

## 9. TRAINING LEARNING & WORKING



There are opportunities open to you if you want to start or return to employment, studying or training. There are also schemes that may be of interest to the person you care for, as you may both benefit from being part of a wider social circle and participating in activities that will boost your confidence. The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 says that carer's assessments must consider the carer's wishes regarding work, education and training, see chapter two for more details. Working and studying can sometimes affect entitlement to benefits, both for you and the person you care for, so it is recommended that you check with a benefits expert such as the Welfare Rights Team on 0800 731 5920.

## Training

### For Carers

Training courses can be geared towards getting back into work, learning skills and techniques that will help you in your caring role, or be purely for fun. The Carers' Information Service runs monthly training sessions for carers – topics have included assertiveness, moving and handling and time management. All our training is free of charge and we can pay for alternative care for the person you look after, as well as transport and childcare costs. Contact us on 020 8649 9339 (option 1) for details of forthcoming courses.

Caring with Confidence (0800 849 2349, [www.caringwithconfidence.net](http://www.caringwithconfidence.net)) offers free training to carers aged 18 or over through local group sessions, self-study workbooks and online sessions. The training is made up of several modules, each looking at a different aspect of being a carer, and you can choose how

and when you access these. For example, you may want to attend one or two group sessions, then complete the rest of the modules online a few months later.

Croydon has a range of training courses for people caring for someone with a specific condition. Rethink Croydon Carers Support Service (020 8649 9339, option 3, [www.carerscontactline.co.uk](http://www.carerscontactline.co.uk)) runs a Carers Education and Training Programme for carers of an adult with a severe mental illness, and the Alzheimer's Society Croydon (020 8916 3587) offers training to carers of someone with dementia. You may also find our factsheet *Specific Conditions* helpful.

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### For the Person You Care For

A number of organisations offer computer training for disabled people. Croydon Keystrokes (020 8764 8822, [www.disabilitycroydon.org.uk](http://www.disabilitycroydon.org.uk)) encourages people with disabilities to learn how to use computers; it offers free introductory training courses and drop-in sessions with support from staff and volunteers. U Can Do IT (020 7730 7766, [www.ucandoit.org.uk](http://www.ucandoit.org.uk)) can provide a free computer and low cost computer training to people with disabilities. Age Concern Croydon (020 8680 5450, [www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk](http://www.ageconcerncroydon.org.uk)) offers computer training for people aged 55 or over and those with disabilities – charges apply.

Some groups offer work experience for people living with a particular disability; see our *Specific Conditions* factsheet.

# Learning

## For Carers

If your caring role makes it difficult for you to attend classes, there are distance-learning courses that enable you to study from home. Learning for Living (020 7294 8217, [www.learning-for-living.co.uk](http://www.learning-for-living.co.uk)) is an online course for carers designed to help you recognise your current skills and realise your potential. Learndirect (0800 101 901, [www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk)) provides online learning opportunities for people aged 16 and over who want to improve their skills or work towards an educational qualification. The National Extension College (0800 389 2839, [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk)) and the Open University (0845 300 60 90, [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)) also offer distance-learning courses that can be completed within a time scale that suits you. Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT) (020 8253 8550, [www.calat.ac.uk](http://www.calat.ac.uk)) offers part-time adult education courses, on a wide range of subjects, at six centres across the borough.

The Young Carers Support Project (YCP) (020 8649 9339, option 2 [www.carerscontactline.co.uk](http://www.carerscontactline.co.uk)) has an Education Support Worker who liaises with schools on behalf of young carers, as well as providing emotional support to young carers experiencing problems at school. The YCP also runs a weekly homework club (during term-time) where young carers can get help with schoolwork. Connexions (020 3354 2000) provides information, advice and support to young people aged 13-19 (13-25 if the young person has a disability) on all issues to do with education, training and careers.

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## For the Person You Care For

If you are caring for a child with a disability, they may have special educational needs (SEN) that mean they find it harder to learn than other children of the same age. There is not enough space in this guide to give detailed information about SEN, but there are some excellent publications available, such as *Special Educational Needs – England* from Contact a Family (0808 808 3555, [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)), or *Special Educational Needs - A guide for parents and carers* from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (0845 602 2260, [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)).

If you have concerns about your child's progress you should speak to someone

as soon as possible; remember, you know your child better than anyone. If your child is not yet at school you should consult your GP or health visitor, if they are at school speak to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or the Head Teacher.

Help for children with SEN may initially be provided from within the school. If your child does not make enough progress, support may be sought from outside professionals such as a speech and language therapist. If you feel that your child is still not progressing, or needs a lot more extra help, you can ask for a statutory assessment to be carried out by Croydon Council Special Educational Needs Section (020 8726 6000 ext 62394); this may lead to your child being given a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The statement will set out exactly what help your child needs and who will provide it. You can get advice and support through the statementing process from KIDS Croydon Parent Partnership Service (020 8688 8288, [www.kids.org.uk](http://www.kids.org.uk)), as well as information on all aspects of special educational needs in Croydon. You can also get advice and support from national organisations, including the Independent Panel for Special Education Advice (IPSEA) (0800 0184016, [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)), Network 81 (0845 077 4055, [www.network81.org](http://www.network81.org)), and the Advisory Centre for Education (0808 800 5793, [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)).

If you are the parent of a pre-school child who has a disability the home teaching service offered by the Portage and Early Childhood Team (020 8726 7401) or the playgroup run by Croydon Opportunity Group (020 8916 0543) may be helpful. If your child misses a lot of school because of a long-term illness or frequent admissions to hospital, they may get help from the Hospital and Home Tuition Service (020 8771 5603).

Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT) offers part-time adult education courses; their Learner Support Service (020 8662 5574) arranges any extra support required to ensure people with disabilities can access CALAT courses. If the person you care for is going to enrol in higher education (degree level or above), full or part-time, they may be entitled to a Disabled Students' Allowance - a grant to help meet the extra course-related costs students can face as a direct result of a disability. For more information contact Student Finance England on 0845 300 50 90.

# Working

## For Carers

Juggling work and care can be a challenge, so it is important that you access all the support available. You do not have to tell your employer or your colleagues that you are a carer, but you may find them a source of support if you can share your situation. Your employer might be able to offer you additional assistance beyond your statutory rights, such as access to a telephone, or a parking space near to work. If your employer wants to help but is not sure how, you could tell them about Employers for Carers (020 7378 4956, [www.employersforcarers.org](http://www.employersforcarers.org)), an initiative supported by Carers UK that provides advice and support to employers who want to develop a carer friendly policy.

The Work and Families Act 2006 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 gave carers rights to help them manage work and caring, such as the right to request flexible work and leave entitlement. Flexible working could include measures like changing your start and finish times, working the same hours but in fewer days, or working from home. You have the right to apply for flexible working if you have at least 26 weeks continual employment at the time you make your application and you are the parent of a child under six, or a disabled child under 18; or caring or expect to be caring, for a partner, relative or an unrelated adult who lives at the same address as you.

Your application should be in writing, and whilst you do not have to prove you are a carer, it may help your request if you can give as much information as possible. You may also want to include how the proposed working arrangements will benefit the company as a whole, and not just yourself. You should receive a response, even if it is not a final decision, from your employer within 28 days. If your request is turned down your employer must demonstrate good business reasons for doing so, and you have the right to appeal. If your request is agreed to it will permanently change your contract, and you may want to ask for flexible working arrangements on a trial basis initially.

If you are a parent carer of a child receiving Disability Living Allowance (see chapter four) and have worked for your employer for at least a year, you can take 18 weeks unpaid parental leave before their 18th birthday. All parents are entitled to 13 weeks unpaid parental leave before their child's fifth birthday.

You will need to give your employer at least 21 days' notice if you want to take parental leave. Parent carers who work, or want to work, can get support and information from Working Families' Waving Not Drowning Project (020 7017 0072, [www.workingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)).

Everyone has the right to take a 'reasonable' amount of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant; whether this time is paid or unpaid is up to your employer. You should tell your employer as soon as possible after the emergency has happened. There is no set limit on how often you can claim time off for dependants, as long as you are dealing with real emergencies, nor do you need to have worked for your employer for any set length of time. If working and caring become too difficult and you are thinking about resigning, ask your employer about a career break (or sabbatical). It would mean that you could concentrate on your caring role for a while, knowing that you have your job to go back to. If you are on an unpaid career break, you may also be entitled to claim Carers Allowance (see chapter four).

Carers UK (0845 241 0963, [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)) publishes some useful booklets: *Carers and Employment: A Guide to the Right to Request Flexible Working* and *Supporting Working Carers, a Carer's Guide*. Acas (08457 47 47 47, [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)) can help with any employment questions you may have, and also produces a range of guides for employees, such as *The Right to Apply for Flexible Working*, which you can request by calling 08702 42 90 90 or visiting their website.

The Learning Curves Careers Information and Advice Service (020 8253 8560) can help you find the course or training you need to progress in your current job, or support you to pursue a different career entirely.

## 9. TRAINING LEARNING & WORKING

### For the Person You Care For

If the person you care for wants to work and is receiving Jobseeker's Allowance, but feels that their health issues are a barrier to finding a job, they may benefit from meeting with a Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) at Jobcentre Plus (020 8700 8362). DEAs can provide support and information via schemes such as:

- Access to Work – advice and practical help such as providing a support worker or communicator, giving grants to cover travel costs, and funding adaptations to make the workplace accessible.
- WORKSTEP – support in finding and retaining a job for people who have significant obstacles to overcome as a result of their disability.
- Job Introduction Scheme - offers employers help towards the cost of wages for the first few weeks of employment, giving someone with a disability the chance to demonstrate their capabilities.

Croydon Employment and Support Service (CESS) (020 8255 5459) helps adults with disabilities find appropriate employment. CESS offers work preparation courses, work place visits, benefits advice, travel training and more. Status Employment (020 8655 3344, [www.statusemployment.org.uk](http://www.statusemployment.org.uk)) helps people aged 16 or over who have a mental health problem to find and retain paid work.

Key Contacts	
ACAS	08457 47 47 47
Age Concern Croydon	020 8680 5450
Alzheimer's Society Croydon	020 8916 3587
Carers UK Publications Order Line	0845 241 0963
Caring with Confidence	0800 849 2349
Connexions	020 3354 2000
Contact a Family	0808 800 3555
Croydon Adult Learning and Training	020 8253 8550
Croydon Council Special Educational Needs Section	020 8726 6000 ext 62394
Croydon Employment and Support Service	020 8255 5459
Employers for Carers	020 7378 4956
Jobcentre Plus	020 8700 8362
KIDS Croydon Parent Partnership Service	020 8688 8288
Learning Curves	020 8253 8560
Learning for Living	020 7294 8217
Rethink Croydon Carers Support Project	020 8649 9339 option 3
Student Finance England	0845 300 50 90
Young Carers Support Project	020 8649 9339 option 2
Waving Not Drowning Project	020 7017 0072
If you cannot find what you are looking for, please contact the <b>Carers' Information Service, 020 8649 9339</b> , option 1.	