

September
- October
2016



Carers News

Informing carers in Croydon

Carers
Information
Service



Getting on top of your finances as a carer

Money management workshops

The Carers' Information Service joined forces with South West London Law Centres (SWLCC) this summer to hold free money management workshops for carers. Workshops covered topics such as checking benefits entitlements, switching suppliers to save money and managing on a tight budget.

Carers who attended the workshop gave very positive feedback:

Absolutely fantastic...very educational."

"Really interesting. I think it's really helpful."

"You have been a life-saver."



We hope to hold more of these sessions in future, so please keep an eye on future editions of *Carers News* for details.

Debt Clinic

The Debt Clinic at the Carers Support Centre provides carers with a 60 minute appointment with a South West London Law Centres (SWLCC) advisor. The advisor can look at current debt issues, income maximization and assess potential eligibility for a grant towards white goods and utility bill debts. You can find future dates and how to book at the back of *Carers News*.



Support with benefits



The benefits system can often seem very complicated and it can be hard to know where to turn for help. To help carers claim what they are entitled to, the Croydon Welfare Rights Team runs benefits surgeries at the Carers Support Centre, providing full benefits checks and support with form-filling. Sessions run on most Wednesday afternoons at the Centre. You can find dates for forthcoming surgeries at the back of *Carers News* and on our website.

Sessions are by appointment only, so please email appointments@carersinfo.org.uk or call 020 8663 5608 and leave a message to book. You can also contact us directly on 020 8649 9339, option 1 for benefits information and advice.

For general benefits information, our *Money Matters* factsheet provides information on financial support. You can also find information on grants in our *Grant-Giving Organisations* factsheet. You can download both factsheets from www.carersinfo.org.uk or ask for a paper copy at the Carers Support Centre.

Further information

The following organisations provide general information on financial issues. Please be aware this is not the same as financial advice. For financial advice about your situation, speak to a financial adviser:

- Carers UK has online information on Carer's Allowance and provides an advice line for carers on 0808 808 7777, Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm: www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-benefits/carers-allowance
- Entitled To is an online benefits calculator: www.entitledto.co.uk
- Money Advice Service is a government funded service providing independent money advice online or by phone. Visit www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk or call 0800 138 7777, Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm and Saturday, 9am - 1pm
- Money Saving Expert is a consumer information website on money matters with guides, tips and tools on saving money day-to-day: www.moneysavingexpert.com
- Turn2Us provides an online benefits calculator and grant-finder directory: www.turn2us.org.uk



Your rights at work as a carer



Juggling work and caring for someone can be a difficult balancing act. As a carer, you have certain rights and protection in law to help you manage paid employment and your caring role. Your employer may also have additional policies that go above and beyond legal requirements. *Please be aware that this article provides general information and is not employment or legal advice.*

Protection from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect people who may be discriminated against, such as disabled people. If you care for an elderly or disabled person, you should also not be discriminated against (treated unfairly) by service providers under the Equality Act. Service providers include businesses, shops, organisations and employers.

As well as protecting disabled people and their carers from direct discrimination, the Equality Act also states that service providers must make reasonable adjustments for disabled people to prevent them from being at a substantial disadvantage.

If you feel you or the person you care for may be being discriminated against under the Equality Act, it is important to get specialist advice - see the further information section at the end of this article for details.

Carer's Assessment

As a carer, you have the right to have a Carer's Assessment of your needs as a carer. Your assessment should cover a range of issues that impact you as a carer, including work, training and education. If you feel you need more support to balance work and caring commitments, or if your caring commitments prevent you from finding or maintaining work, it is important to bring this up during your assessment. Explain the impact these difficulties have on you and your wellbeing, as well as on your financial situation. If you would like a Carer's Assessment, contact Help for Carers on 020 8663 5664.

After your assessment, Croydon Council will decide if you are eligible for support. Visit Carers UK for more information: www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/carers-assessment.

Flexible working

If you have been in your current job for 26 weeks or more (unless you are an agency worker or office holder), you have the right to ask for flexible working. This is not the same as the right to receive flexible working and you can be turned down, but only once the correct process has been followed. If you are using this right, you can only make one request every 12 months. Your request must be in writing and include certain information, such as:

- What type of flexibility you are asking for e.g. flexi-time, working from home, etc.
- When you wish to start flexible working
- If you have made any previous requests (and if so, when)
- The impact your request, if any, would have on your work and how this impact could be resolved

Your employer has up to 3 months to respond to your request. Flexible working requests can only be turned down for a good business reason; for example, because it would be too costly to the business or it would not be possible to reorganise work amongst existing staff. Some employers have an appeals system if you are turned down, but there is no legal requirement to have one.

