

CAREERS NEWS

Informing carers in Croydon

March/April 2011

Get Out There!

With spring trying its best to make an appearance, and summer (we hope) on its way, we thought we would get you thinking about how to get out and make the most of this time of year.

Travel and Access

Getting to and from your destination can often be the most challenging part of a day out, but there is help available so don't be put off. Croydon Mobility Forum produces *An Easy Guide to Accessible Transport in Croydon* which is available at [www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/ctservice/cmfcmf.Transport for All](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/ctservice/cmfcmf.Transport%20for%20All) (020 7737 2339, www.transportforall.org.uk) has a helpline and website that can advise on all aspects of accessible transport in London, and produces *Get Moving: a guide to London's transport services for older and disabled people* – which can be downloaded from the website.

If you are travelling by train with the person you care for and they are registered blind or visually impaired, or are a wheelchair user and remain in their wheelchair during a train journey, you can both receive a 34% discount on your rail tickets. A wider range of people, such as those with a hearing impairment, epilepsy and those receiving disability-related benefits are eligible for a Disabled Persons Railcard (0845 605 0525, www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk), which entitles the holder and a companion to a third off most rail fares.

National Express (www.nationalexpress.com) has a Disabled Person's Travel Helpline (08717 818 179), which can advise on accessible routes, and discuss any queries a passenger with disabilities may have. National Express also offers concessions of up to 50% for people with disabilities - depending on when and where they travel.

If public transport is not an option then don't forget Blue Badge holders are eligible for



a 100% discount on the congestion charge (0845 900 1234, www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/congestioncharging) provided they have registered their details with Transport for London (registration fee applies).

Choosing a destination that is accessible once you have arrived is also vital, and a bit of research beforehand can save a lot of trouble on the day. *OpenBritain 2011* is the definitive travel guide to accessible Britain. It costs £9.99 plus £4.99 postage and packing (Disabled Persons Railcard holders receive a £5 discount) and is available from Heritage House Group (01603 813319, www.shop.goheritage.co.uk). For more local information Disabled Go (0845 270 4627, www.disabledgo.com) is an online access guide that covers the Croydon area and lists full access features for many public venues such as shops, theatres and cinemas.

You Don't Have to Spend a Fortune

People with disabilities and carers can often get free or discounted entry to attractions such as zoos, theme parks, theatres, exhibitions and leisure centres. For example the Fairfield Halls (020 8688 9291, www.fairfield.co.uk) offers a discount of up to 50% to people with disabilities and their

carer, and the Cinema Exhibitor's Association card (0845 123 1292, www.cinemauk.org.uk/ceacard) entitles the card holder, who must be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, to one free ticket for someone accompanying them to the cinema.

Concessions are not always advertised so it is always worth asking what their policy is. You will often need to provide proof of disability, such as an I Count card if you are caring for a child, or a letter confirming receipt of a disability benefit, so make it a habit to always have this proof with you and you will never miss an opportunity to save money.

There are also lots of things to do that don't cost anything at all (except perhaps some travel expenses). Croydon has over 120 parks and open spaces, which are perfect for picnics and walks, and we are an easy train journey away from lovely coastal towns such as Brighton and Eastbourne. All of London's main museums such as the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum and the British Museum are free of charge, as are the major galleries such as the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery and the Tate galleries. The website www.dofreestuff.com is full of attractions, listed by county, that don't charge for admission.

Focus On: Croydon Mencap

Croydon Mencap offers a range of activities and services to people with a learning disability and their carers.

For Children

Treetops (020 8689 8170): Children's centre in Thornton Heath offering after school, Saturday and school holiday play sessions. Outings are also arranged during holiday sessions. Charges: £7.50 per after school or half-day session, £10.00 per day and £10 - £15 per outing.

For Young People

Youth Club (020 8684 5890): Meets weekly, 7 - 9.30 pm, during term time in Thornton Heath for young people (aged 12-18). Activities include Wii, computer games, cooking, craftwork, karaoke, indoor football and one off events. Charges: £1.00 per session.

For Younger Adults

Leslie Park (020 8662 9201): Resource centre in central Croydon offering younger adults (aged 18-35) daytime activities from Monday to Friday throughout the year. Activities include dancing, singing and music, drama, gardening, art and crafts, outings and one off events. Leslie Park provides a door to door transport service for members. Access to Leslie Park is via a referral from Croydon Social Services, or service users with a Personal Budget can apply direct.

