Get ready for Carers Week!
6 - 12 June 2016

Carers Week at the Carers Support Centre

It’s all go at the Carers’ Information Service getting ready for Carers Week. We’ve got lots planned this year, including:

• Craft & Chatter
• Singing and dancing
• Pilates and tai chi tasters
• Annual Carers’ Information Day
• Drop in massage tasters

For dates and booking information, see the What’s On timetable at the back of the newsletter.

The Carers Café will be closed on Wednesday 8 June for Carers’ Information Day. But don’t be disheartened, because the Café will be open for two extra afternoon sessions on 6 June & 10 June, 1.30pm-3.30pm. We will also have free gifts available for carers at the Carers Support Centre all week, so make sure you swing by and visit us!

Pilates and tai chi for carers

We will be offering a one hour taster Pilates session at the Carers Support Centre during Carers Week on Tuesday 7 June at 2pm. Pilates can help you change the way you think about your body, and has additional benefits such as improving your posture, strength and range of movement.

We will also be offering a relaxing tai chi taster at the Carers Support Centre on Thursday 9 June at 1.30pm-2.30pm. Tai chi has a number of health benefits including reducing stress, improving balance and building muscle strength. Tai chi is also generally suitable for people over 65 or with limited mobility.

Places for both sessions are very limited so contact ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk or call 020 8649 6280 to book your place ASAP.

Help us build a carer friendly Croydon

This year Carers Week is asking communities to get carer friendly. Carer friendly communities are places where carers feel supported to look after their family or friends, and recognised as individuals with needs of their own. It’s great to see that many organisations in Croydon are making an effort to do more for carers, but there’s still lots of work to do.

Carers Week are asking people to recommend organisations, services and employers in Croydon who are already carer friendly and invite others to commit to becoming carer friendly. Why not visit your local GP surgery, pharmacist, supermarket or hairdresser and see what they are doing for carers? Download the Carers Week checklist and start checking: www.carersweek.org/about-carer-friendly-communities/carers-checklist

Don’t forget to recommend the Carers Support Centre!
If you think the Carers Support Centre is a great place for carers, visit www.carersweek.org/get-involved/recommend and let them know!

Carers’ Information Day 2016

The Carers’ Information Service will once again be hosting our annual Carers’ Information Day on 8 June, 10am - 4pm at Fairfield Halls. It’s a great opportunity to talk face to face with organisations and services supporting carers and disabled people in Croydon and find out what’s available locally. There’s no need to book; just turn up on the day. Look forward to seeing you there.
Decisions, decisions... a cheat’s guide to the Mental Capacity Act

As a carer, the person you support may struggle to make certain decisions for themselves. For people who have difficulties with informed decision making, the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and Code of Practice (2007) provides a legal framework and guidance on how decisions can be made. This cheat’s guide de-codes the Act and what it means for you and the person you care for.

Please be aware that the information in this article is general information and not legal advice. If you need legal advice on issues regarding mental capacity, please speak to a solicitor.

What is the Mental Capacity Act (2005)?

Mental capacity is the level of understanding someone has to make particular decisions. The Mental Capacity Act is about protecting people who find it harder to make decisions for themselves because of ‘an impairment in their mind or brain’. This ‘impairment’ may be temporary (e.g. the person is unconscious) or long-term (e.g. the person has dementia, a learning disability, a brain injury, etc.)

Having such an ‘impairment’ does NOT mean that you automatically cannot make decisions for yourself. The Mental Capacity Act says that anyone aged 16 or older must be assumed to have the mental capacity to make their own decisions, unless it can be shown otherwise.

How do you know if someone has mental capacity or not?

Understanding someone’s mental capacity is not a one-time judgement; every decision should be looked at individually. For example, the person you care for may have the mental capacity to choose what to have for dinner tonight, but not whether or not to take their medication. Mental capacity can also change over time, or fluctuate.

Helping people make as many decisions as they can

The Mental Capacity Act says that people should be supported as much as possible to make decisions for themselves. This could mean:

- finding a place where the person is comfortable before asking them to make a choice
- explaining the information slowly and clearly
- asking the person to make the decision at a different time if possible
- making information accessible to the person e.g. video or Easy Read

How is mental capacity decided?

When deciding if someone has mental capacity to make a particular decision, the Mental Capacity Act says that the person must be able to do the following:

- Understand information relevant to the decision
- Remember the information
- Use or weigh up that information to make a decision e.g. pros and cons

Most day-to-day decisions around mental capacity will be made by you (the carer). However, some may need some professional involvement. For example, a social worker or another relevant trained professional will assess if someone has the mental capacity to decide to move into a care home.