This information covers your legal rights to asking for flexible working, but your employer's policies may be more generous. Check with your employer whether they have their own flexible working policy and what is available.

Time off for dependants

Every employee has the right to take 'reasonable' time off work for an unexpected event that affects a dependant. A dependant includes a spouse, partner, parent, child or relative living with you. It may also include someone who relies on you for help in an emergency. The right to time off only applies in unexpected events that affect the dependant. For example, an unexpected event might be that your child is suddenly ill and needs to come home from school and there is no one to take care of them, or a relative you care for is rushed to hospital. Your employer is not obligated to pay you during your time off and the time off must be reasonable in the circumstances.

Further information and support

- ACAS has online information on employment rights and responsibilities, a helpline and an early resolution service before cases reach tribunal. Their helpline (0300 123 1100) is open Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm and Saturday, 9am - 1pm: www.acas.org.uk
- Carers UK has online information on rights at work, including the right to ask for flexible working: www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/work-and-career
- Employers for Carers is a membership forum of employers committed to promoting carer-friendly policies in the workplace: www.employersforcarers.org
- Equality Advisory and Support Service provides information and advice on equality law and human rights. The helpline (0808 800 0082) is open Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm and Saturday, 10am - 2pm: www.equalityadvisoryservice.com
- Equality and Human Rights Commission provides online guidance on equality and human rights issues in the UK: www.equalityhumanrights.com
- Working Families online information and a specific helpline (020 7017 0072) for carers: www.workingfamilies.org.uk/article-categories/caring-for-adults-and-disabled-children

News and Views



Carers Rights Guide 2016 out now

Carers UK has published the latest *Carers Rights Guide* for 2016. The guide covers your rights as a carer on a range of topics including: getting support, social care, financial help and in the workplace. Find the guide on the Carers UK website: www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-resources/carers-rights-guide.

Carers Strategy update

Thank you to everyone who responded to the government Carers Strategy consultation. The consultation has now ended and the government should publish the new Carers Strategy at the end of 2016. We will keep you updated on the final outcome and what it means for carers.

Update for carers hiring a personal assistant

As you may be aware, the law regarding pension payments has changed. Under the Pensions Act 2008, employers now have to offer staff automatic enrolment into a pension scheme if they are not in one already, as long as staff are aged 22 or over and earn over £10,000 a year. This includes people employing their own personal assistants. If you hire your personal assistant via an agency, the agency is the employer and will be responsible for compliance. If you directly hire your personal assistant, you will need to comply with this requirement by a certain staging date, depending on when you became an employer. The Pensions Regulator has an online tool to help you check your staging date: www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers. You can also call them directly on 0345 600 1011.

If you pay for your personal assistant by direct payments, your personal budget may need to be increased to meet your pension obligations. Contact your direct payment adviser to discuss any required increase in your personal budget to cover additional costs. For more information, contact the Croydon Direct Payments Support Service on 020 8726 6000 ext 61925.

Revamped website launch for the Carers' Information Service

The Carers' Information Service is proud to present our newly launched website for unpaid carers in Croydon: www.carersinfo.org.uk. Designed and built by Bluegg, the new website provides an online information hub for carers in Croydon, covering issues such as benefits, social care, health and caring for a child. Fully mobile responsive, the new website also allows carers to look up events, training and activities at the Carers Support Centre, and find meeting rooms to hire.

We hope you enjoying using the new website. Email any comments or queries about the website to amydeakin@carersinfo.org.uk

Latest at the Carers' Information Service

Boost mind and body with our new Pilates class for carers

Carers in Croydon can strengthen their body and relax their mind with our new Pilates sessions for carers at the Carers Support Centre. Pilates is a low-impact strengthening exercise with particular focus on core strength to improve general fitness and wellbeing.

Sessions will take place at the Carers Support Centre every Monday from 12 September to 28 November, 1pm - 2pm. These sessions are subject to high demand, so early booking is recommended. Call 020 8649 6280 or email ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk to book your space. Please note - before starting any new exercise, it is advisable to talk to your GP or a relevant health professional, particularly if you have any injuries or health conditions.

