

HOW TO 02

Getting Support from Social Care

Carers Information Service

As a carer, it is important to get the right support in your caring role. This factsheet explains how adult social care works and what you can do to get more help. If you are caring for a disabled child or young person under 18, please see our **Caring for a Child** factsheet. Please note that any organisations listed are included for information only and listing does not mean recommendation.

This factsheet is part of **How To... A Guide for Carers in Croydon**. You can download the full series of factsheets from our website www.carersinfo.org.uk. You can also call us on 020 8649 9339, option 1, or visit the Carers Support Centre.



What is social care and support?

Social care is support provided by a local authority's adult social care department (also known as social services) to someone who needs extra help due to illness, disability or old age. Social care is based on a person's needs, rather than their condition or diagnosis.

Support provided by social care may include:

- Information, advice and signposting to other sources of support.
- Information, advice or equipment to prevent, reduce or delay a person's needs and support independence.
- Equipment and adaptations to ensure a person's home remains safe and accessible.
- Daytime activities such as lunch clubs and day centres.
- Support to get out and about.
- Telecare- a range of devices installed in a person's home to support their independence.
- Practical care and support at home.
- Respite care in a range of settings so you can have a break.
- Direct payments to have more control over choosing and managing support.
- 24-hour care in a residential home.

What is a Needs Assessment?

You can ask for support for an adult by asking for a Needs Assessment under the Care Act 2014. For information on how to get support when caring for a child, see our *Caring for a Child* factsheet.

You may wish to look at what information and support is available from community support organisations before requesting an assessment. The Carers Information Service www.carersinfo.org.uk/local-directory and Croydon Council www.croydon.gov.uk have directories of local support organisations.

Local councils must conduct an assessment if a person appears to have needs for support, even if their needs are at first glance not substantial enough to meet the eligibility criteria.

When asking for a Needs Assessment, you can also ask for an assessment of your own needs as a carer, known as a Carer's Assessment. See our section on Carer's Assessments for more information.

In Croydon, most Needs Assessments are conducted by Croydon Adult Social Care. However, there are exceptions:

Mental health and substance addiction

South London and Maudsley (SLaM) NHS Foundation Trust Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

0800 731 2864
www.slam.nhs.uk

Information and advice on SLaM's services and how to access them for people with a mental health problem and/or substance addiction and their carers.

When the person who needs support lives outside Croydon

It is the responsibility of the social care department where the person lives to carry out a Needs Assessment. For example, if you live in Croydon but the person you care for lives in Bromley, you should speak to the adult social care team in Bromley for a Needs Assessment. However, if you live outside Croydon but the person you care for lives in Croydon, you should ask Croydon Adult Social Care for a Needs Assessment.

Requesting an assessment

To request a Needs Assessment, you will need to contact Croydon Adult Social Care:

Call: 020 8726 6500

Email: referral.team2@croydon.gov.uk

Online referral: <https://my.croydon.gov.uk/contactreferrals>

Write to: The Contact Centre, Adult Social Care, Bernard Weatherill House, Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Based on the information provided during this initial assessment, a range of advice and information will be suggested. Where a further, more in-depth assessment is required, a referral will be made by Croydon Council's central duty team to the relevant team in adult social care. For example, this could be the learning disability team, the physical disability team or an older people's team.

Someone from the team, usually a social worker or care manager, will contact you to arrange the assessment. If the person you care for needs an interpreter, you can ask for one to be present during the assessment.

How a Needs Assessment works

A Needs Assessment looks at how a person can be supported to maintain their wellbeing, independence and quality of life. As the carer, you can be involved in the assessment, as long as the person you care for agrees.

The person doing the assessment should be appropriately trained with the right skills and knowledge to do assessments. Assessments are typically conducted in person, though a supported self-assessment can be offered where the person is able to complete the assessment themselves and this is verified by the social worker. If the person you support has problems with communication or may lack the mental capacity (ability to make informed decisions) to complete the form on their own, a self-assessment

is unlikely to be appropriate.

The Care Act states that the person who needs support should be involved as much as possible in their assessment. If the person would have 'substantial difficulty' in understanding the assessment process, an appropriate person should support them. You, as the carer, may fulfil this role. However, if there is no one appropriate to support the person, the council must appoint an advocate.

The Needs Assessment of the person you care for should look at the following:

- The person's needs and how you meet their needs as a carer.
- Their choices and goals. For example, if they wish to take up a new activity, meet up with friends, etc.
- Their preferences for their day-to-day care and support, including any cultural needs.
- What support is needed to prevent or delay further needs from developing. For example, Croydon Council may offer a period of reablement to help the person regain skills.
- The needs of their family/carer(s).