What happens if the person I care for lacks mental capacity?

If the person you care for lacks mental capacity, decisions will need to be made in their best interests. This means that whoever is making the final decision - whether that is you, or a professional such as a social worker or hospital consultant - must consider what is best for them as a person before making a choice on their behalf.

If a professional is making a decision on behalf of the person you care for, they must consult you and listen to you as the carer and someone interested in the person’s welfare. After all, you know them best! They must also involve the person as much as possible and, if they previously had mental capacity, consider their past beliefs and wishes.

What about Lasting Power of Attorney?

Lasting Power of Attorney enables an Attorney to make decisions on behalf of another person with regards to their personal welfare and financial matters. There are two types of Lasting Power of Attorney: Property and Welfare (which covers financial and property decisions) and Personal Health and Welfare (which covers decisions about health and social care).

If the person you care for is losing or may lose the ability to make decisions for themselves in the future, it is strongly recommended that they appoint an Attorney. The Lasting Power of Attorney will only come into effect if the person loses mental capacity, so it is better to have one than not have one when needed, even if it is never used.

Once a person loses mental capacity to grant Lasting Power of Attorney, only the Court of Protection can appoint a decision maker to make decisions on their behalf. The decision maker is called a Deputy. Deputy application must be made to the Court of Protection. It can be quite expensive, including an application fee and an annual fee thereafter, and there can be a lot of paperwork to fill in. It’s therefore seriously important to consider appointing an Attorney at an early stage.

Steps to making Lasting Power of Attorney

- You can start the process online but you will need to print out and send the forms with a written signature. The forms are quite complicated but you do not necessarily need a solicitor
- You will need a certificate provider to register your Lasting Power of Attorney. This is a person who confirms that the person making the Lasting Power of Attorney knows what they are doing and isn’t being pressured into it. A certificate provider can be a professional such as a social worker or solicitor, or someone who has known the person for 2 years or more and isn’t a relative or partner

Read
• There is a £110 fee to register a Lasting Power of Attorney. However, the fee may be reduced/waived in some circumstances.

More information
The Carers’ Information Service offers information and advice to carers on a range of issues. If you need legal advice on mental capacity and lasting power of attorney/deputyship, we hold regular legal advice surgeries at the Carers Support Centre. Contact the Carers’ Information Service on 020 8663 5608, email appointments@carersinfo.org.uk or visit www.carersinfo.org.uk for more information.

What’s on in Croydon
Free workshops for parent carers with KIDS
Are you a parent of a disabled child/child with special educational needs? KIDS are holding a series of free workshops for parent carers over the summer:

- **18 May**: 10am-12noon Transport from home to school, Becky Saunders (Croydon Council)
- **15 June**: 10am-12noon What is available for your child at school, Judith Lunnon (Croydon Council)
- **7 July**: 10am-12noon Mental Capacity Act, Elvio Correia (Hestia Housing & Support) held at Carers Support Centre

All workshops (except 7 July) will take place at Small Hall at East Croydon United Reformed Church, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon, Surrey CR0 5LP. Workshops are FREE for parents/carers and young people, but a small fee of £10 applies to professionals. Book your place in advance via email: virginijasl@kids.org.uk.

Croydon Neighbourhood Care - events for carers
Croydon Neighbourhood Care offers a range of groups for carers in Croydon, including:

- **Carers Afternoon Relaxation Group** - every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, 1.30pm - 3.30pm at Central Hall, Davidson Lodge, Freemason’s Road, Croydon CR0 6PD. Come along and join us for an enjoyable afternoon
- **Evening Carers Group** - every last Wednesday of the month at Central Hall, Davidson Lodge, Freemason’s Road, Croydon CR0 6PD. A chance to meet other carers and have fun

Contact carers@cnca.org.uk or call 020 8662 1000 for more information.

Listening to carers: meet Healthwatch Croydon on Tuesday 12 July 10.30am at the Carers Support Centre
Listening to carers is a key priority for Healthwatch Croydon. Healthwatch Croydon’s carers’ focus group gives carers the opportunity to say what works well in the healthcare system and what could be improved. All feedback is anonymous and Healthwatch Croydon will publish a report on the findings. For more details or to share your experience email info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk or call 020 8663 5648. For more information on Healthwatch Croydon, visit www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk.

