



## 1. INFORMATION

### Information, Advice and Emotional Support

**Becoming a carer can radically alter your life – you may suddenly be caught up in a whirlwind of appointments and jargon and your normal routine can be thrown completely. Carers who have become more used to their role may still find that they experience times of change and stress and need extra support outside of friends and family. Talking to someone about your feelings can help and there are counselling services, helplines and support groups that give you the space to share with others how you feel about your situation.**

You may want more practical help with tasks such as securing appropriate services for yourself and the person you care for, especially if you have never been involved with these issues before, and there are organisations that can do this by making phone calls on your behalf, going to meetings with you, filling out forms, putting your views in writing and giving more specialist help such as legal representation.

This guide is primarily concerned with organisations and services that specifically help carers and the person that you care for. Most organisations have a particular focus, such as supporting carers of a certain age or those who look after someone with a specific condition, see our factsheet *Specific Conditions*. There are also services that support people generally that may be of use to you in your caring role, for example those that relate to a particular faith community or ethnicity; our factsheet *BME Carers* lists a wide range of such groups. You can find out about the full range of voluntary and community groups in the borough from Croydon Voluntary Action (020 8684 3862, [www.cvalive.org.uk](http://www.cvalive.org.uk)), which publishes a free *Directory of Community*

*Organisations in Croydon.* Internet resources such as Talk2Croydon ([www.talk2croydon.co.uk](http://www.talk2croydon.co.uk)), which offers you the chance to have your say about local issues and get involved in campaigns, and Croydon Online ([www.croydononline.org](http://www.croydononline.org)), a community website that lists local organisations, activities and clubs for all ages and abilities, can also be useful.

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## Support for all Carers

In Croydon, there are three carers' support organisations that work with all carers, irrespective of the disability or illness of the person they care for. There are also national carers' organisations offering information, advice and helpline services.

The Carers' Information Service (020 8649 9339, option 1, [www.carerscontactline.co.uk](http://www.carerscontactline.co.uk)) offers advice, information, support and training to any adult carer living in, or caring for someone who lives in, the London Borough of Croydon. We offer an enquiry service so that you can contact us by phone, in writing or in person (by appointment) to talk about the issues you are facing. As well as offering a listening ear, we can liaise with other professionals on your behalf, help write letters, fill out forms and undertake research in order to answer any questions you have about caring. We also have a range of publications including this guide, a regular newsletter called *Carers News* and a monthly e-bulletin, all of which are free and available on our website. Our series of factsheets includes the titles: *Caring for a Child with a Special Need or Disability*, *Caring for an Adult*, *BME Carers*, *Support for Specific Conditions*, *Holidays* and *Grants*. We offer regular training courses, which cover practical, or self-development topics such as moving and handling and being more assertive. These courses enable you to learn a new skill, meet other carers and take time out from your caring role. Funding is available to cover the costs of alternative care for you to be able to attend our courses or any others that are relevant to your caring role. We also work with other organisations to run events for Carers Week in June and Carers Rights Day in December. We raise awareness of issues affecting carers and campaign for change by participating in forums such as the Carers Partnership Group. This multi-agency group meets to discuss wider issues that are of concern to carers in Croydon, and includes representatives from local organisations, services and carers. You are welcome to contact us if you have an issue which you would like us to take to the Carers Partnership Group for discussion.

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Croydon Crossroads Carer Support Service (020 8667 9893) supports carers living in Croydon and can help you in various ways to access the support and services you need. A support worker can visit you at home and offer emotional support, attend meetings with you, help fill out forms, accompany you to benefit appeals and much more. The service also runs three grants schemes: up to £200 towards a holiday for carers (this can only be applied for every two years), up to £30 a month towards transport costs taken for leisure purposes, and grants to subsidise the cost of training courses and any alternative care required (this can be any training, it does not have to be related to your caring role). There are regular lunches for carers who are current users of the service.