Visit Carers UK for more information on Needs Assessments:
www.carersuk.org/needs-assessment

The Needs Assessment should look at the person's needs regardless of any support you provide as a carer. It is therefore important to be clear about the support you provide, the impact it has on you and what additional support would make a difference (e.g. replacement care so you can have a short break, support workers visiting the home to help with personal care, etc.) Be as honest as possible - it is not an admission of failure to say you are struggling.

Adult social care should take your views into account when deciding what support to provide and should never assume that you are willing (or able, even if willing) to take on or continue a caring role.



Reviews

People's needs can change over time, so Needs Assessments should be reviewed regularly. If a review is not scheduled but the level or nature of need has changed, ask for an earlier review.

Determining eligibility

After the Needs Assessment, Croydon Council will decide if the person you care for is eligible for support. Under the Care Act, all local authorities must apply the national eligibility criteria when making this decision.

To meet the eligibility criteria, a person must:

- Have a mental health problem or physical condition (not necessarily diagnosed) that means they have care and support needs.
- Be unable to meet two of the listed outcomes (goals) as a result of their condition. These include: maintaining nutrition, being safe in their own home, maintaining a habitable home, developing or maintaining relationships, being able to access education, employment or training if they want to, etc.
- As a result of not meeting these outcomes, there is or is likely to be a significant impact on their wellbeing.

Find the full eligibility criteria on the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) website: www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/assessment-and-eligibility/eligibility/outcomes-eligibility-regulations.asp.

Financial assessment

If the local council assesses the person you care for as requiring support, including respite, they will be financially assessed to determine whether they need to pay for all or part of their care. The financial assessment assesses capital and income. Capital includes savings, investments, property, land and business assets. Income includes benefits, pensions and earnings, though some forms of income will be disregarded.

When assessing the person's capital, the assessment looks at capital limits. The current capital limits are:

- Upper capital limit- **£23,250**.
- Lower capital limit- **£14,250**.

If the person's capital is below the lower limit, their capital will be ignored for the financial assessment. If it is above the upper limit, the person will pay for all support they receive. If their capital is in between the limits, a 'tariff income' of £1 for each £250 above the lower limit will be added to their weekly income for the purposes of the assessment.

Moving into residential care

If the person owns their own home and is moving into long-term residential care, the assessment will include the value of their home unless certain people are still living there, such as a partner or spouse. The amount they will pay depends on their financial circumstances. Speak to the Financial Assessment Team for more information.

Croydon Financial Assessment Team

020 8760 5676 (Charging Helpline)
www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/adult-care/asc-money/charges-intro

Provides financial assessments for adult social care support services. Can provide information on the financial assessment process.

Care plans

If the person you care for is assessed as being eligible for support, the council should create a care plan, explaining how their eligible needs will be met. Even if you as the carer are already meeting the assessed needs, the care plan should record this. Care plans should be drawn up collaboratively between the person who needs support and the council. As a carer, you should be involved in drawing up the care plan, as long as the person you care for agrees.

Care plans should be kept under regular review, typically annually at least. If the needs of the person you care for change, you can request a care plan review. Any request should be properly considered and only turned down for a good reason.



Once the final care plan is agreed to, the person you care for should be given a copy. You should also receive a copy with the person's consent. If you do not receive a copy, it is important to request one, as it may help you in future should you have any concerns about care or if circumstances change.

Carer's Assessment

Carers who look after a person over 18 have a right to a Carer's Assessment under the Care Act 2014. Unlike the previous criteria, you no longer need to provide 'substantial' or 'regular' care. For parent carers, see our *Caring for a Child* factsheet.

A Carer's Assessment is a way of recording the impact caring has on your life and exploring your support options. If you meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to support from the local authority to meet your assessed needs.

It is the responsibility of the local council of the person you care for to carry out your Carer's Assessment. You can request an assessment even if the person you care for does not wish to be involved with adult social care.

In Croydon, the Carers Information Service is commissioned by Croydon Council to provide Carer's Assessments for adults caring for another adult who lives in the London Borough of Croydon.

Your assessor will ask you questions about your caring role, how caring affects you, your goals and what would help you reach those goals. The assessor will use your responses to see if you meet the eligibility criteria for further support. You may also be given information and advice during the assessment to support you in your caring role.

