulations to Mrs McGlasson who was the lucky winner of the £25 Marks and Spencer voucher. The comments were overwhelmingly positive, with everyone finding our services helpful, and one carer saying "you tell us what we need to know".

Although we gave a deadline of 10 December for the return of surveys we would still welcome more completed forms. If you would like a survey sent out to you please call us on 020 8649 9339 or email info@carersinfo.org.uk.

Some interesting information about the carers who completed a survey:

- Two thirds are aged 18-64.
- 40% are retired.
- 20% are full time parents
- 23% are working
- 15% are unemployed
- 30% have a disability themselves.
- 25% care for more than one person.
- Roughly a third are caring for a husband/wife or partner and a third for a child under 18.
- 58% do not get a regular break from caring.

Our fun question asking you to describe the Carers' Information Service as an animal produced much hilarity in the office, and we can now reveal the top three animals: dog, owl and cat. All for the most flattering reasons of course!

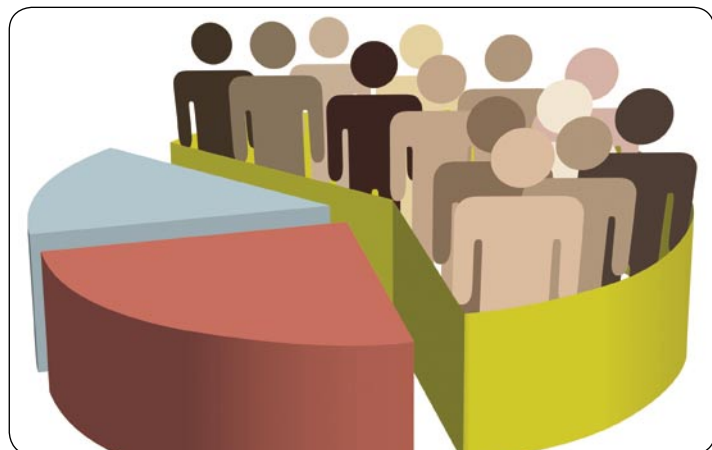
There did seem to be some confusion about some of our services and publications so we thought we would try to clear that up:

Advocacy

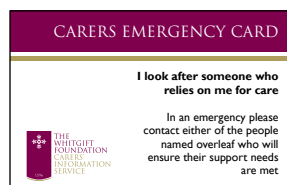
Our Carers Advice Worker, Angela Webb, offers an advocacy service to any carer in Croydon. Advocacy can take many forms, including:

- Help with filling in forms for benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance.
- Help completing social services forms for Carers Assessments and self-directed support.
- Assistance in researching and applying for grants.
- Liaising with professionals such as social services, GPs, and residential care staff on your behalf.
- Attending meetings with you to offer support and to ensure your views are listened to.

If you think our Carers Advice Worker could help you then contact Angela on 020 8649 6285 (Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) or email angelawebb@carersinfo.org.uk.



Carers Emergency Card



We offer carers an emergency card to alert others to the fact that they are a carer in the event of them having an accident or falling ill. The emergency card is very simple: it states that the bearer is a carer and that

someone relies on them for care, on the back of the card are spaces for the names and telephone numbers of two people to contact in an emergency. It is vital to check with people before putting their names on a card to ensure they are appropriate contacts.

Many respondents who did not know we offered a carers emergency card put a note on the survey asking us to send them one, however, in most cases we didn't have your details and were unable to do so. Anyone who would like an emergency card can request one by calling us on 020 8649 9339 or emailing info@carersinfo.org.uk.

Training Project

We have been running monthly training sessions and workshops for carers for the past three years. These sessions have covered topics as diverse as first aid, moving and handling people, Indian head massage and assertiveness. All our training is free, lunch is provided and the sessions offer the chance to learn valuable skills while meeting new people and taking a break from your caring role.

Our training sessions are always advertised in this newsletter, *Carers News*, and in our e-bulletin and on our website, www.carersinfo.org.uk. In the November/December edition of *Carers News* we advertised our February and March 2011 training: Anger Management and Hand Reflexology. Anger Management is now fully booked, but there are places available on the Hand Reflexology course on Tuesday 8 March, 10 am - 3 pm. Look out for news about other sessions in future editions of *Carers News*.

If you would like to attend any of our training sessions you do not need to be invited, you simply need to contact Ruth Laws, our Volunteer and Training Coordinator, on 020 8649 6280 or email ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk.

Our Publications

We produce two regular publications:

- *Carers News* (which you are reading now): a newsletter published five times a year in January, March, May, September and November. *Carers News* is available by post or email.
- *What's New for Carers?* an e-bulletin sent out every month that is only available via email.