Croydon Carers Centre (020 8688 7219, [www.croydoncarerscentre.co.uk](http://www.croydoncarerscentre.co.uk)) runs a drop-in facility offering emotional support, help and advice with benefits, signposting to other services and advocacy. It also offers counselling, complementary therapies and outings for carers and those they care for.

### National Organisations

- Carers Direct (0808 802 0202, [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)) offers information, advice and support to all carers, including young carers. Lines are open 8 am - 9 pm Monday to Friday, 11 am - 4 pm at weekends.
- Carers UK (0808 808 7777, [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)) is an active campaigner for carers' issues, produces a range of publications and has a helpline for carers open on Wednesday and Thursday 10 am - 12 noon and 2 - 4 pm.
- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (0844 800 4361, [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)) has carers' centres across the UK and hosts discussion boards on its website.

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### Support for Young Carers

The Young Carers Support Project (020 8649 9339, option 2, [www.carerscontactline.co.uk](http://www.carerscontactline.co.uk)) is for children and young people from the age of seven to 25 (maximum of age 18 at point of referral) who are providing a significant amount of care for a parent or sibling. The project conducts carers' assessments (see chapter two) and offers home visits, information, advice, advocacy, regular outings and activities during school holidays and support applying for grants. There is specialist help for young carers of a parent who

has a mental health problem and those who need help with school issues, including a weekly homework club during term-time.

### National Organisations

- An online community for young carers at [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net) offering chatrooms, forums and newsletters as well as support from online youth workers and agony aunts.
- Sibs (01535 645 453, [www.sibs.org.uk](http://www.sibs.org.uk)) provides information, advice and support to brothers and sisters (siblings) of people with special needs, disabilities or chronic illness.

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### Parent Carers of Children and Young People with a Disability

When referring to children and young people with a disability we are including those with 'special needs' and 'special educational needs'.

Parents in Partnership (PIP) (020 8651 6198, [www.pipcroydon.btik.com](http://www.pipcroydon.btik.com)) is a first point of contact for parent carers in the borough and can give you advice and information, as well as details of other services.

Face 2 Face (020 8667 0207, [www.croydon-homestart.co.uk](http://www.croydon-homestart.co.uk)) is a befriending service providing parent carers with emotional support, especially with coming to terms with their child's disability. There is also a monthly support group.

Beulah Family Church Parent Support Group (020 8771 4570) is for any parent of a child with a disability; they do not need to be a member of the church. It meets on a monthly basis and offers emotional support and the chance to meet other people in a similar situation.

There are a number of Children's Centres in Croydon that offer stay and play sessions for disabled children and their carers as well as workshops and advice sessions. To find your nearest centre, contact the Family Information Service on 0845 1111 100, [www.croydonchildcare.com](http://www.croydonchildcare.com).

Families with a child aged five and under who has complex needs and receives, or is likely to receive, input from more than four different services, can get practical and emotional support from the Early Support Programme for

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Disabled Children (07799 471428, [www.earlysupport.org.uk](http://www.earlysupport.org.uk)). This programme aims to improve the services families receive by ensuring effective multi-agency working - this is usually done by allocating a key worker who will liaise with other professionals on behalf of the family.

### National Organisations

- Contact a Family (0808 808 3555, [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)) offers a comprehensive information service to families caring for a child with a disability through their helpline and range of publications. Their [www.makingcontact.org](http://www.makingcontact.org) site puts families caring for a child with a similar condition in touch with each other.
- Gingerbread (0800 018 5026, [www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)) has a helpline and factsheets for lone parents, and a specialist advice service for lone parents caring for a child with a disability or long-term health problem.

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### Carers of Older People

Age Concern Croydon (020 8680 5450, [www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk](http://www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk)) offers a range of services to people aged 55 and over, and to people of any age who have a disability, including children, and their carers. These services include information, advice, advocacy, befriending, handy person services, computer training, nail cutting, benefits advice and home safety checks. It also has an online directory ([www.accdirectory.org.uk](http://www.accdirectory.org.uk)) that gives details of local and national services and organisations of use to older people and carers.