New carers support group at the Carers Support Centre



The Carers' Information Service is starting a six-week carers support group for Croydon carers from 21 September. Led by a trained advice worker, sessions will cover a range of topics including: getting support, looking after your health, benefits and wellbeing. The group will also provide the opportunity for mutual emotional support in a safe and confidential space. Sessions will run 2pm - 4pm on 21 and 28 September; 5, 12, 19 and 26 October.

To make the most of group sessions, it is recommended that carers attend all six sessions. Spaces are limited to 10 places, so to book your place, call 020 8649 6280 or email ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk.

Carers Week 2016 - Thank you

Thank you to everyone who took part in Carers Week at the Carers Support Centre in June this year. This year's Carers Week was the biggest yet, with massage, Pilates and Tai Chi tasters, craft sessions, a well-attended information day with a visit from the mayor. It was great to see so many carers taking part in events, finding new information and making new contacts.

The challenge now is to ensure that we continue to work towards making Croydon a better place for carers.



What's On in Croydon



Back to school? Get support with your child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Are you in the process of getting an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) for your child? Is your child transferring or about to transfer from a Statement or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) to an EHCP? Do you feel confused about the process?

The Croydon Independent Support Service offered by Family Lives can help. Just pop in to one of their drop-in sessions, where an Independent Supporter will provide a range of free and impartial information, support and advice. Drop-ins are open between 10am - 12noon at the Carers Support Centre. The next drop-in sessions are: 6 September, 4 October, 8 November, 6 December and 3 January.

Not able to attend a drop-in?

Book an appointment with an independent supporter:

Call: 020 3131 3150

Email: parentssupportherts@familylives.org.uk

To find out more information about the Independent Support Service, visit www.familylives.org.uk/IS.

Young Adult Carers Service from Off the Record's Young Carers Project

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

Off the Record's Young Carers Project is offering a new Young Adult Carers Service for young adult carers in Croydon aged 18-25. This new service is designed to ease the transition from young people's services into adult services for young carers. The Young Carers Project will work with local adult carers' services to carry out assessments and put plans in place to support young carers turning 18. The service will focus on key areas in the young person's life, including health, the caring role, time for yourself, how you feel, finances and work.

If you are a carer in Croydon aged 18-25 and would like to speak to someone, contact the Young Carer's Project on 020 8649 9339, option 2. For more information, visit Off the Record's website: www.offtherecordcroydon.org/our-services/young-carers-project

Workshops for parent carers with Parents in Partnership (PIP)



Parents in Partnership (PIP) is hosting a range of exciting new workshops for parent carers, including:

Communication Workshop

Thursday 22 September, 10am - 12noon. Led by Sue Utleby
For parents of children aged 7 and under. A workshop using puppets and different communication systems to engage, motivate and make learning fun.

Mental Capacity, Court of Protection and Power of Attorney Training

Thursday 6 October, 10am - 12.30pm. Led by Philip Warford
Training for parent carers on the law regarding decision-making, mental capacity, Court of Protection and Power of Attorney.

If you wish to attend either of these training sessions, please call the PIP office on 020 8663 5626 or email office@pipcroydon.com.

No health without mental health workshops

South London and Maudsley (SLaM) is hosting free half-day workshops for carers and professionals on supporting good mental health. Workshops will cover:

- Interaction between good mental and good physical health
- How physical health affects our mental health
- Recognising the signs and symptoms of poor mental health
- Finding the right mental health services in Croydon

The next workshops will run on 6 October, 1.30pm - 5pm and 17 October, 9.30am - 1pm and take place at Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA. To book your place or for more information, email SLaMLearningSolutions@slam.nhs.uk or contact Kemi Akinwale on 020 3228 4865.

Are you looking for a rewarding job?

A Croydon-based carer is looking for a paid, full-time personal assistant to support her 27-year-old son, who has cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user. As well as providing company and promoting independence, duties will also include: assisting with personal care, moving and handling, accessing services and supporting travel on public transport. Additional care work is also available at the weekends. If you are hard-working, open-minded, caring and have a good sense of humour, this could be the job for you. For more details about this position, please contact Helen Thompson, Carers' Information Service Manager on 020 8649 6284.

What's On at the Carers Support Centre

Carers
Support
Centre

All of the following free activities are open to current carers in Croydon and take place at the Carers Support Centre, 24 George Street, Croydon CR0 1PB. Some activities must be booked in advance and dates and times may be subject to change, so please check before you attend.

