



7. HOUSING

Living in suitable housing is important for the health, safety and independence both of you and the person you look after. At some point you may need to help the person you care for to find different accommodation because their needs have changed. This might be because they are now an adult and wish to live independently, they need to live in a more accessible environment, or perhaps they require more care than you are able to provide at home. This chapter looks at the different housing options available, how to access them, and where to go for advice. If you need adaptations to make your home more accessible, or would like help and advice with home safety, security or maintenance, see chapter 5.

Council Housing

Anyone aged 18 or over can apply for council or housing association accommodation by applying directly to Croydon Council (020 8726 6100). You will be put in a queue (called a band) on the housing register. The band you are allocated will depend on how urgently you are assessed as needing housing – the higher the band the faster you will be housed – but there will be a waiting list. People with an illness or disability may be placed in a higher band if they complete a medical assessment form and submit evidence of their needs, explaining why they are struggling to manage in their current home and need to be rehoused as quickly as possible. For more information contact the Housing Enquiry Team on 020 8726 6100 or visit www.croydon.gov.uk/housing.

Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing schemes for people aged 60 and over are usually blocks of self-contained flats, with some communal facilities, and a warden who is on call 24-hours in case of emergencies. Sheltered housing can give the person you care for the chance to continue to live independently (they will be completely in charge of their own property), while you can relax knowing that help will always be on hand. Croydon Council and Croydon housing associations offer a range of sheltered housing schemes, contact the Housing Enquiry Team on 020 8726 6100 or visit www.croydon.gov.uk/housing for more details. If you think the person you care for has needs that could not be met by sheltered housing, you might want to consider special sheltered housing, which is for frail older people or those who have higher support needs. For more information on special sheltered housing call Social Services for Adults on 020 8726 6500.

Age Concern Croydon (020 8680 5450, www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk) has a Housing Options service for older people who are thinking of moving and want to know what choices they have. The Elderly Accommodation Counsel (020 7820 1343, www.eac.org.uk) provides a free advice and information service to older people, their families and carers on any aspect of housing, including sheltered housing.

Supported Housing

Young people and adults who are vulnerable and have housing-related support needs, perhaps because they have a disability or have not had the opportunity to acquire independent living skills, might qualify for supported housing. Supported housing aims to develop and sustain a person's ability to live as independently as possible, either in their own home (floating support) or in accommodation with staff on site. Access to most supported housing services in Croydon is through the Support Needs Assessment and Placement Service (SNAP) (020 8760 5498). SNAP staff will decide if supported housing is the most appropriate form of support for the person you care for and if it is they will carry out an assessment of their needs and refer them to a supported housing scheme. If supported housing is not thought to be appropriate the SNAP team will help them access alternatives such as a social services' assessment of need (see chapter two).

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The CAPS Supported Lodging Scheme (020 8726 6000 ext 63516) places vulnerable adults, such as those with a learning disability or mental health problem, in the home of an adult placement carer where they will be supported to live as a member of the family and wider community. The Croydon Generic Floating Support Service (020 8726 8891) provides practical advice, support and assistance to people in their own homes, including homeowners. The service aims to help people having difficulty managing their home and aspects of their lives by helping with issues such as budgeting, neighbour disputes and parenting difficulties.

Care Homes

If you do not feel that you can continue to look after the person you care for at home, and their support needs are greater than sheltered or supported housing can meet, you may want to consider arranging for them to move into a care home. Care homes offer full-board accommodation, 24-hour care, and opportunities for the person you care for to socialise and take part in leisure activities. Some homes offer additional support in the form of nursing care, and some specialise in caring for people living with a specific condition, such as dementia. Croydon Council (020 8726 6500) produces the *Croydon Care Directory* which gives details of accredited private, voluntary and local authority care homes in Croydon.

Choosing the right home is important and if you can you should take the time to fully investigate all potential homes, including visiting them in person. If the person you care for has been assessed by Croydon Social Services as needing a place in a care home they are still entitled to have a say in which home they move to, even if social services are funding the placement. You can request recent inspection reports on any care home in England from the Care Quality Commission (03000 616161, www.cqc.org.uk), and there are a number of organisations who are able to help you choose not only the most suitable care home, but also the best way to fund a place there:

- Age Concern Croydon (020 8680 5450, www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk) has a range of free factsheets including *Attendance Allowance in Care Homes* and *Finding Care Home Accommodation*.

- CareAware (08705 134 925, www.careaware.co.uk) provides information, advisory and advocacy services for older people on any aspect of care homes and care home fees.
- Counsel and Care (0845 300 7585, www.counselandcare.org.uk) provides advice, information and publications on any issue to do with care homes and care home fees for people aged 60 or over.
- The Relatives and Residents Association (020 7359 8136, www.relres.org) supports older people by advising on all aspects of care homes, as well as providing a listening ear to family and carers.

The person you care for may have to pay towards the cost of their place in a care home; Croydon Council will conduct a financial assessment to determine the level of their contribution. For more information call the Charging Helpline (020 8760 5676) or call Social Services for Adults on 020 8726 6500 and request *Choosing and Paying for a Care Home*. Some people are exempt from all care home fees, such as those who have savings below a certain amount, and those receiving NHS continuing healthcare (see chapter three). For national advice and information specifically on care home fees call the NHFA Care Fees Advice Line on 0800 99 88 33 or the Help The Aged Care Fees Advice Service on 0500 76 74 76.

Problems with Housing

If you are experiencing any housing-related problems such as tenancy disagreements, harassment, or the threat of eviction you could contact Croydon Council's Housing Advice Service on 020 8726 6100 – this service can advise private tenants as well as people living in council and housing association properties. Croydon Housing Aid Society (020 8726 0840) is an independent housing advice centre that gives advice on all housing related matters. Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity, runs a London Housing Advice Centre that anyone living in a London borough can access; call their free housing advice line on 0808 800 4444 for more information.

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Key Contacts

Age Concern Croydon	020 8680 5450
Care Quality Commission	03000 616161
Counsel and Care	0845 300 7585
Croydon Council Charging Helpline	020 8760 5676
Croydon Housing Advice Service	020 8726 6100
Croydon Housing Aid Society	020 8726 0840
Croydon Housing Department	020 8726 6100
Elderly Accommodation Counsel	020 7820 1343
Help The Aged	0500 76 74 76
NHFA Care Fees Advice Line	0800 998 833
Relatives and Residents Association	020 7359 8136
Shelter	0808 800 4444
Social Services for Adults	020 8726 6500
Support Needs Assessment and Placement Service	020 8760 5498

If you cannot find what you are looking for please contact the Carers' Information Service on 020 8649 9339, option 1.

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