

HOW TO 02

Taking a Break



This factsheet gives details of how carers can access a break from their caring responsibilities.

It is important that carers are able to take regular breaks from their caring role, but many carers do not know where to turn for help. Other than the support of friends and family (and not all carers have this), the main ways of accessing a break are to approach Croydon Council and ask to be assessed for social care and support services, or to buy in additional care services privately.

If you are caring for a disabled child aged 0-18 please see our *Caring for a Child* factsheet for more information on taking a break.

Social Care & Support Services

What is Social Care & Support?

Social care and support services take many forms, but can include:

- Practical support in the home, such as a care worker to assist with washing and dressing.
- 24-hour care in a residential home.
- Provision of equipment and adaptations to ensure a person's home remains safe and accessible.
- Activities and day centres.
- Short breaks for carers.
- Information, advice and signposting to other services.
- Direct Payments to allow someone to arrange their own support.

Eligibility Criteria & Costs

Not everyone is eligible for social care and support services. In Croydon, only people with substantial or critical levels of need are eligible for support from the Council. These levels of need are set out in the Department of Health guidance *Fair Access to Care Services (FACS)*, for more information on FACS visit www.croydon.gov.uk or call the Carers' Information Service on 020 8649 9339, option 1.

There may be a charge for social care and support services. Disabled people aged 18 and over will be financially assessed to determine how much, if anything, they will be expected to contribute. A spouse or partner is not under any obligation to provide details of their own finances unless the disabled person is going into residential care. Croydon Council does not charge for services that a care manager judges to be for the benefit of the carer rather than the disabled person.

For more information on Croydon's charging policy or help completing an assessment form call the Charging Helpline on 020 8760 5676 or visit www.croydon.gov.uk.

Disability Rights UK (020 7250 3222, www.disabilityrightsuk.org) produces a factsheet called *Charging for community care* which gives more details on social services charges and the national guidelines local authorities are supposed to follow when working out people's contributions to their care services.

Requesting an Assessment

Most social care assessments are conducted by Croydon Adult Social Services, however there are exceptions:

1. Mental Health & Substance Addiction

SLaM NHS Foundation Trust Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

0800 731 2864

www.slam.nhs.uk

- Information and advice on SLaM's services and how to access them for people with a mental health problem and/or substance addiction and their carers.

2. Young Carers

Off the Record's Young Carers Project

020 8649 9339, option 2

www.offtherecordcroydon.org

- Emotional, educational and family support and social activities for young carers aged 7-25 (7-18 at point of referral) living in Croydon.
- Conduct Young Carers' Assessments.
- Young carers who are caring for a disabled adult should get the adult to contact social services for an assessment of their own needs - see page 2.

3. When the disabled person lives outside Croydon

It is the responsibility of the social services department of the area where the disabled person lives to carry out social services assessments for both the disabled person and their carer. For example, if a carer lives in Croydon but the disabled person lives in Bromley, it will be Bromley Social Services that should be approached for social care and support.

Croydon Adult Social Services

To request an assessment to determine if a person is eligible for social care and support services (and they live in Croydon and do not have a mental health problem or substance addiction):

- Call: 020 8726 6500, option 4.
- Write to: Social Services, Bernard Weatherill House, Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA.
- Email: referral.team2@croydon.gov.uk.

Based on the information provided during this initial contact, if it appears that the person meets the eligibility criteria for social care and support a referral will be made by Croydon Council's Contact Centre to the relevant team at social services, for example learning disability, physical disability or older people.

If it is unclear whether the person meets the eligibility criteria, a referral will be made to the Duty Team who will contact the caller for a more detailed discussion. If the Duty Team assess someone as eligible for support a referral will be made to the appropriate team within social services.

Someone from the team, usually a social worker or care manager, will make contact with the caller to arrange a face to face meeting for a full assessment of needs. Social services can arrange for an interpreter to be present at the assessment if required. If someone does not meet the eligibility criteria social services should provide advice and information on alternative sources of support.

