

CAREERS NEWS

Informing carers in Croydon

Nov/Dec 2011

Are You Prepared?

A number of carers have been in touch with us recently following an emergency when they were unable to look after the person they normally care for. Have you created an emergency plan? Who would step in, if you were not available? It is important for carers to make such a plan to ensure that the right help can be given to the person you look after in a timely way with the least disruption to your lives.

Government guidance on the Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000 clearly states that planning for unexpected events must be addressed in a carer's assessment. This might include consideration of a situation such as your car breaking down and the impact this would have if you were due to be collecting the person you care for, to a major incident such as being admitted to hospital unexpectedly. There are also practical issues such as what to do if an essential piece of equipment breaks down overnight, or what you would do if you were snowed in and couldn't get to a vital medical appointment.

All carers have a legal right to request a carer's assessment, carried out by the social services department of the local authority of the person you look after (or someone acting on its behalf, such as a charity). If you haven't had an assessment, ask for one by calling Croydon Council on 020 8726 6500 if you care for an adult, or 020 8726 6400 if you care for a child. If you've already had a carer's assessment and planning for an emergency was not covered, you can ask the local authority to look at your assessment again and put this right. If you provide care for someone with a mental health problem under the care programme approach, there should be a written care plan that includes unexpected events.

It can be difficult to think about these



issues but it is worth spending time talking about emergencies with the person you look after (depending on your situation) and other people involved in their care. You can then begin creating your plan by recording information such as full contact details for both you and the person you look after, especially if they do not live with you. Consider who could be contacted in an emergency to provide alternative care in your absence. This may be friends, family or neighbours, or perhaps care workers provided by a specialist scheme. Lists of any medication the person is taking - a copy of a recent prescription list can be helpful - and details of any ongoing treatment or interventions that are essential to them will be useful. You might want to describe special equipment that is needed and include details of the supplier and it can also be useful to write down your normal routine - consider all the tasks that you do for that person and what someone else would need to know if they were deputising for you.

There are a number of helpful schemes for carers that are worth considering. Croydon Council has a service called Croycare (020 8654 7166), a 24-hour emergency response service. Carers who are providing a "substantial" amount of care for someone and have had a carer's assessment, may be able to register for this service if they meet the eligibility criteria. You will be given an emergency alert card with your own unique registration number and an emergency number to call. If you are unable to provide care, response workers will phone your designated contacts to organise your emergency plan. Alternatively, they will provide direct support to them, using trained workers for up to 72 hours.

We at the Carers' Information Service (020 8649 9339) have created an emergency card for carers that can be carried with you in your purse or wallet. This card lets people know that someone depends on you for care and gives you space to record the details of two alternative contacts. This is a simple way of ensuring that emergency services will know that you are a carer.

The Message in a Bottle scheme enables emergency services to find someone's basic personal and medical details quickly and easily in a hurry. You can get one of these labelled bottles from the Lions Club of Croydon (020 8689 5411). Information about the person you look after is kept on the form inside the bottle and put in the fridge. A green cross sticker is then put on the front of the fridge and on the back of the front door so that emergency services know to look for the bottle.

The LifeBook is a free booklet where you write important and useful information about your life, from who insures your car to where you put the TV Licence. Developed by AgeUK the LifeBook could be invaluable to a family member or friend if they need to find important information about someone in an emergency. The LifeBook is available in booklet form or can be emailed to you to complete and store on your computer. For further details or to request a copy call 0845 685 1061 quoting reference ALL 721.

Training for carers is another important means of preparing for emergencies. We are offering two first aid courses in the new year. The trainers can tailor the session to address your specific concerns. First Aid for Carers of a Child with a Special Need or Disability will be held on January 10 and First Aid for Carers of an Adult will be held on March 13. For details and to book a place contact Ruth Laws on 020 8649 6208 or email ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk. Please note that all courses are for unpaid carers, we are unable to give a place to paid care workers. Priority will be given to carers who have not had any previous first aid training.



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The Carers' Information Service provides information, advice and support to anyone who is looking after a family member, friend or neighbour who needs help due to illness, frailty or disability.

Diary Dates



Hear Us Christmas Party and Wellbeing Extravaganza for people affected by mental health will be held on Tuesday 6 December from 1.30 - 5 pm at CVA Resource Centre, 82 London Road, Croydon CR0 2TB. There will be information stands from organisations concerning mental health, a pamper room, activities, festive food and music. Contact Jane White on 020 8681 6888 for details.