The Partnership for Older People (POP) Service (020 8654 4440, [www.croydonpop.org.uk](http://www.croydonpop.org.uk)) has a bus that goes to various locations across the borough bringing services, information and advice to people aged 55 and over and their carers. There are many different professionals and services available at different times including: blood pressure checks, falls prevention, health 'MOTs' and medicines management, hearing assessments and benefits advice.

Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (020 8662 1000, [www.cnca.org.uk](http://www.cnca.org.uk)) has neighbourhood care groups all over the borough. The groups are independent and have their own volunteers that offer a variety of services to meet the needs of people in their area who are isolated, vulnerable or disabled.

The services provided differ from group to group, but examples of the help they can offer include short breaks for carers, befriending, occasional gardening and DIY, shopping, lunch clubs and transport.

Older People's Network (OPeN) (020 8683 7002) offers older people the chance to meet regularly and express their opinions about the issues that matter to them. The group's views are then passed on to service providers via representatives, ensuring everyone's voice is heard.

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### Carers of People with a Physical Disability

DisabilityCroydon (020 8684 5538, [www.disabilitycroydon.org.uk](http://www.disabilitycroydon.org.uk)) provides information, advice and support to adults with a physical disability or sensory impairment and their families. Services include a helpline, regular newsletter, RADAR keys for accessible toilets, an alternative formats service (large print, Easy Read, audiotape, disk or Braille translations) and disability equality and computer training. In partnership with Age Concern Croydon, DisabilityCroydon runs ACDC Advocacy, which provides advocacy support for people aged 18–54 with a physical disability or sensory impairment. People aged 55 and over should access the scheme via Age Concern Croydon (020 8680 5450, [www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk](http://www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk)). DisabilityCroydon also runs the Direct Payment Support Service (see chapter two).

### National Organisations

- Scope (0808 800 3333, [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)) offers information, support and advice to people with a physical disability and their carers.
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### Carers of People with a Sensory Impairment

Croydon Hearing Resource Centre (020 8686 0049, [www.croydonhearing.org.uk](http://www.croydonhearing.org.uk)) gives information and support to people with hearing loss and their carers. The centre provides advice and practical help, including re-tubing and supplying batteries for NHS hearing aids, onsite and at the local surgeries they hold around the borough. Home visits are offered to people who are housebound; and hearing equipment assessments are carried out on behalf of social services.

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Croydon Deaf Children's Society (07951 611190, [www.croydondeafchildren.org.uk](http://www.croydondeafchildren.org.uk)) offers information, advice and support to children with a hearing impairment and their families, particularly at difficult times such as diagnosis or choosing a school. It also arranges social events to enable the children to enjoy each other's company and for parents to talk and support one another.

Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (020 8688 2486) offers practical support, information and advice for adults with a visual impairment and their carers. It provides a wide range of social activities such as lunch clubs and day centres, free counselling, rehabilitation services and support for people newly registered blind.

### National Organisations

- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), (0303 123 999, [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)) offers practical support and advice to anyone with a sight problem.
- Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID), (0808 808 0123, textphone 0808 808 9000, [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)) offers a wide range of services for people with a hearing impairment and their carers.
- Sense (0845 127 0060, textphone 0845 127 0062, [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)) supports deafblind people, their families and carers.

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### Carers of People with a Learning Disability

If you care for a child or adult with a learning disability you can get information and support from Croydon Mencap (020 8662 9201, [www.croydon.cswebsites.org](http://www.croydon.cswebsites.org)). Croydon Mencap publishes a free *Directory of Services for People with Learning Disabilities* and a regular newsletter. Other services include daytime activities, evening and weekend clubs, Treetops Children's Centre and welfare benefits advice. It also runs an Older Carers Support Service offering information, advocacy, social events, and help with transport costs to carers aged 60 and over who care for an adult with a learning disability. This service can also carry out carer's assessments on behalf of social services.