Other Support for Carers Funded by Social Services

Croydon Council funds a number of organisations (including Off the Record's Young Carers Project - see page 1) to provide short breaks for carers who may not meet the eligibility criteria for social care and support services:

Bangladesh Welfare Association

020 8684 0272

www.bwelfare.org.uk

- Advice, Information and Advocacy Project supports BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) elders (aged 50 and over) and their carers with issues such as welfare benefits, housing, social care and independent living.
- Short breaks for carers.

Crossroads Care South Thames

020 8648 9677

www.crossroadscaresouththames.org

- Two respite schemes for carers:
 - **Health and Wellbeing Respite** offers 78 hours free respite a year for carers who may also be receiving other services from Croydon Adult Social Services.
 - Care support workers can relieve a carer for a few hours over a number of weeks or in a block of 78 hours to facilitate a longer break.
 - **New Respite** offers 60 hours free respite a year for carers who are not receiving any other support from Croydon Adult Social Services.
- Carers can self-refer for both these schemes.

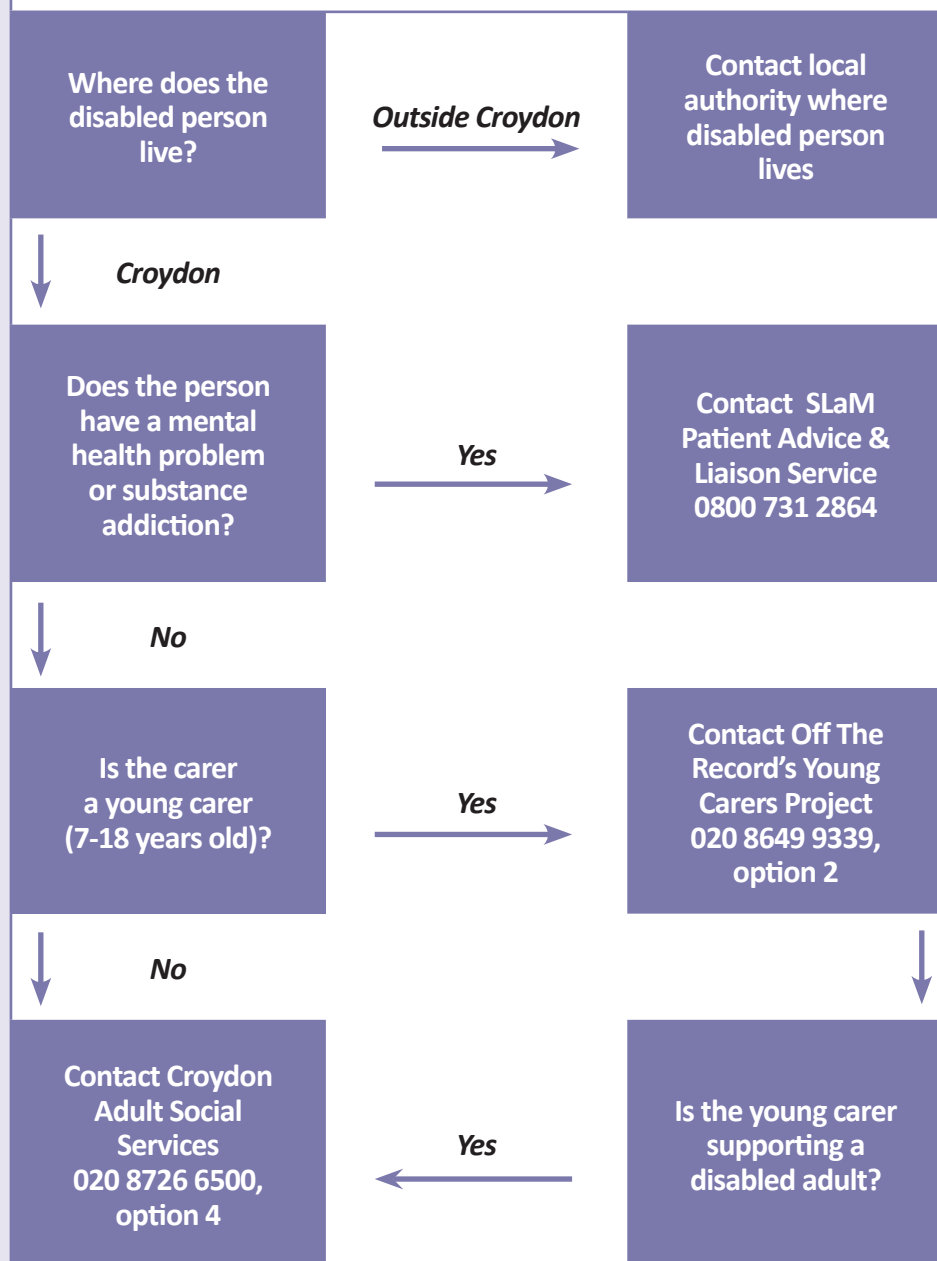
Horizon Care and Welfare Association

020 8665 0921 or 020 8663 5640/1/2/3

www.horizoncareandwelfare.org.uk

- Personal care, help in the home and with tasks such as shopping and collecting prescriptions and respite care.
- Lunch club for women aged 60 and over.
- Service is free and open to all but preference is given to BME users.

Requesting an Assessment



Community Care Assessments

Assessments of need for disabled adults are also known as Community Care Assessments (CCA). A CCA looks at the help a person needs to live independently and is an opportunity to discuss how to solve any challenges the disabled person is facing.

If all the needs of the disabled person are being met by a carer who is happy to continue providing this support, social services can decide that there is no need to arrange additional services. This is why it is important that carers are involved in the CCA - to let social services know if there are areas where they are unable to support the disabled person. Social services should, by law, take into account the views of the carer when deciding what support to provide for a disabled person and never assume someone is willing (or able, even if willing) to take on or continue a caring role.

Part of a CCA will consist of completing an Adult Social Care Assessment (ASCA) in which both the disabled person and the assessor give their views on the level of support that is needed. The ASCA also asks if the disabled person has a carer and if so whether the carer wants a Carers' Assessment.

The needs of disabled people can change over time so CCAs should be reviewed regularly. If a review is not scheduled but the level or nature of need has changed, a re-assessment can be requested from social services.

