



8. SHORT BREAKS AND LEISURE

Your caring role may not allow for much free time and your wellbeing may be affected as a result. Taking a regular break – whether for a few hours or even longer – may help reduce stress and anxiety and can be just as refreshing for the person you care for as well as it is for you. Remember that going out to meet a friend for a coffee is just as valid a reason to have a break as going to a doctor's appointment or doing the shopping. Leisure time is important too, whether you do something with the person you care for, or separately. There are a number of schemes and services that can make this easier.

Short Breaks

Informal Networks

You may have relatives, friends or neighbours who could help out from time to time. It can be hard to ask for help, but other people may not realise that you would appreciate their support unless you ask them. If you can be specific about what you need then those around you may be all too willing to help. If you are part of a carers group you may find others who are looking after someone with a similar disability or of a similar age and they are likely to have a good understanding of the issues you are facing. You could help each other to take a break by offering a lift share to an activity, or babysitting so that you can go out. If you do not feel that you could leave the person you care for with someone else, a friend coming to your home for just a couple of hours could enable you to have a sleep, or catch up on things around the house.

Care at Home

Home care, also known as domiciliary care, is when a trained care worker comes to the home during the day, evening or overnight to carry out some of the tasks that you would normally do. You can pay for home care privately. Croydon Council has contracts with homecare agencies who are monitored and reviewed regularly. Contact Social Services for Adults on 020 8726 6500 for a copy of the Approved Home Care Agencies list.

You can also ask Croydon Social Services to organise home care on your behalf or to give you a direct payment to make your own arrangements. The person you care for will need to meet the criteria for assistance and will need to be assessed - see chapter two for more information about assessments. Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (020 8662 1000, www.cnca.org.uk) has neighbourhood groups all over the borough. Some of these have volunteers who can provide a sitting service, where someone comes to the home for a few hours to be with the person you care for while you go out.

Community Service Volunteers (020 7278 6601, www.csv.org.uk) can help the person you care for to live independently by living with them and providing any assistance that is required. Travelling expenses, pocket money and meals must be provided. Direct Payments can be used to pay these fees. Volunteers will generally stay for a minimum of four months and a maximum of a year. There are groups that support carers from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities that provide culturally specific short break schemes. You can read about these in our factsheet *BME Carers*.

Care Away from the Home

An alternative to another person coming into the home is to use a scheme where the person you care for spends part of the day elsewhere at either a day care centre, day service or an older people's lunch club. As well as giving you a break, this will give the person you care for the opportunity to socialise and take part in activities. Such services are run by Social Services for Adults (020 8726 6500) and the person you care for will need to meet the criteria for assistance and be assessed, see chapter two.

There are day services provided by voluntary organisations, such as Croydon

8. SHORT BREAKS AND LEISURE

Mencap (020 8662 9201, www.croydon.cswebsites.org), which supports people with a learning disability and Mind in Croydon (020 8668 2210, www.mindincroydon.org.uk), which supports people with a mental health problem. See chapter one for more details about these and other specific condition groups, or see our *Specific Conditions* factsheet.

Children with disabilities can use a variety of social services schemes including Calleydown Residential Centre; a Saturday club; holiday activity schemes; or they can go to a care worker's own house for a few hours or even an overnight stay. All of these services are only available to children who have been assessed by the Children with Disabilities Team - see chapter two for more information about accessing these services. The Croydon Childminding Network (020 8604 7586) maintains a list of specialist childminders in the borough who look after children in their own home (not the child's) and who have experience and skills relating to the care of disabled children.

Financial Help to Take a Break

If you are on a low income you may be able to get funding from the Respite Association (01406 701944, www.respiteassociation.org) to pay for a short break. There are a number of grant-giving organisations that may also be able to fund a break - see our factsheets *Grants* and *Holidays* for more details.

Leisure

Information about local organisations, events and activities for carers can be found in our free newsletter, *Carers News*, and in our monthly e-bulletin, as well as on our website, www.carerscontactline.co.uk. Joining our postal and electronic mailing list ensures that you will be up to date with everything that is happening for carers in the borough. *Leisure Link* (020 8239 4397, www.croydononline.org/leisure) is a regular newsletter that gives information about leisure opportunities for people with a learning disability. There are other organisations, such as those covering specific caring groups, that also distribute newsletters and other mailings which will inform you about activities; see chapter one for details.