Advocacy Partners (020 8681 4903, [www.advocacypartners.org](http://www.advocacypartners.org)) is a

professional advocacy service for people with learning disabilities living in Croydon. It enables people to have control over their own lives, make decisions, be treated fairly and participate fully in community life.

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### Carers of People with a Life-Limiting or Life-Threatening Condition

The Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service (020 8401 3441) provides information, support, counselling and free complementary therapies for cancer patients and their carers. It also offers a drop-in service (ring to check times) and you can book an appointment to see a Citizen's Advice Bureau worker on some days.

The South East Cancer Help Centre (020 8668 0974, [www.sechc.org.uk](http://www.sechc.org.uk)) offers information, counselling, complementary therapies and activity groups such as drama and yoga for cancer patients and their carers. There are support groups for specific cancers such as prostate, bowel, lung and liver cancer.

The Hospice Information Service (020 7520 8222, [www.helptohospices.org.uk](http://www.helptohospices.org.uk)) provides information about hospice care and how to find a hospice. The Association for Children's Palliative Care (ACT) (0845 108 2201, [www.act.org.uk](http://www.act.org.uk)) provides information and support to parent carers of children with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition.

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### Carers of People with Mental Health Problems

Rethink Croydon Carers Support Service (020 8649 9339, option 3, [www.carerscontactline.co.uk](http://www.carerscontactline.co.uk)) provides support, advice, information, advocacy and training for adults who are caring for someone with a severe mental illness. The service offers home visits, assistance and advocacy at meetings, and the opportunity to meet other carers through its Afternoon Carers Support Group and African and Caribbean Carers Group. Rethink also supports the NSF Carers Group (020 8660 3746) and the Voices Forum (for people with schizophrenia and their carers) (020 8464 7052).

Regular Carer Education talks are held in Croydon for people who care for someone with a mental health problem. Professionals and service users are also welcome at these events. There is usually a talk from a professional and

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the chance to meet other carers and share experiences. For more information contact Rethink on 020 8649 9339, option 3.

Mind in Croydon (020 8668 2210, [www.mindincroydon.org.uk](http://www.mindincroydon.org.uk)) offers a wide range of services for people with mental health problems, their carers and families including social clubs, work experience, employment and social inclusion service, active minds project (giving support to access leisure and education services), advocacy, counselling, information helpline, furniture service and welfare benefits advice. It also produces a free *Guide to Mental Health Services in Croydon*.

The Croydon Association of Pastoral Care in Mental Health (020 8665 6718, [www.croydon-apcmh.co.uk](http://www.croydon-apcmh.co.uk)) offers drop-in sessions, creative workshops and social activities for people with mental health problems.

Carers of people with a mental health problem are welcome to join the Croydon Mental Health Forum (020 8683 7010), which is facilitated by Croydon Voluntary Action. The forum is made up of people who have experienced mental health problems, carers, people who work in the voluntary or community sector, and members of the public. The aim of the forum is to strive for improvements to treatment and care for mental health service users and their carers.

### National Organisations

- SANE (020 7375 1002, Saneline 0845 767 8000, [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)) provides an information and support service to people experiencing mental health problems, their families and carers.

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### Carers of People with Dementia

Croydon Memory Service (020 3228 9500) provides an assessment, diagnosis and treatment service for adults experiencing memory difficulties, and support for their carers. If the person you care for has dementia you can get information, advice and support from the Alzheimer's Society Croydon (020 8916 3587). It also carries out carer's assessments on behalf of Croydon Council, provides training courses and support groups for carers, access to alternative care, help with benefit forms and a monthly social event called the Forget-Me-Not Café for people with dementia and their carers.