Once the assessment has been completed, you will have an opportunity to check it for accuracy. Once you have checked your assessment, with your consent it will be submitted to Croydon Council's Adult Social Care department. If you require further support from Croydon Council as a result of the Carer's Assessment, you may receive a Carer's Personal Budget to meet your eligible assessed needs.

Your Carer's Assessment is free of charge and any support provided to you as a result of your Carer's Assessment is also not chargeable. However, if the person you care for receives a support service, they will be charged for that service. For example, if you are offered respite, the person you care for may be assessed by Croydon Council for their ability to pay for replacement care to give you a break. Please note that you can request a review of your Carer's Assessment every 12 months.

Carers Information Service

020 8663 5664

assessments@carersinfo.org.uk

www.carersinfo.org.uk

Provides Carer's Assessments for adult carers of an adult Croydon resident.

Carers can request assessments directly or be referred by a professional.

As well as the Carers Information Service, there are a number of other voluntary organisations providing Carer's Assessments for specific groups of carers:

Croydon Mencap Carers Assessment and Support Service (CASS)

020 8684 5890

info@croydonmencap.org.uk

www.croydonmencap.org.uk/services/older-carers

Provides Carer's Assessments for carers looking after an adult (aged 18 or older) with a learning disability.

Off the Record's Young Carers Service

020 8649 9339, option 2

info@offtherecordcroydon.org

www.offtherecordcroydon.org

Provides Young Carer's Assessments for young carers aged 7-18. If the young carer is caring for an adult, the adult should contact Croydon Adult Social Care for a Needs Assessment.

Preparing for a Carer's Assessment

Here are some ideas to help you prepare for your Carer's Assessment. Write down the answers and take any notes with you to your assessment.

1. Keep a diary of the needs of the person you support, as well as your caring responsibilities.
2. Think about which tasks you would most like help with. Put these in order of priority.
3. Would adaptations to the home, or an item of equipment, make caring easier or safer?
4. Think about the impact caring on your physical and mental wellbeing. Do you feel more tired, stressed or isolated?
5. Is your caring role making it more difficult to pursue your work, study or leisure interests?
6. How is your family life affected by your caring role?
7. Do you want to continue in your caring role? If you do, would you like to do less?
8. Think about what would happen in an emergency. Who would look after the person you care for?



As well as having your own Carer's Assessment, you can also request a re-assessment of the person you care for if their needs or circumstances have changed. For example, if you wish to return to work, the person you support may need more care.

Respite

Respite is replacement care for the person you care for to give you a break from caring. Respite counts as a service provided to the person you care for, so if this is provided, the person you care for will be financially assessed for their ability to pay for all or part of the service. You can also purchase respite privately. Many care homes offer respite care such as short residential stays, lunch clubs and day services.

Croycare (Emergency Respite)

020 8654 7166

croycare@croydon.gov.uk

Offers short-term respite in an emergency when the carer cannot provide care. Carers who register receive an emergency alert card.

Horizon Care and Welfare Association

020 8665 0921

horizoncareandwelfare@hotmail.com

Offers respite, short breaks, emergency help, support groups and befriending. Specialises in supporting those from BME communities, but services are open to everyone.

The Respite Association

01775 820 176

help@respiteassociation.org

www.respiteassociation.org

Funding for respite for carers living on a low income. Offers free breaks for carers at caravans in Skegness and near Blackpool.

1596 Club

020 8256 1596

whitgiftcare.co.uk

Day service for older people run by The Whitgift Foundation. Offers a range of activities, lunch and transport to and from the venue. Cost is £30 per day.

Direct payments

A direct payment is a payment from Croydon Council which allows people with care and support needs to arrange their own care and support. This could include funding a service or paying for a personal assistant.

To receive a direct payment, you will need an assessment from Croydon Adult Social Care. The council will use the national eligibility framework to decide whether you are eligible for support from the council. To arrange an assessment, call 020 8726 6500 or email referral.team2@croydon.gov.uk.

If you currently receive a support service from Croydon Council and would like to change to direct payments, you will need to discuss this with your care manager or social worker. If you do not have a care manager or social worker, please contact the referral team on 020 8726 6500.

Once you have had an assessment, your care manager will refer you to the Direct Payment Support Service, who will work with you to help you set up and manage your direct payment, including your responsibilities as an employer if you hire a personal assistant.

Family members can be employed using direct payments, with the exception of a spouse, partner or close relative, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Before employing a family member, consider any impact this may have on benefits eligibility and family dynamics. For example, it may affect your entitlement to Carer's Allowance. For more information on benefits and finances, see our *Money Matters* factsheet.