For Adults

If service users need support their carers must accompany them.

Discos (020 8684 5890): Six discos are held each year in central Croydon. Charges: £3.50 per disco.

Monday Club (020 8684 5890): Meets weekly, 7 - 9 pm, in central Croydon and offers the chance to socialise and take part in activities. Charges: £2.50 per session.

Saturday Club (020 8684 5890): Meets twice a month, 10 am - 3 pm, in South Croydon. Activities include table-top games, bingo, pamper sessions, singing and one off activities. Charges: £4 per session.

Sports Club (020 8684 5890): Meets once a month, 10 am - 12 noon, in South Croydon. Activities include hockey, netball, team games and rounders. Charges: £2 per session.

For Carers

Benefit and Welfare Advice (020 8684 5890): One to one support for families (on Mondays and Tuesdays) to claim disability and carer related benefits. Home visits can be arranged.

CASS - Older Carers Support Service (020 8684 5890): Information, advice, support, social events and outings for parent carers over the age of 60. Undertake carer's assessments on behalf of Croydon Social Services.

For Everyone

Charity Shop (020 8656 8703): The shop, at 249 Lower Addiscombe Road, Croydon CR0 6RD, is open Monday to Saturday, 10 am - 4.30 pm, and sells a range of second hand goods. Donations are always welcome and collection can be arranged. Volunteering opportunities are available.

Croydon Mencap News (020 8684 5890): Bi-monthly newsletter full of information on Croydon Mencap services.

For more information on Croydon Mencap call the main office on 020 8684 5890 or visit www.croydon.cswebsites.org. You can find out more national Mencap and what it offers by calling 0808 808 1111 or visiting www.mencap.org.uk.

Make a Difference: Volunteer

Volunteering can be a great way of using existing skills to benefit others, while learning new skills, meeting new people and making a valuable contribution to the organisation or individual you are volunteering with. It can also help improve confidence for people thinking of returning to paid work after time away - perhaps as a parent or carer. Below are some volunteer roles that may be of particular interest to carers:

Give Carers a Break: Crossroads Care Croydon provides respite for carers, and is looking for volunteers who are able to spare some time, on a regular basis, to provide companionship and a 'sitting service' for vulnerable people whose carers need to take a break. Crossroads will provide all volunteers with an induction and ongoing support. For more information call 020 8688 4499 or email mail@croydoncrossroads.org.uk.

Bring Carers Together: Crossroads Care Croydon Carers Support Service is also looking for outgoing volunteers who can commit to about three hours a week to arrange regular outings and support group meetings for carers living in Croydon. Crossroads will provide all volunteers with an induction and ongoing support. For more information call 020 8667 9893 or email carerssupport@croydoncrossroads.org.uk.

Imagine Befriending: Imagine is a charity that focuses on helping people with mental health problems to live a full and independent life. Imagine in Croydon has recently established a Befriending Service, and is looking for people with an interest in mental health, with good people skills, who can spare a few hours on a regular basis to support mental health service users access mainstream activities. Volunteers will be given training and ongoing support, and expenses will be reimbursed. For more information call Annette Montague on 020 8253 7079 or email amontague@imaginementalhealth.org.uk.

Help Combat Hate Crime: The Safer Croydon Partnership is concerned that up to 90% of hate crimes are not reported. To try to combat this the Partnership is looking for volunteers to act as 'third party report receivers' to whom victims/witnesses of hate crime can report the crime instead of dealing with the police directly. The volunteer will then pass the report on to the police. It is hoped this will encourage people to report hate crime. Volunteers will be given training and ongoing support. For more information call Carl Parker on 020 8726 6000 ext 88974 or email carl.parker@croydon.gov.uk.

More Opportunities: The Volunteer Centre Croydon (020 8253 7070, www.cvalive.org.uk) has over 30 years experience of matching volunteers with organisations that can use their skills, and has details of hundreds of volunteering opportunities.



First Aid for Carers

As a carer it is very important, and potentially life saving, to know what to do in a medical emergency. The Carers' Information Service is offering First Aid Awareness courses for Croydon carers in May and June.