Carers' Assessments

Carers have a legal right (under the Carers' and Disabled Children Act 2000) to a Carers' Assessment (CA). A CA is not a judgement of a person's ability to care for someone, it is an opportunity for a carer to explain to what extent, if any, they are able to support the disabled person and what help they need to do this. A CA can be carried out at the same time as a CCA, but a carer has the right to request a separate assessment if they wish. In Croydon, carers are often sent a CA form in the post – for organisations that can help with completing a CA form see our *Information and Advice* factsheet.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 makes it a duty for local authorities to inform carers of their right to a CA, and during the assessment to take into account a carer's work, study and leisure interests.

A carer should be clear about the level of support they are willing and/or able to offer and ensure that social services is not making assumptions about what support they, the carer, can provide. A CA should also explore what support a carer might need to continue their caring role without compromising their physical or mental wellbeing.

A carer can request a CA even if the disabled person refuses involvement with social services, or even before their caring role has started if they are going to be providing care in the future.

If the disabled person is re-assessed and the level or nature of their need has changed the carer should be offered a re-assessment of their CA. A carer can also request a re-assessment of both their CA and the disabled person's CCA if their circumstances have changed, for example the disabled person may need more support if the carer wishes to return to work.

Preparing for a Carers' Assessment

Here are some ideas to help carers prepare for, and get the most out of, an assessment.

1. Keep a diary of the disabled person's care needs and your caring responsibilities. Make sure you include everything, no matter how minor it may seem.
2. Think about which tasks you would most like help with. Put these in order of priority.
3. Would adaptations to the home, or an item of equipment, make caring easier or safer?
4. Think about how caring is impacting on your physical and mental wellbeing. Are you getting enough sleep, are you feeling stressed or isolated?
5. Is your caring role having an impact on your ability to pursue work, study or leisure interests?
6. How is your family life affected by your caring role?
7. Do you want to continue in your caring role? If you do want to continue, would you like to do less?
8. Think about preparing for an emergency. Who would look after the person you care for if you aren't able to?

When thinking of your answers to these questions, make notes you can refer to during the assessment.