Help for Carers - new name for South Thames Crossroads
South Thames Crossroads have changed their name to Help for Carers. The service will still remain the same and Carers Assessments, advice and social events will still be available from Help for Carers Croydon office at the Carers Support Centre, 24 George Street. Call 020 8663 5664 or email carerssupport@helpforcarers.org.uk for more information.

Help for Carers - Carers’ Clubs/Pub Clubs
Help for Carers invites you to meet other carers at your local carers’ club or pub club:

**Carers’ Clubs - Come along for coffee and a chat**
- **Purley**: 3 May (Tuesday to avoid bank holiday), 6 June & 4 July, 10.30am - 12noon at Café Blue, 945 Brighton Road, CR8 2BP
- **Thornton Health**: 12 May, 9 June & 14 July, 11am - 12noon at Blue & Orange Café, 85 High St, CR7 8RY
- **Shirley**: 26 May, 30 June & 28 July, 10.30am - 12noon at Shirley Café, 219 Wickham Road, Shirley, CR0 8TG
- **New Addington**: 20 May, 17 June & 15 July, 12noon - 1.30pm at Treats by Eden, 18 Central Parade, New Addington, CR0 0JB

**Pub Club - Join other carers for a drink at Pub Club**
- **East Croydon**: 3 May, 7 June & 5 July, from 7.30pm at The Orchard Pub, Cherry Orchard Road, CR0 6BA
  
  Help for Carers continues to run a carers’ cinema club on the first Wednesday evening of the month. To attend any of these events or find out future dates, please contact Help for Carers on carerssupport@helpforcarers.org.uk or call 020 8663 5664.

The My World Centre is back!
• Are you a parent / carer of a child awaiting a diagnosis or diagnosed with autism, ADHD, Asperger’s, PDD or ODD?
• Do you want to chat with others and meet others in a non-judgemental environment?
• Do you want your child/children to attend any groups specifically for special needs?

If so, The My World Centre is for you! Check out the Facebook page for more details – make sure you like and share to help raise awareness: www.facebook.com/TheMyWorldCentre.

Have your say on mental health in Croydon
Join Healthwatch Croydon’s Advisory Forum and have your views heard on mental health services in Croydon on 5 May 2016, 12noon - 2pm at New Addington Community Centre, Community Hall, Central Parade, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 0JB.

Light refreshments will be provided. Book via www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/events or call 020 8663 5648.
News and views

The government wants to hear from carers - have your say

The Department of Health is developing a new carers' strategy, and they want to hear your ideas. This is your chance to let the government know about your experience of caring and the support you need. The consultation closes on 30 June, so make sure you have your say! www.gov.uk/government/consultations/carers-strategy-call-for-evidence

Universal Credit digital service roll out in parts of Croydon

Universal Credit digital service will be fully rolled out in some parts of Croydon in addition to CR0 4 & CR0 2. If you live in postcode CR0 0, CR0 1, CR0 3, CR0 5, CR0 6, CR0 7, CR0 9, CR9, SE25 4 or SE25 5 and you make a new claim or have a change in circumstances, you will be moved onto the Universal Credit digital service. In addition, anyone living in these areas who would normally apply for:

- income support
- job seeker’s allowance
- employment support allowance
- child/working tax credit
- housing benefit

will now need to apply for Universal Credit online via www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit. For more information, call the Universal Credit helpline on 0345 600 0723.

Proposals to cut Personal Independence Payment reversed

The new Work and Pensions Secretary Stephen Crabb confirmed that the proposed reduction to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has been cancelled after concerns were raised by disabled people and a number of disability organisations: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-35863776. For more information on PIP, contact us on enquiries@carersinfo.org.uk or call 020 8649 9339, option 1.

House of Lords Select Committee: disabled people are being ‘let down’

The House of Lords Select Committee on the Equality Act (2010) and Disability says disabled people are being ‘let down’ and that the government needs to do more. Recommendations made by the Committee include: obliging taxi drivers to take passengers with wheelchairs, improving disabled access to sports grounds, improving how the government communicate with disabled people and reducing barriers to fighting discrimination. Read the full report on www.parliament.uk.

Latest from the Carers’ Information Service

Make sure you like us on Facebook/follow us on Twitter for all the latest information and events. Find us on Facebook and Twitter under Informing Carers.