OPeN is the Croydon Older People's Network and it holds regular meetings for anyone interested in issues affecting older people, including carers. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 8 December from 10.30 am - 1 pm at CVA Resource Centre, 82 London Road, Croydon CR0 2TB. Call Pauline Dawkins on 020 8683 7002 or email pauline.dawkins@cvalive.org.uk for details.

Disabled Parents and Carers Together offers information, advice and support, with regular meetings to provide a friendly social network. Their next meeting is on 9 December at Christ Church Hall, 861- 863 Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2BN, from 10.30 am - 1 pm. For more information please call Disability Croydon on 020 8684 5538 or email claire@disabilitycroydon.org.uk.

Club Soda's Christmas event will be on 16 December, 7-11 pm at Stanley Halls, South Norwood Hill, South Norwood SE25 6AB. Tickets on the door £7. They are also running free arts based workshops at Croydon Clocktower on Monday nights from 5-7pm. Workshops run until 12 December 2011. All workshops are designed to include participants of all abilities and are delivered by artists with and without learning disabilities. For more information call Oliver Tipper on 020 8253 1034.

PipPlus is a new information and support group for parents and carers of teenagers aged 14 -25 who have special educational needs. If you have any questions on adult services, further education or money and benefits, join Pip Plus in quizzing the experts on these issues and more. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15 December and from January every third Thursday of the month at Cornerstone House, 14 Willis Road, Croydon CR0 2XX. For further information contact Tansy Goodall on 07795 373 348 or pip.tansygoodall@hotmail.com

Disabled and Looking for Employment

Evenbreak is run by disabled people, for disabled people and has a website (www.evenbreak.co.uk) which is dedicated to matching disabled jobseekers to employers looking to build a diverse workforce. As a social enterprise they are keen to promote a positive image of disabled people in employment, and any surplus income will fund publicity campaigns promoting the benefits of employing disabled people.

Winter Fuel Payment

In 2011-12, Winter Fuel Payment is a tax-free payment of £300 for each household if you were born on or before September 25 1931, or £200 for people born between September 26 1931 and January 5 1951 inclusive. You must be ordinarily resident in the UK and you will not receive a payment if you have been a hospital inpatient for more than a year, you are serving a prison sentence or you are living in a care home and receiving Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. Payment should be automatic, however, the Department for Work and Pensions may not identify you as being eligible if you are not already getting benefits (particularly if you are a man aged 60-65). In this case, you may need to claim but you will only need to claim once, and payments will be automatic after this. Payment is normally made in November but could be as late as Christmas. If you have not been paid by the end of December, contact the Pension Service in January. You can call the Pension Service on 08456 060 265 (textphone 0800 731 7339). It is possible to claim for some (but not all) previous winters. You can find more details by calling the Winter Fuel Payments helpline on 08459 151 515 (textphone 08456 015 613).

The Dilnot Report

Confusing, unfair, and unsustainable - that's the view of an independent commission chaired by economist Andrew Dilnot regarding the current social care funding system. The purpose of the review was to determine who should pay for the care that people need in England. The report recommends that the costs of care in later life between individuals and the state should be shared. It also proposes that there should be a limit on what people pay. The commission recommends capping the lifetime contribution any individual makes towards the costs of their care, with a suggested cap of £35,000, after which the individual is eligible for full state support. The report also recommends a 'zero cap' on disabled adults under 40, so that individuals who have existing care needs at 18 or develop them before 40, would receive state funded care. More information about the report can be found at www.dilnotcommission.dh.gov.uk.

Working and Caring?

If you want to combine paid work with your caring responsibilities, there is help available from your local Jobcentre Plus. This can include replacement care and benefits advice. Work Focused Support for Carers provides help and advice for you to make a successful move into work. A Jobcentre Plus personal adviser can help you to find suitable training, support you in looking for and applying for a job and give you advice about finding replacement care. Work Focused Support for Carers is available to carers aged 18 or over who do not work, or work less than 16 hours a week, and are not eligible for other Jobcentre Plus programmes such as New Deal or Pathways to Work. Your personal adviser will be able to tell you about how your benefits might be affected if you start work and will help you apply for any benefits or tax credits you might become eligible for when you start working. Contact Croydon Jobcentre Plus, 17-21 Dingwall Road, Croydon CR9 2TN, tel 0845 604 3719 or see www.dwp.gov.uk.