First Aid Awareness for Carers of a Child with a Special Need or Disability

Tuesday 10 May, 10 am - 3 pm

First Aid Awareness for Carers of Adults

Tuesday 7 June, 10 am - 3 pm

These courses are completely free of charge and lunch is provided. Please ensure that you are able to attend for a full session before booking. For further details or to book a place contact Ruth Laws, Volunteer and Training Coordinator, on 020 8649 6280 or email ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk.

Please note that all our courses are only for unpaid carers, we are unable to give a place to paid care workers.



What You Said About Us

In the survey we included with the September/October 2010 edition of *Carers News* we asked you what you thought about the services we offer and how you had benefited from them. Your responses were overwhelmingly positive, and we thought we would share some of them with you, including more of your answers to the most important question of them all: If you had to describe the Carers' Information Service as an animal, what would it be and why?

Information and Advice

As a result of our information and advice a third of you now receive more help with your caring role than you did before, and a massive 45% accessed other services, including benefits and financial help. A third of you said you benefited from us providing a listening ear - with a quarter of you better able to cope with your caring role after speaking to us. We were also able to help 40% of you to recognise that you are a carer - a very important aspect of our work, as if you don't know you are a carer you don't always know to ask for help.

Training Courses

We asked those of you who had attended one of our monthly training courses what impact the training had had on your life. Most of you had benefited from meeting other carers, and many of you had made positive changes to your life by putting into practice the skills you had learned and focussing on your personal development. A significant number of you also appreciated the break from your caring role.

How To Guide

Our How To Guides have been informing carers and professionals in Croydon for many years: we asked how you would be affected if we were no longer able to produce the guide. Over two thirds of you said you would be less well informed, almost 40% of you would not know where to go to get help, and over half of you would have to spend more of your valuable time finding things out. 59% of you would prefer the How To Guide to be available in paper format, 24% would like it on paper and online, and the rest would be happy with just an online version. So 83% of you are eagerly awaiting the next edition!

Cat:
independent, friendly,
welcoming



Carers News and What's New for Carers?

Our bi-monthly newsletter, *Carers News*, and our monthly e-bulletin, *What's New for Carers?* go out to almost 6000 carers and professionals in Croydon. We asked what you particularly liked about these publications, and 75% of you said you liked being kept up to date on local news and events, almost two thirds enjoyed being updated on the Carers' Information Service's activities, and 25% of you felt like part of a community as a result of receiving one or both of these publications. For almost a third of you *Carers News* was your only source of information on carers issues - which highlights the importance of this publication.

Summer Guide for Parent Carers

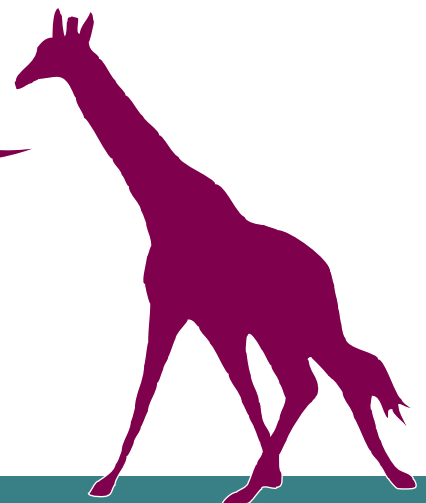
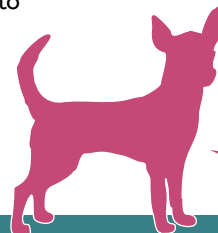
Of the parents who had used our *Summer Guide for Parent Carers*, 70% had been able to find suitable activities for their child as a result.

Carers Emergency Card

Over 90% of you who carry one of our simple carers emergency cards in your purse or wallet find that it gives you peace of mind knowing that if something happens to you people will know that you are a carer, and will be able to contact the right people to ensure that the person you care for is looked after.

Giraffe:
always putting neck
out for people

Dog:
intelligent and
guide those who
need help



Local Events

Census Day

The 2011 census will be held on Sunday 27 March, and every household must complete the questionnaire; the Office for National Statistics provides support for people who may find it difficult to do this. There are many accessibility tools on the website, www.2011.census.gov.uk, such as guidance booklets in many different languages, information on how to request large print questionnaires and audio guidance cassettes/CDs and British Sign Language video guides. People can use the helpline, 0300 0201 101, to ask questions and request a personal visit from census officers to help them complete their questionnaire. Age UK Croydon is offering to help people complete their census questionnaire on Wednesday 30 March, 10 am - 1 pm, at 2 Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX. For more information call 020 8680 5450.