You can reduce the cost of leisure activities by ensuring that you make the most of any discounts. Carers, older people and people with disabilities can often get reductions on entrance fees to major tourist attractions and places of interest so it is always worth asking when you buy your tickets. Many attractions have a carer goes free policy, but the person with the disability may need to show proof of their disability, such as a Disabled Person's Freedom Pass (see chapter six) or details of their Disability Living Allowance (see chapter four).

Access

If accessibility is one of your main concerns when planning leisure activities, there are a number of sources of information. The DisabledGo website (www.disabledgo.info) lists the accessibility of leisure and entertainment venues in Croydon, including pubs, restaurants, cinemas and shops. As well as finding out about wheelchair access you can check other facilities such as toilets and changing areas, large print, hearing systems and parking. The Community Access Service (020 8726 6000 ext 61661) helps adults under 65 with a physical disability and/or sensory impairment to access leisure opportunities (in addition to learning and job opportunities). Croydon Council has an Inclusion Support Worker (020 8604 7570) who can help if you are a parent carer and have difficulty accessing an out of school club because of your child's extra needs.

You can get information on the accessibility of venues and attractions across London, plus details of prices and concessions, from Artsline (www.artsline.org.uk). Shape (0845 521 3457, www.shapearts.org.uk) helps deaf and disabled adults to access arts and entertainment events across London and provides information on the accessibility of venues.

If going out of the home is not possible for the person you care for, Croydon libraries (020 8726 6900) offer specific services for people who are housebound or have a visual impairment, such as the home library service which delivers books to your door every four weeks, and a wide selection of large print, Braille and talking books. W4B - the TV and Radio Charity (01708 621 101, www.w4b.org.uk) aims to prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness by ensuring that those with issues associated with age, illness and disability who find it difficult to leave their homes can benefit from a free television, cd player or radio. Applications must be made by a referee, such as a carers support organisation, health or social services professional.

Specific Activities

There are specific leisure activities and schemes that you and the person that you look after may want to explore - whether you want to do things together, or separately, which will give you a break at the same time. We have listed a range of schemes for a variety of groups of people, but there are many more that are available, so please contact us if you cannot find what you need.

Music, Arts and Sport

- Active Minds is a project run by Mind in Croydon (020 8668 2210, www.mindincroydon.org.uk) that aims to reduce social isolation by enabling people with mental health problems to take part in leisure, sports and social activities. Active Minds will help people to get information on whatever their interests are and support them to join existing groups being run by the project, such as boxercise, use the gym and pool at New Addington gym, go sailing and do gardening.
- The Cinema Exhibitor's Association Card (0845 123 1292, www.ceacard.co.uk) enables people receiving Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance to get one free ticket for someone accompanying them to the cinema. People with a hearing loss or visual impairment may prefer to see the film with subtitles or audio description - some cinemas offer monthly autism-friendly screenings. See www.yourlocalcinema.com for details of local screenings.
- Clocktower Arts (020 8253 1034) organises events for people with disabilities, including the Croydon Beautiful Octopus Club - a club night for people with a learning disability.
- Croydon Contacts (020 8665 0984, www.croydoncontacts.com) provides supported leisure activities for adults with a disability, including a drama club, cinema trips, bowling, cycling and a Sunday lunch club.
- Croydon Mencap (020 8662 9201 www.croydon.cswebsites.org) runs the Leslie Park Project which offers daytime activities to young adults with learning disabilities, including dance, gardening, arts and crafts, swimming,

music, cinema and outings. There is a Saturday Sports Club, Saturday Drop-In Club and a Monday Club which offer a range of activities. Croydon NOW is a person-centred activity service for adults with a learning disability who meet the criteria for services provided by Croydon Social Services. Members are supported to access community facilities in addition to centre-based activities.

- Croydon's swimming pools and leisure centres offer discounts on entry rates to people with disabilities and their carers. Thornton Heath Leisure Centre (020 8689 5300) has a swimming session for carers and people with disabilities on a Friday evening and a family splash session for disabled children and their families on a Sunday morning. Enterprise Swimming Club (020 8644 4851) is for young people and adults with a disability on Friday evenings at Purley Swimming Pool.
- Cycling for All (020 7346 8482, www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk) takes place at Croydon Sports Arena in South Norwood on Monday and Saturday mornings. It gives children and adults with disabilities and balance problems the opportunity to use tricycles and adapted bicycles.
- The Diamond Riding Centre (020 8643 7764, www.diamondcentre.org.uk) provides therapeutic and recreational horse-riding and carriage driving. The centre is open during term-time only and there is a waiting list.
- Saturn V (08454 30 20 31, www.saturnv.co.uk) is a special needs trampolining centre for children and adults.
- The de Stafford Sports Centre Disability Sports Club (01883 344 355) is for teenagers and adults who have a disability. The club offers an opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of indoor sports with professional coaches. The club is in Caterham but is open to Croydon residents.