Crossroads Care Croydon (020 8667 9893) runs a Carers In Work Project, which helps carers who want to get back into, or stay in, work. The project helps carers to identify their skills and limited funding is available to help carers update their skills or get over a stumbling block that may be preventing them from starting up their own business

Health Issues

Wasted Medicines

A new study commissioned by the Department of Health has found that medicines wasted in England account for £1 in every £25 spent- amounting to £300m per year. Findings from the report include:



- Much of the waste identified was not caused by failures on the part of either patients or professionals but by factors such as illnesses progressing and treatment changes being required
- The annual waste figure includes £90 million worth of unused prescription medicines stored in peoples' homes at any one time, £100 million returned to community pharmacies over the course of the year and up to £50 million worth of NHS supplied medicines that are disposed of annually by care homes.

If you are managing your own or someone else's medication, talk to your local pharmacy about help they give to carers- many of them have specific schemes. Pillbox UK is a registered UK pharmacy specialising in dispensing medication into easy to use disposable pill boxes. The service is free of charge, delivered to your home and available to anyone with an NHS prescription. Call 0800 112 3147 or see www.medicineblisterpacks.co.uk.

Croydon Shadow HealthWatch



The borough's local involvement network is holding discussions on the future of Croydon's health services and they are keen to get people involved in different ways, such as attending public meetings and events, taking part in projects and surveys or becoming a Healthwatch representative on patient/carer groups. You don't need any special qualifications or experience to get involved. However people may be interested who:

- Have personal experience of services because they live with long term health conditions, mental health issues or disabilities
- Are unemployed graduates seeking work in the health and social care field or in social policy
- Are currently working and have an interest in volunteering in the health and social care sector
- Are retired and would like to use their skills and experience to help improve health and social care services in the community.
- Represent groups or communities who are less likely to access services they may need.

To join Shadow Healthwatch contact Jennine Bailey, Link Administrator on 020 8253 7090 or email localvoices@croydonlink.org.uk

Carers' Information Service Consultation

We are interested to find out about the experiences of carers who access health services at Croydon University Hospital and have the following questions that we are particularly keen to hear responses to:

- Have you ever been admitted to accident and emergency and needed alternative care for the person you look after? Who helped you to achieve this?
- Has the person you care for been an in-patient? Were you consulted, included and recognised as that person's carer?
- Have you been included in hospital discharge discussions?
- Did you become a carer for the first time following a hospital admission? What was your experience?
- Have you received information about sources of support for carers from Croydon University Hospital?

We are pleased to be working with Croydon University Hospital and the Patient Assembly to help raise awareness of the issues affecting carers and we welcome your input. Help us to get it right by calling, emailing or coming to meet with us to share your experiences so that we can help build on good practice and make concrete suggestions for improvement. Contact Helen Thompson on 020 8649 6284, or helenthompson@carersinfo.org.uk.

Flu Jabs for Carers

As a carer you may be worried about getting the flu because it would affect your ability to care for the person you're looking after. You may be able to get a flu jab because of this, or because of your age or your own health. Government Policy is that the flu vaccine should be offered to the following groups:

- Everyone aged 65 or over
- Everyone aged 6 months or over who is in a clinical risk group
- People living in long stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities where the infection could spread easily and put lives at risk.
- People who are receiving Carer's Allowance (CA), or who are the main carer for a person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill. This will be given on an individual basis at the GP's discretion depending on your need.

If you are not aged 65 or older, tell your GP if you receive CA or are the main carer for the person you care for. Explain your concerns and your GP should check to see (based on the information given) if you fall into one of the clinical risk groups and they will decide if you need a flu jab. Remember that you need it every year, so don't assume that you don't need another vaccination because you had one last year.

Web Counselling Service for Parents

Caring for a disabled child can put enormous pressure on relationships and family life. Scope is working in partnership with Relate to provide trained counsellors, who understand the impact of disability, via a live web counselling service. This is available to anyone whose family relationships are in difficulty. The service is free of charge to any parent carer and completely confidential (see terms and conditions on the website).

Tel: 0300 100 1234, email relateforparents@relate.org.uk or go to www.relateforparents.org.uk.