If you would like to receive either or both of these publications then you will need to join our mailing list. You can do this by contacting us on 020 8649 9339 or emailing info@carersinfo.org.uk and requesting a mailing list form.

Our Website

Not everyone was aware of the range of information available on our website, www.carersinfo.org.uk:

- All our publications can be found on the website and these are constantly updated so if you think something in your How To Guide or one of our factsheets is out of date you can easily check online.
- *Carers News* (including past editions) is there so you don't have to worry if you mislay your copy or want to refer to something in a previous edition.
- The News and Events pages on the website frequently feature items that missed the deadline for *Carers News* or the e-bulletin and so you might not hear of them if you don't check the website.

Local News

End of an Era

Daphne Jones, who is known to many people in Croydon thanks to her sterling work on behalf of children with disabilities and their families, has retired. Daphne was tireless in her efforts on behalf of all parent carers; representing their interests at such a multitude of committees and meetings that she was able to bring professionals together and promote joined up thinking as she was often the only one who knew what everyone else was doing.

Daphne founded Parents In Partnership (PIP) 18 years ago, and what began as a handful of parents getting together to explore options for their children has become a borough-wide organisation employing five members of staff.

Daphne was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2010 and we are so pleased for Daphne that her work for parent carers has been deservedly recognised as outstanding. We would like to say a huge thank you to Daphne for all she has done for families in Croydon and wish her all the very best for the future.

Ready Steady Work

DisabilityCroydon is working with Remploy to deliver a project supporting parents who have a disability or long-term health condition who would like to return to work but lack the necessary confidence. Ready, Steady, Work offers six hours of one-to-one mentoring support, including help writing a CV and completing application forms, interview practice, training and skills development. For more information about this project contact DisabilityCroydon's Employment and Enterprise Team on 020 8684 5538 or 07976 912 915.

Addiction Support

Croydon PLUG (Peer Led User Group) helps service users who have completed their drug and/or alcohol treatment to remain drug/alcohol free. PLUG meets on Wednesday evenings, 5 - 8 pm, at East Croydon United Reform Church, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon CR0 5LP and offers informal support, advice and activities in a safe drink/drug free space. For more information call or text 07516 935 931.

A new group run by women for women, PLUGETTES, started in November and meets on Tuesdays, 12.30 - 2 pm, at Lantern Hall, 190 Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SE. For more information call Sue on 07961 611 650.

Driver Needed

The Carers' Information Service is looking for a volunteer publications delivery driver to join our team and spend a few hours every other month delivering our newsletter, *Carers News*, to organisations in the north of the borough. We will reimburse you for all out of pocket expenses, and you will be invited to our twice yearly volunteer social events where you can meet the rest of our friendly volunteering team. If you have your own car and would like to find out more about this opportunity, contact Ruth Laws, our Volunteer and Training Coordinator, on 020 8649 6280 or email ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk.

Local Events

Giving us a Voice is an 18-month project that aims to involve people with a learning disability and their carers in regional meetings to inform local policy makers about what they need and expect from services. There is clear evidence at present that services are not reaching these communities and their families, and Giving us a Voice is a systematic way of tackling this problem. The London meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 January, 9.30 am - 3.45 pm, at the Copthorne Tara Hotel in Kensington. For more information, or to book a place, go to www.givingusavoice.org.uk or call 01905 740500 and ask for Alex Mundy.

Croydon Crossroads Carers Support Service runs a support group for carers who are juggling paid employment with their caring role. The group meets once a month at the CVA Resource Centre, 82 London Road, West Croydon CR0 2TB. The next meetings will be on Wednesday 26 January and 23 February, 6 - 8 pm. For more information call Donna Richmond on 020 8667 9893 or 07760 990 205.

Club Soda (events run by and for people with learning disabilities) is having a Valentine's Party on Friday 11 February, 7 - 11 pm, at The Clocktower, Katharine Street, Croydon CR9 1ET. Tickets cost £6 and can be booked by calling 020 8253 1030. Visit www.club soda.org.uk for more information.

There will be a **talk for carers of people with mental health problems** on *The Police and Mental Health Services* on Wednesday 23 February, 7 pm, at Courtyard House, 1d Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SG. Service users and professionals are also welcome to attend. For more information call Yvonne Webster on 07930 617 691 or email yvonnewebster_68@hotmail.com.

The **Croydon Macmillan Care and Cope Support Group** for carers of people with cancer will be meeting on Monday 28 February, 3 pm, at the May Fayre Restaurant in Croydon University Hospital. A dietician will speak about diet and cancer, and there will be a light buffet and music as well. For more information call Benny Millier on 020 8401 3000 ext 5744 or email benny.millier@nhs.net.



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Designed by Croydon Voluntary Action 020 8683 5911

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