Training & Workshops

All of the following must be booked by calling 020 8649 6280, or emailing ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk.

IT Buddy

Alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10.30am - 12.30pm
Carers can bring in their own laptop or tablet, or use ours and discuss any IT issues they are experiencing with one of our volunteer IT Buddies. Please be aware we cannot do repairs.

Carers Support Group (New Event)

Wednesday 2pm - 4pm on:
21 and 28 September; 5, 12, 19 and 26 October
A six-week support group led by a trained advice worker from the Carers' Information Service. Group sessions will focus on different caring topics, and provide emotional support.

Managing Stress: a Workshop for Carers

Tuesday 4 October, 10am - 3pm
Caring can impact on your health and wellbeing – this workshop will identify the signs and symptoms of stress and give you some practical techniques you can use to combat it.

Managing Change

Tuesday 18 October, 10am - 3pm
Learn practical techniques for managing change as a carer.

Keeping Safe

Tuesday 25 October, 10am - 12noon
Find practical information to help you and the person you care for keep safe from online scams, cold callers, telephone sales calls and bogus callers.

Managing Violence and Aggression

Tuesday 1 November, 10am - 3pm
Learn how to calm down a situation and keep yourself safe when a person behaves aggressively.

If Only I'd Known: Caring for Someone with Dementia

Sessions on Wednesdays, 2pm - 4pm on: 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 November
A series of workshops for carers of people who have received a recent diagnosis of dementia, or who think the person they care for may have dementia. Each session covers a different topic. Carers can book one, some or all of the sessions.

Managing Sleep Difficulties

Tuesday 8 November, 10am - 3pm
Getting the right amount of sleep can be a real challenge when you are caring. This workshop will help you find practical techniques to get the good night's rest you need.

Moving and Handling People

Tuesday 15 November, 10am - 3.30pm
It's important to know how to move someone safely without injuring yourself. Learn how to move the person you care for in a safe way that prevents back strain.

Health, Wellbeing & Social Activities

No need to book, just come along.

Carers Café

Monday to Friday, 10.30am - 12.30pm
Drop in, relax, have a break and enjoy free refreshments, wi-fi, games, magazines and books. Supported by our team of volunteers.

Alzheimer's Society in the Carers Café

Monthly on a Thursday, 10.30am - 12.30pm on: 1 September; 6 October and 3 November
A dementia adviser is available to talk to any carer of someone who has or may have dementia. You may also bring the person you care for along to the Carers Café.

Carers Book Club in the Carers Cafe

Monthly on a Wednesday, 11am - 12noon on: 14 September; 12 October and 16 November
Croydon Library will supply the books. Just collect each month's chosen book from us, then come along to discuss it the following month with like-minded readers.

Carers Singing Group

Fortnightly on a Wednesday, 10.30am - 11.45am on: 21 September; 5 and 19 October; 2, 16 and 30 November
Sing your heart out at the Carers Support Centre! This is a guided singing group, covering a wide range of musical styles from around the world. No experience necessary, just come along and join the fun.

Coffee with a Copper in the Carers Café (New Event)

Monthly on a Wednesday, 10.30am - 12.30pm on: 28 September, 26 October and 23 November
Opportunity for carers to meet and chat to a local police officer over a cup of tea/coffee.

Family Fund in the Carers Café

Monthly on a Thursday, 10.30am - 12.30pm on: 29 September and 27 October
For parents and carers of a disabled or seriously ill child or young person, up to the age of 17. Find out how a Family Fund grant could help and receive support making an application.

Craft and Chatter

Monthly on a Friday, 11am - 12.30pm on: 30 September; 28 October and 25 November
Bring along some craft for our relaxing Craft and Chatter session. There's no need to be an expert! Pens, paper and pictures are provided, but bring along any other craft materials you would like to use.

All of the following must be booked by calling 020 8649 6280, or emailing ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk.

Massage

Monthly on a Friday, 10.30am - 3pm on: 9 September; 14 October and 11 November
A relaxing 25 minute hand and arm or neck and shoulder massage.

Pilates for Carers (New Event)

Weekly on a Monday, 1pm - 2pm on: 12, 19 and 26 September; 3, 17, 24 and 31 October; 7, 14, 21 and 28 November
Take care of your body and mind with our Pilates sessions for carers.