How Social Care & Support Services are Provided

There are two main ways of receiving social care and support services:

1. Services Arranged by Croydon Adult Social Services

The traditional method is for social services to provide support directly. This could be in the form of a care worker, a place at a day centre or adaptations to the home. For some people this approach will work well, but for others it can be limiting as they do not have a choice in who provides a service, and when or how it is delivered. This system does not allow much room for being innovative when thinking of different ways of meeting someone's assessed needs, but does have the advantage of not requiring the person to make any arrangements themselves.

2. Self-Directed Support

Self-Directed Support (SDS) is a new way of providing social care that gives people more choice, control and flexibility over how their support needs are met.

Under SDS a person will be allocated a Personal Budget (PB), which is the overall amount of money social services will pay towards their assessed support needs. Most people receive their PB in the form of a Direct Payment (DP) - a cash payment made directly to the individual's bank account - which they can then spend on equipment and services to meet the needs identified in the assessment and agreed in the support plan. Anyone who is entitled to social care and support services is eligible for direct payments. Those who do not want to receive a DP can ask social services to arrange services on their behalf.

People receiving DPs will be expected to keep records to show how the money has been spent. If someone chooses to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) directly, rather than hire a care worker through an agency, they will become an employer and have legal responsibilities towards their employee. Support with all aspects of becoming an employer and dealing with issues such as payroll and insurance is available from the Direct Payment and Support Planning Service.

Family members can be employed using DPs, but not a spouse, partner or close relative from the same household - except in exceptional circumstances. Before employing a family member, consider the impact this could have on family dynamics and whether the relative's finances will be affected, for example they might no longer be entitled to Carer's Allowance.

For more information on benefits and finances, see our *Money Matters* factsheet.

Managing Direct Payments & Employing a Personal Assistant

Direct Payment and Support Planning Service

020 8726 6000 ext 61925

julie.turner1@croydon.gov.uk

- Help with creating a support plan and managing Direct Payments (DPs), including recruiting staff and managing the responsibilities of being an employer.
- Holds list of payroll services that can help with the paperwork involved in being an employer.

Disability Rights UK

020 7250 8181

www.disabilityrightsuk.org

- Useful publications on independent living topics such as Personal Budgets (PBs), DPs and employment contracts.
- Independent Living Advice Line (0300 555 1525, independentliving@disabilityrightsuk.org) is open Monday and Thursday 9am - 1pm and can advise on issues such as PBs, DPs and employing PAs.

Skills for Care

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/employingpas

0113 241 1275

- A range of free publications to inform and guide PA employers, including *Employing Personal Assistants: A toolkit to help you employ your own personal assistants*.

Buying in Care & Support Services Privately

Care Agencies

There is a wide range of care agencies in the local area offering services such as personal care, practical help with household tasks, companionship, support to pursue leisure activities or even a live-in care worker to provide continuous support.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

03000 616 161

www.cqc.org.uk

- All home care providers have to register with the CQC and are inspected regularly to ensure they meet the required standards.
- Details of all home care providers and their latest CQC report are available in an online directory.

Independent Age

0800 319 6789

www.independentage.org

- Publishes a range of guides and factsheets including *Home care agencies: what to look for*, which can be downloaded from the website or a paper copy can be ordered by calling 020 7241 8522.

Approved Home Care Providers

020 8726 6500

www.croydon.gov.uk

- Croydon Council produces a list of approved home care providers who have demonstrated that they meet Croydon's quality standards.

United Kingdom Homecare Association (UKHCA)

020 8661 8188

www.ukhca.co.uk

- Details of home care providers that have signed up to the UKHCA's code of practice in addition to the minimum standards required by law.
- Produces a factsheet, *Choosing care at home*, in partnership with Carers UK.

Employing a Personal Assistant Directly

Employing a Personal Assistant (PA) directly rather than hiring a care worker through an agency involves becoming an employer and having to deal with issues such as payroll and insurance. The organisations mentioned in the *Managing Direct Payments & Employing a Personal Assistant* section are able to help self-funders as well as those receiving help from social services.

The Seven Steps to Self-Directed Support

1

Initial Contact

Initial determination of eligibility.
Refer for further assessment.
Signpost to other services.
Refer to SARA (online self assessment for equipment).

2

Assessment

Full assessment including Adult Social Care Assessment.
Carers' Assessment.
Financial Assessment.