Disabled Parents & Carers

Disabled Parents Together is holding an event for parents and carers who have a disability, and organisations supporting them, on Friday 1 April, at Croydon Park Hotel. Almost a third of the carers who responded to our survey said that they had a disability, and this is an opportunity to meet people in a similar situation, find out about local sources of support, share your views and make a positive contribution towards improving life for disabled parents and carers. To book your place call 020 8684 5538, option one, or email Claire@disabilitycroydon.org.uk.

Parent Support Group

Selhurst Children's Centre has launched a support group for parents of children with special needs. The group will meet fortnightly on the first and third Fridays of the month, 1.30 - 3 pm, at Selhurst Children's Centre, 23 Dagnall Park, South Norwood SE25 5PL. Membership of the group is free, and your child does not need to have a formal diagnosis. The dates for the next meetings are 1 and 15 April. For more information call Berni Excell on 020 8684 3777 or 07846 477 233.

Do-Si-Do Your Partner

A Barn Dance to raise money for Parkinson's UK Croydon Branch is being held on Saturday 2 April, 6.30 - 10 pm, at Purley United Reform Church, 906 Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2LN. Tickets cost £10 and include a buffet. To buy your ticket call 07887 781 361.

Mental Health in Croydon

A talk for carers of people with mental health problems is being held on Wednesday 27 April, 7 pm, at Courtyard House, 1d Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SG. Steve Davidson, Borough Director for Mental Health Services, will be speaking about Croydon's Mental Health Service. Professionals and service users are also welcome. For more information call Yvonne Webster on 07930 617 691 or email yvonnewebster_68@hotmail.com.

Mad Hatter Tea Party

The MS Society Croydon Branch is celebrating Cake Break (a national MS Society fundraising initiative) by having a Mad Hatter's Tea Party on Thursday 5 May, 10 am - 12 noon, at Christ Church, between 861-863

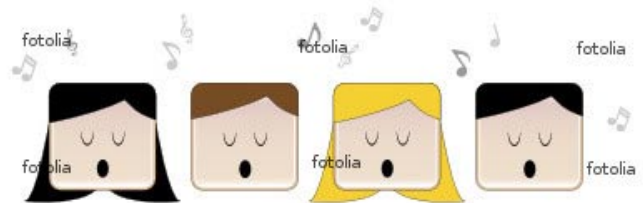


Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2BN. Tea and coffee will be provided free of charge, but cakes will be charged for. There will also be a raffle. Feel free to make and bring your own hat - there are prizes to be won! For more information call Debbie Henn on 020 8660 0389.

Living with Asperger Syndrome

Croydon Dyslexia Association is holding an open meeting on Wednesday 18 May, 7.15 - 9 pm, at East Croydon United Reformed Church, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon CR0 5LP. The speaker will be Ronnie Young, specialist trainer on autistic spectrum disorders and author of *The Asperger Syndrome Pocketbook*, who will be talking about living with Asperger syndrome. Entry is free to members, and £5 to non-members. For more information call 08442 496949 or visit www.croydononline.org/dyslexia.

Sing Your Heart Out



Popchoir is for anyone and everyone who loves to sing (pop songs not classical), but hasn't found anywhere other than the car or shower to do so. There are no auditions, no need to read music and no experience needed. The choir meets on Mondays, 8 - 9.30 pm, at St Mildred's Centre, Bingham Road, Croydon CR0 7EB. Each 12 week term costs £108 (£9 a session), but people are welcome to turn up to a free taster session before they sign up. For more information call 08455 190 890 or visit www.popchoir.com.

Know Your Neighbours?

The Big Lunch is an annual event that aims to combat isolation by encouraging people to get together with their neighbours once a year and share lunch together. This could be as simple as having neighbours round for a barbeque in your back garden, or as ambitious as arranging a massive street party. The Big Lunch 2011 is taking place on Sunday 5 June, and Croydon Council are offering to help by making it as easy as possible to close a road or use a park or other open space (applications need to be submitted by Thursday 5 May). For more information call 020 8726 6000 or visit www.croydon.gov.uk/community/equality/rwbl/big-lunch.

Carers' Information Service
Courtyard House, 1d Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SG
020 8649 9339 (option 1)
020 8686 3472 (Fax)
info@carersinfo.org.uk
www.carersinfo.org.uk

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Designed by Croydon Voluntary Action 020 8683 5911

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