Social Events

- The Alzheimer's Society Croydon (020 8916 3587) runs the Forget-Me-Not Café, a monthly social event for people with dementia, their families and carers.

8. SHORT BREAKS AND LEISURE

- Contact the Elderly (0800 716 543, www.contact-the-elderly.org) runs two schemes in Croydon for elderly people to meet one Sunday afternoon a month for tea, talk and companionship in a volunteer's home.
- Croydon Crossroads Carer Support Service (020 8667 9893) runs a lunch club for carers who are receiving support from them.
- Croydon Carers Centre (020 8688 7219) has regular outings and events for carers throughout the year.
- Croydon Mencap (020 8662 9201, www.croydon.cswebsites.org) has an Older Carers Support Service that helps carers who are over 60, living in the borough of Croydon and caring for someone with a learning disability. As well as offering home visits and one-to-one support, the service holds regular coffee mornings, lunches and special events to enable carers to meet one another.
- Parents in Partnership (PIP) (020 8651 6198, www.pipcroydon.btik.com) holds regular events for families caring for children with a disability and provides details about other activities of interest to parent carers.

Activities For Children and Young People

You may find our annual publication *Summer Guide for Parent Carers*, which is published in July, helpful if you are looking for holiday activities and ideas suitable for children and young people with a disability or illness. You can also find out about childcare, children's centres and other activities for children by calling the Family Information Service (0845 1111 100, www.croydonchildcare.com).

- Croydon Crossroads Saturday Club (020 8688 4499) is for young people with a physical disability aged 8-18.
- Croydon Mencap (020 8662 9201 www.croydon.cswebsites.org) runs youth clubs for young people with a learning disability aged 12-18 .
- Croydon Sports Development Team (020 8760 5592) offers sports activities and coaching for young people aged 8-18, including those with disabilities.

- Spectrum (07976 912915 or 07906 276202) offers arts and leisure activities and a range of clubs for young people with disabilities.
- SureStart (020 8649 8441) has a sensory room that can be booked for a free one-hour session.
- Treetops Children's Centre (020 8688 3263) is an after school club for children with special needs aged from 5 - 12. It is also open some Saturdays and during school holidays.
- Waggy Tails Club (020 8651 6728) gives young people with special needs aged 10–17 the opportunity to train dogs. This is especially useful to help children overcome their fear of dogs.
- Whitgift Special Needs Activity Project (SNAP) (020 8405 6933, www.whitgiftsnap.org.uk) runs schemes for children and young people with a physical or learning disability aged 5-19 for two weeks during the summer holidays. Applications must be submitted by the end of April.
- The Youth Worker at the Youth Disabilities Project (07990 790183) can tell you about Croydon's youth centres and clubs that are suitable for young people with disabilities.
- The Young Carers Support Project (020 8649 9339, option 2) supports children and young people who have a caring role in the family. It organises activities and outings for young carers during school holidays and can also help to arrange family breaks.

Holidays

You may decide to go on holiday without the person you care for and find alternative care for them or you might prefer to go on holiday together, but look for a venue where help is provided. See our factsheet *Holidays* for sources of information and advice, travel insurance, medication, equipment, holiday providers and financial help.

8. SHORT BREAKS AND LEISURE

Key Contacts	
Alzheimer's Society Croydon	020 8916 3587
Clocktower Arts	020 8253 1034
Contact The Elderly	0800 716 543
Croydon Libraries	020 8726 6900
Croydon Carers Centre	020 8688 7219
Croydon Childminding Network	020 8604 7586
Croydon Crossroads Carer Support Service	020 8667 9893
Croydon Mencap	020 8662 9201
Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association	020 8662 1000
Croydon Social Services	020 8726 6500
Family Information Service	0845 1111 100
Inclusion Support Worker	020 8604 7570
Mind in Croydon	020 8668 2210
Parents in Partnership	020 8651 6198
Respite Association	01406 701 944
Social Services for Adults	020 8726 6500
Young Carers Support Project	020 8649 9339 option 2
If you cannot find what you are looking for, please contact the Carers' Information Service, 020 8649 9339, option 1.	

SHORT BREAKS AND LEISURE. 8