Need advice? We can help

When you need advice, it can be hard to know where to turn. At the Carers Support Centre, we offer a wide range of advice surgeries for carers, on topics such as benefits, debt, legal, housing and much more. To find out how we can help you, see What’s On at the Carers Support Centre at the back of the newsletter, email enquiries@carersinfo.org.uk or call 020 8649 9339, option 1.

Looking for somewhere to meet?

Do you know anyone looking for a venue to hold meetings, trainings or support groups? The Carers Support Centre can offer bright rooms with a maximum capacity of 30 seated or 52 standing, with free Wi-Fi throughout the building. All rooms are fully accessible, except for our Joan Harris Boardroom, and a data projector can be provided at an additional cost.

For more information, or to view our rooms, visit www.carerssupportcentrecroydon.org.uk, call 020 8663 5600 or email bookings@carersinfo.org.uk.

New support group for carers coming this September

The Carers’ Information Service is starting a six week Carers Support Group this September. Support groups can be a safe space for carers to offload and get the information and support they need in confidence. They are also a way of meeting people who understand the reality of caring. Dates and bookings will be confirmed in the next issue of Carers News.

Carers Book Club - join the discussion

Come and join us for reading inspiration and lively discussion at the Carers Book Club. This month we are reading The Razor’s Edge by W. Somerset Maugham. Next month’s book will be The Red Tent by Anita Diamant. Books are loaned from Croydon Library and can be picked up at the Carers Support Centre. To join the book club contact ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk or call 020 8649 6280.

Got a story to tell?

We would love to feature more stories from carers in our newsletter. Maybe you’ve done something interesting or enjoyed a local activity that you would like to tell others about. Perhaps you’ve got strong opinions on something in the news that affects carers. Or maybe you would just like to share your story of the ups and downs of caring. If you or someone you know would like to tell us their story, let us know by contacting amydeakin@carersinfo.org.uk or call 020 8649 6288.
What’s On at the Carers Support Centre

All of the following free activities are open to carers in Croydon and take place at the Carers Support Centre, 24 George Street, Croydon CR0 1PB. Some activities must be booked in advance and dates and times may be subject to change, so please check before you attend.

The Carers Support Centre is a partnership between Croydon Council and The Whitgift Foundation and run by the Carers’ Information Service. The Centre is open Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm, and carers are welcome to drop in for information and advice on their caring role. To keep up to date, join our mailing list via the contact details on the back page.

### Training & Workshops

**All of the following must be booked by calling 020 8649 6280, or emailing ruthlaws@carersinfo.org.uk.**

#### IT Buddy

Bi-weekly on a Wednesday and Thursday, 10.30am - 12.30pm  
Carers can bring in their own laptop or tablet, or use ours and discuss any IT issues they are experiencing with one of our volunteer IT Buddies. Please be aware we cannot do repairs.

#### Managing Stress: a Workshop for Carers

**Tuesday 10 May, 10am - 3pm**  
Caring can impact on your health and wellbeing - this workshop will identify the signs and symptoms of stress and give you some practical techniques you can use to combat it.

#### How to Cope with Sleep Difficulties

**Tuesday 14 June, 10am - 12noon**  
Getting the right amount of sleep can be a real challenge when you are caring. This workshop will help you find practical techniques to get the good night’s rest you need.

#### Siblings Workshop

**Tuesday 5 July, 10am - 3pm**  
Parents of disabled children or children with special educational needs often worry about the impact of their child’s disability on their siblings. This workshop acknowledges the challenges for parents and provides practical ways to support siblings.

### Health, Wellbeing & Social Activities

No need to book, just come along.

#### Carers Café

Monday to Friday, 10.30am - 12.30pm (closed 8 June, additional 1.30pm-3.30pm session on 6 June & 10 June)  
Drop in, relax, have a break and enjoy free refreshments, wi-fi, games, magazines and books. Supported by our team of volunteers.

#### Carers Singing Group

Fortnightly on a Wednesday, 11am - 12.15pm on: 4 & 18 May; 15 & 29 June; 13 & 27 July  
Sing your heart out at the Carers Support Centre! This is a guided singing group, covering a wide range of musical styles from around the world. No experience necessary, just come along and join the fun.

#### Alzheimer’s Society in the Carers Café

Monthly on a Thursday, 10.30am - 12.30pm on: 5 May, 2 June & 7 July  
A Dementia Adviser is available to talk to any carer of someone who has or may have dementia. You may also bring the person you care for along to the Carers Café.

### Family Fun in the Carers Café

Monthly on a Thursday, 10.30am - 12.30pm on: 26 May & 30 June  
For parents and carers of a disabled or seriously ill child or young person, up to the age of 17. Find out how a Family Fund grant could help and receive support making an application.