Direct Payments Support Service

020 8726 6000 ext 19509

direct.payments@croydon.gov.uk

Provides support with managing direct payments in Croydon, including recruiting staff and managing the responsibilities of being an employer. Holds list of payroll services that can help with the paperwork involved in being an employer.

Disability Rights UK

020 7250 8181 (General)

0300 555 1525 (Personal

Budgets Helpline)

personalbudgets@disabilityrightsuk.org

www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Produces publications on independent living topics for disabled people and their carers. The helpline can advise on issues such as personal budgets, direct payments and employing personal assistants.

Skills for Care

0113 241 1275

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/employingpas

Produces free publications and guidance for personal assistant employers, including *Employing Personal Assistants: A Toolkit to Help You Employ Your Own Personal Assistants*

Care homes and care providers

There are a wide range of care agencies in the Croydon area offering services such as personal care, practical help, companionship, support to pursue leisure activities or a live-in care worker. Many care homes also offer respite care as short residential stays, lunch clubs or day services. For more information, see our *Care Homes* factsheet.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

03000 616 161

www.cqc.org.uk

All home care providers have to register with the CQC and are inspected regularly to ensure they meet the required standards. Details of all home care providers and their latest CQC report are available on their online directory.

Croydon Care Directory

020 8364 8428

info@londoncaredirectories.co.uk

www.londoncaredirectories.co.uk

Details of private, voluntary and council care homes and home care providers in Croydon. Published by London Care Directories. Free copies are available from the Carers Support Centre.

Independent Age

0800 319 6789

advice@independentage.org

www.independentage.org

Publishes a range of guides and factsheets including *Getting Care Services at Home*, which can be downloaded from the website. Paper copies can also be ordered.

United Kingdom Homecare Association (UKHCA)

020 8661 8188

enquiries@ukhca.co.uk

www.ukhca.co.uk

Provides details of home care providers that have signed up to the UKHCA's code of practice in addition to the minimum standards required by law. Produces a factsheet, *Choosing Care at Home*, in partnership with Carers UK.

UK Care Guide

www.ukcareguide.co.uk

Online directory of UK care providers and registered care homes.

Whitgift Care

020 8256 1596

whitgiftcare.co.uk

Run by The Whitgift Foundation. Manages a range of care options for older people across three care homes. Services include '1596 Club' day service, sheltered living, residential accommodation and respite.



Complaints

Step 1

If you or the person you care for have concerns about the support received from social care, speak to the relevant social worker or care manager. If this doesn't resolve the issue or you do not feel comfortable doing this, a complaint can be made to the Complaint Resolution Team. You can do this on the person's behalf with their consent. Try to make the complaint in writing so there is a record of what was said.

If care is funded privately, the person receiving care can complain directly to the care manager. If the issues are not resolved, a formal complaint can be made using the organisation's complaints procedure. All care agencies and care homes must have a complaints procedure and the person receiving care should be given a copy.

Complaint Resolution Team

020 8726 6000

complaints@croydon.gov.uk

www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/feedback/complaintsprocedure/accomplains

Complaints should be acknowledged within three working days and the council should advise how they will be handling the complaint and when to expect a response within ten working days. The council will then investigate the complaint. The person making the complaint can ask for an advocate to support them through the process. If no advocate is available, the complaints manager may be able to provide one.

Step 2

If the complaint is still not resolved, the next stage is to contact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

0300 061 0614

www.lgo.org.uk

Deals with complaints about care funded by adult social care. You can ask the LGO to look at your case if you are not happy with the way the complaint was dealt with by the provider. The LGO can only look at how a service was delivered or a decision was made; it cannot look at the decision itself. Adults funding their own social care have a legal right to ask the LGO to take up their case if they are not happy with the way the complaint was dealt with by the provider.

Step 3

The final stage is to pass any feedback on to the Care Quality Commission or your local Healthwatch.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

03000 616 161

www.cqc.org.uk

National body for care quality standards. Cannot look into individual complaints about care services, but you can contact them if you are unhappy with the care received to help the CQC improve services in the future.

Healthwatch Croydon

020 8663 5648

info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

Monitors health and social care providers in the London Borough of Croydon. Cannot look into individual complaints but can feed into future decision-making on local health and social care services.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the contents of this factsheet are correct, but the Carers Information Service cannot accept responsibility for information that is inaccurate or for the quality of the services listed. All the *How To... A Guide for Carers in Croydon* factsheets are available at www.carersinfo.org.uk to download, where they will be regularly updated.

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Carers
Information
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