Support Services in Croydon



A new women's drop-in centre has been set up for those experiencing mental health problems. Women are welcome to come along for tea, coffee and optional activities such as board games, sewing and craft. A buffet lunch is available for £1.50. You can also expect a warm welcome without referral, a listening ear from volunteers when you want to talk and a place that will accept you as you are. As this is a group that seeks to support each other, the emphasis is on concern for each other first and foremost as individuals, not your mental status. The drop-in is open every Monday, except public holidays, in the New Lounge at Christ Church, Purley from 12.30 - 2.30 pm. If you would like to know more please contact Judy on 020 8763 8291 or email office@christchurchpurley.org.uk. You do not have to be a church member to attend.

Crossroads Care Croydon offers specialist support for those caring for people towards the end of their lives who are on their GPs Palliative Care Register. The service can help by providing a fully trained Care Support Worker who can take over the carers role for up to 8 hours per week, free of charge. The aim is to help carers keep their loved ones in their own home as long as possible and the service works closely with healthcare and other professionals involved to ensure that the needs of the family are met. Help can be given during the day, evening and overnight with needs such as personal care, administration of medication and other specialist tasks, meal preparation and assistance with eating. To find out more, contact Crossroads Care Croydon on 020 8688 4499.

Addiscombe Unity Club runs a lively club every Friday from 1.45 - 3.45 pm for the over 60s. It gives you the opportunity to meet new friends and enjoy weekly entertainment. You will find them in the Church Hall, 147 Bingham Road, Shirley Road End, Addiscombe CR0 7EN. Contact Marguerite Warner on 020 8654 5918 if you need more details.

Selhurst Children's Centre in South Norwood runs a parent carer support group every Monday from 1.30 - 3pm for parent carers to chill and chat with others, whilst your children play. For more information please call Berni Excell on 020 8684 3777.

Croydon Young Stroke Group meets twice a month from 10.30 am - 12.30 pm on the first Tuesday of the month at The Tea Rooms, St. Michaels' Church, Poplar Walk, Croydon CR0 1UA. On the third Tuesday of the month the group meets at Allington Court, Chart Close, Addiscombe, Croydon CR0 7YF. For more information please call Linda Moon on 020 8406 3886 or Pauline Meczes on 020 8651 2906.

Royal London Society for Blind People is looking for new members for its peer group for young people aged between 12 and 18 with a visual impairment. They hold monthly meetings, sports activities and outings. There is a small registration fee, but after that everything is free. For more details or to register please contact Debbie Watton on 020 7808 6112 or email deborah.watton@rlsb.org.uk

Apasenth is a charity providing a service specially supporting Asian and BME adults with learning disabilities. They offer culturally and faith sensitive services at its centre in Challenge House, Mitcham Road, Croydon CR0 3AA. Also available are IT classes, numeracy and literacy courses, cooking and day trips. Apasenth receives referrals from Croydon Social Services Learning Disability Team, following a needs assessment. For more information you can contact Muhammed Sattar on 020 8683 6491.

Croydon Independent Support Brokerage Service (CISBS) has closed down and a new service has been commissioned by Croydon Council to help individuals who are using direct payments and self directed support. The Support Planning & Direct Payments is part of the Penderels Trust and is based at Cornerstone House, 14 Willis Road, Croydon CR0 2XX. You can contact them on 0208 684 9559 or email croydon@penderelstrust.org.uk.

Croydon Council opened a temporary One Stop Shop in London Road in August to help those affected by the summer riots. This service is now closed, but if you still need help you can contact Croydon Council on 020 8726 6000. The Council has revamped its website at www.croydon.gov.uk and included more information of interest to carers in the health and social care section, which can be accessed via the home page.

A Croydon carer is seeking to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) for her 78 year old mother, every evening from 6.30 to 9.30 pm, to give her a break from caring. The ideal candidate would be mature, calm and able to offer quiet companionship as well as physical tasks such as using a hoist. If you are interested, please contact Angela Webb, Carers Advice Worker at the Carers' Information Service on 020 8649 9339 for further details.

Carers' Information Service
Courtyard House, 1d Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SG
020 8649 9339 (option 1)
020 8686 3472 (Fax)
info@carersinfo.org.uk
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For a large print copy of Carers News call us on 020 8649 9339 (option 1)