## Carers of People with a Substance Addiction

If you are affected by someone else's substance misuse you may be interested in the Family, Friends and Carers Support Group run by Croydon Community Drug Agency (020 8686 7500). There are various Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group meetings in Croydon, all of which are 'open' to carers at least once a month. For details ring 020 7833 0022 for Croydon, or 01883 330720 for Purley, Coulsdon, Addington, Selsdon and Sanderstead. There are two Al-Anon Family Groups (020 7403 0888) in Croydon for carers of problem drinkers. Alateen is part of Al-Anon and is for young people, aged 12-17, who are affected by someone else's drinking. Call for details of local groups. Croydon Alcohol Counselling Service (020 8667 9500) provides individual or couple counselling for those experiencing problems with alcohol (now or in the past) and their carers. The Drugs 'n' Alcohol Service (DNA) (020 8296 9655) offers counselling for people aged 14-26 who live, work or study in Croydon and want to talk about their own or someone else's drug or alcohol use.

## National Organisations

- FRANK (0800 776600, [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)) offers advice and information to anyone concerned about drug use.
- Adfam (020 7553 7640, [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)) supports people affected by drugs or alcohol.

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## Counselling

Counselling offers people the chance to talk in complete confidence and can be particularly beneficial to carers who may not feel that they can speak freely about how they really feel about their caring role to those around them. The Rethink Croydon Counselling Service (020 8649 9339, option 4, [www.carerscontactline.co.uk](http://www.carerscontactline.co.uk)) offers up to twelve free counselling sessions with a trained counsellor for any carer in Croydon. This is the only carers-specific counselling service in the borough, but there are many general counselling services in Croydon, contact us on 020 8649 9339, option 1 for more details.

## National Organisations

- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (01455 833 316,

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[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)) can help you find a local counsellor or psychotherapist.

- Counselling Directory ([www.counselling-directory.org.uk](http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk)) lists local contacts.

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### Legal Information and Advice and Making a Complaint

The Croydon and Sutton Law Centre (020 8667 9226) provides solicitors who can help with housing, employment, benefits and equalities issues. Legal advice is means tested.

Croydon Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) ([www.croydoncab.org.uk](http://www.croydoncab.org.uk))

New Addington CAB (01689 846 890)

Thornton Heath CAB (020 8684 2236)

The CAB provides free, confidential and impartial advice and information on a wide range of issues including debt, benefits, employment and housing.

The Disability Law Service (020 7791 9800, [www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)) provides a confidential and free legal advice and casework service for disabled adults, their families and carers. It specialises in community care, employment, education, welfare benefits, disability discrimination and consumer contract law.

Community Legal Advice (0845 345 4 345, [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk)) provides free legal advice and information to people who live on a low income or benefits, on issues such as debt, education, benefits and tax credits, employment and housing problems. The service can also help you find a local legal adviser.

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<b>Key Contacts</b>	
Age Concern Croydon	020 8680 5450
Alzheimer's Society Croydon	020 8916 3587
Carers Direct	0808 802 0202
Carers UK	0808 808 7777
Community Legal Advice	0845 345 4 345
Contact a Family	0808 808 3555
Crossroads Carers Support Service	020 8667 9893
Croydon and Sutton Law Centre	020 8667 9226
Croydon Carers Centre	020 8688 7219
Croydon Community Drug Agency	020 8686 7500
Croydon Deaf Children's Society	07951 611 190
Croydon Hearing Resource Centre	020 8686 0049
Croydon Mencap	020 8662 9201
Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association	020 8662 1000
Croydon Voluntary Action	020 8684 3862
Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind	020 8688 2486
Disability Law Service	020 7791 9800
DisabilityCroydon	020 8684 5538
Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Service	020 8401 3441
Mind in Croydon	020 8668 2210
Parents In Partnership	020 8651 6198
Rethink Croydon Counselling Service	020 8649 9339, option 4
Rethink Croydon Carers Support Service	020 8649 9339, option 3
Young Carers Support Project	020 8649 9339, option 2
<b>If you cannot find what you are looking for, please contact the Carers' Information Service on 020 8649 9339, option 1.</b>	