Keep Dancing! Ballroom Dancing for Carers

Sessions on a Friday, 11am - 12noon on: 7, 14 and 21 October; 11, 18 and 25 November

Come and enjoy a fun and informal dancing session led by a professional dancer and friend of the Strictly stars! Sessions are suitable for all ages and abilities and are followed by tea/coffee and chat in the Carers Café.

Gentlemen's Lunch Club

Held every other month on a Tuesday, 1pm - 2pm on: 25 October
An opportunity for male carers to get together to enjoy a nice lunch and good conversation.

Ladies Who Lunch

Held every other month on a Friday, 1pm - 2pm on: 18 November
An opportunity for female carers to get together to enjoy a nice lunch and a catch up.

Support Groups for Carers

No need to book, just come along.

Diabetes Parent Support Group

Monthly on a Monday, 9.30am - 11.30am on: 12 September and 10 October

A group for parents caring for a child with diabetes, with guest speakers. Email marian.drennan@nhs.net for details.

NAS Croydon Branch Parent Group

Monthly on a Monday, 10am - 12noon on: 12 September and 10 October

Coffee morning providing an opportunity to meet other parents and carers who have received a diagnosis, or are waiting to receive a diagnosis of, autism spectrum condition for a family member. For more information email croydon8@nas.org.uk.

Turkish Community Carers Group (New Event)

Fridays, 12.45pm - 4pm

Group for carers from the Turkish community. Meetings involve activities for carers and the opportunity to meet other local carers from the Turkish community.

Advice Surgeries for Carers

No need to book, just turn up.

Disabled Parents and Carers Together (DPACT)

Weekly on a Tuesday, 1 - 3pm

Advice, support, casework and advocacy for parents and carers who have a chronic illness or disability. Drop-ins welcome, but advisable to call 0800 689 7474.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans

Monthly on a Tuesday, 10am - 12noon on: 6 September and 4 October

Advice on issues around Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for disabled children and young people. Provided by Family Lives Croydon Independent Support Service.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Weekly on a Friday during term-time, 10am - 12noon on: 9, 16, 23 and 30 September; 7, 14 and 21 October

Advice on any SEN issues provided by Kids Croydon SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support) and Mediation Service.

All of the following must be booking by calling 020 8663 5608 or emailing appointments@carersinfo.org.uk

Benefits Surgery

Weekly on a Wednesday, 2.30pm - 4pm on: 7, 14 and 21 September; 5, 12 and 19 October; 2, 9, 16 and 23 November

Weekly appointments for carers to discuss any benefits issues. Offers a full benefits check and support with form-filling

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) Debt Clinic

Monthly on a Monday, 10am - 12noon on: 5 September; 3 October and 7 November

Hour-long appointment with an SWLLC Thames Water Advisor who can look at current debt issues, income maximization and assess potential eligibility for a grant towards white goods and utility bill debts.

Legal Advice Surgery

Monthly on a Tuesday, 12noon - 4pm on: 6 September; 4 October; and 1 November

Access free legal advice appointments on any subject (except conveyancing, probate, Power of Attorney and wills). Appointments provided by Duncan Lewis Solicitors.

Legal Clinic

Monthly on a Thursday, 12noon - 3.30pm on: 29 September; 27 October; and 24 November

30 minute appointment with a Mental Health Accredited solicitor from Bison Solicitors. Can discuss the following legal areas: mental health, Court of Protection, Power of Attorney, mental capacity, clinical negligence, family law and immigration (but not asylum).

Mental Health Carers Advice Surgery

Fortnightly on a Thursday, 10.30am - 1.30pm on: 1 and 29 September; 13 and 27 October; 13 and 27 November

Hour-long appointment with Mind in Croydon Mental Health Carers Support Service. Can discuss any issue or concern relating to caring for someone with a mental health problem.

Shelter Housing Advice Surgery

Monthly on a Wednesday, appointments 1pm - 2.30pm and drop-in 3pm - 3.45pm on: 28 September, 26 October and 23 November

30 minute appointment with an advisor from Shelter for advice and assistance on any aspect of housing.

For a large print copy of Carers News call us on 020 8649 9339, option 1

Carers Support Centre, 24 George Street, Croydon CR0 1PB
Open Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm

☎ 020 8649 9339, option 1

@ info@carersinfo.org.uk

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