3

Personal Budget

Indicative Personal Budget (IPB) worked out.
Financial contribution calculated.
Notification of IPB and any contribution required.

4

Support Plan

Support plan is completed. Help is available from:

- Family or friends.
- Care manager.
- Direct Payment and Support Planning Service.

Decision on how Personal Budget will be delivered, for example, Direct Payment.

5

Sign-off Plan

Croydon Council sign-off support plan if it is safe, affordable and legal.
Final Personal Budget and contribution confirmed.

6

Support Plan Implemented

Support and services in place.

7

Monitor and Review

Have outcomes been achieved?
Have needs changed?
Changes made to budget and support plan if needed.

Care Homes



Many care homes offer respite care - some in the form of short residential stays and others via lunch clubs and day services. For more information on care homes see our *Care Homes* factsheet.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

03000 616 161

www.cqc.org.uk

- All care homes have to register with the CQC and are inspected regularly to ensure they meet the required standards.
- Details of all care homes and their latest CQC report are available in an online directory.

Croydon Care Directory

020 8726 6500

www.londoncaredirectories.co.uk

- Lists care and nursing homes in Croydon, including details of those offering respite care. Also lists home care agencies.

Whitgift Foundation

The Whitgift Foundation owns two care homes in Croydon, both offer respite care in the form of day services and short stays:

Whitgift House

020 8760 0472

www.whitgiftcare.co.uk

- Whitgift Care Lunch club offers a two-course meal for £3 every weekday to people aged 65 or over.

Wilhelmina House

020 8760 0933

www.whitgiftcare.co.uk

- Day care for people aged 65 and over:
 - 10am - 4pm - including coffee, lunch and afternoon activities for £20 a day.
 - 10am - 7pm - including a high tea for £25 a day.
 - 8am - 7pm - including breakfast and a bath for £35 a day.

Complaints

Step 1

(for care funded by social services)

People who have been told they are not eligible for social care and support services, or are unhappy with the services they are receiving, should initially contact the social worker or service manager involved to discuss their concerns. If this does not resolve the issue a complaint can be made to the Social Care and Housing Complaints Team.

Social Care and Housing Complaints Team

020 8726 6000 ext 65685

complaints@croydon.gov.uk

- Complaints should be acknowledged within three working days and the council should advise how they will be handling the complaint within ten working days.
- The council will then investigate - this should take no longer than 65 working days even in complex cases.
- The person making the complaint is entitled to have an advocate to support them through the process; if no advocate is available the complaints manager may be able to provide one.

Step 1

(for privately funded care)

Complaints about the level of service provided by a care agency or care home should initially be raised with the manager. If the issues are not resolved a formal complaint can be made using the organisation's complaints procedure: all care agencies and care homes must have a complaints procedure and should give a copy to clients when they start to receive a service.

Step 2

If the complaint is still not resolved the next stage is to contact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

0300 061 0614

www.lgo.org.uk

- Deals with complaints about care funded by social services, but only with regards to the way a service has been delivered or the way a decision has been made; it does not deal with complaints or appeals regarding decisions themselves.
- Adults funding their own social care have a legal right to ask the LGO to take up their case if they are not happy with the way the complaint was dealt with by the provider.

Step 3

The final stage is to pass any feedback on to the Care Quality Commission.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

03000 616 161

www.cqc.org.uk

- Cannot look into individual complaints about care services, but encourages people to contact them if they are unhappy with the care they received to help the CQC improve services in the future.

Community Organisations

There are some other groups, usually community organisations or charities, which can help carers to take a break, see our *Grants and Leisure and Holidays* factsheets for more details.

Croydon Neighbourhood Care

020 8662 1000

www.cnca.org.uk

- Neighbourhood care schemes across the borough offer a range of services to isolated, vulnerable and frail people. Some schemes offer respite to carers.

Respite Association

01406 373163

www.respiteassociation.org

- Funding for short-term respite for carers on low incomes.

Every effort has been made to ensure the contents of this factsheet are correct, but the Carers' Information Service cannot accept responsibility for information that is inaccurate or for the quality of the services listed.

All the *How To Guide for Carers in Croydon* factsheets are available at www.carersinfo.org.uk where they will be regularly updated.