#### Carers Singing Group

Fortnightly on a Friday, 11am - 12.15pm on: 4 & 18 May; 15 & 29 June  
Sing your heart out at the Carers Support Centre! This is a guided singing group, covering a wide range of musical styles from around the world. No experience necessary, just come along and join the fun.

#### Craft and Chatter in the Carers Café

Monthly on a Friday, 11am - 12.30pm on: 6 June (1.30pm-3.30pm for Carers Week); 24 June & 29 July  
Bring along any craft activity or spend time de-stressing with some drawing or colouring-in. No need to be an expert! Pictures, paper and pens provided.

#### Pilates Taster Session

Tuesday 7 June, 2pm - 3pm  
A one-off taster pilates session for carers as part of Carers Week. Places are extremely limited so book ASAP.

#### Tai Chi Taster Session

Thursday 9 June, 1.30pm - 2.30pm  
A one off taster tai chi session for carers as part of Carers Week. Places are extremely limited so book ASAP.

### Massage

Monthly on a Friday, 10.30am - 3pm on: 8 July  
A relaxing 25 minute hand & arm or neck & shoulder massage.
Support Groups for Carers
No need to book, just come along.

Diabetes Parent Support Group
Monthly on a Monday, 9.30am - 11.30am on: 16 May, 13 June & 11 July
A new group for parents caring for a child with diabetes, with guest speakers.

NAS Croydon Branch Parent Group
Monthly on a Tuesday, 10am - 12noon on: 24 May, 28 June & 19 July
Coffee morning providing an opportunity to meet other parents and carers who have received a diagnosis, or are waiting to receive a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder for a family member. For more information email croydon8@nas.org.uk.

Advice Surgeries for Carers
No need to book, just turn up.

Disabled Parents and Carers Together (DPACT)
Weekly on a Tuesday, 1-3pm
Advice, support, casework and advocacy for parents and carers who have a chronic illness or disability. A member of staff is available at the Carers Support Centre every week. Drop-ins welcome, but advisable to call 0800 689 7474 (leave a message and calls will be returned as soon as possible) to check availability.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans
Monthly on a Tuesday on: 3 May, 7 June & 5 July
10am - 12noon
Advice on issues around Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for disabled children and young people, provided by Family Lives Croydon Independent Support Service.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)
Weekly on a Friday during term-time, 10am - 12noon on: 6 May, 13 May, 20 May & 27 May; 10 June, 17 June & 24 June; 1, 8, 15 & 22 July
Advice on any SEN issues, provided by Kids Croydon SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support) and Mediation Service.

For a large print copy of Carers News call us on 020 8649 9339, option 1

Make sure you like us on Facebook/follow us on Twitter for all the latest information and events. Find us on Facebook and Twitter under Informing Carers.

All of the following must be booked by calling 020 8663 5608 or emailing appointments@carersinfo.org.uk

Benefits Surgery
Weekly on a Wednesday, 2.30pm - 4pm on: 4 May & 18 May; 1 June, 15 June & 22 June; 6 July, 13 July & 20 July
Weekly appointments for carers to discuss any benefits issues and offer a full benefits check.

Debt Clinic by South West London Law Centres (SWLLC)
Monthly on a Monday, 10am - 12noon on: 9 May, June & July TBC Hour long appointment with an SWLLC Thames Water Advisor who can look at current debt issues, income maximization and assess potential eligibility for a grant towards white goods and utility bill debts.

Drug & Alcohol Advice
Bi-monthly on a Tuesday, 10am - 1pm on: 31 May, 13 June & 11 July
Hour long appointment with a Turning Point advisor, for family members and concerned others who are affected by alcohol or drug use of a relative or friend.

Legal Advice Surgery
Monthly on a Tuesday, 12- 4pm on: 3 May & 31 May; 28 June & 26 July
30 minute appointment with a solicitor on any subject except conveyancing, probate, power of attorney and wills.

Legal Clinic
Monthly on a Thursday, 12noon - 3.30pm on: 26 May, 30 June & 28 July
30 minute appointment with a solicitor on any the following areas of law: mental health, court of protection, power of attorney, mental capacity, clinical negligence, family law and immigration (but not asylum).

Mental Health Carers Advice Surgery
Fortnightly on a Thursday, 10am - 1pm on: 26 May; 9 June & 23 June; 7 July & 21 July
Hour long appointment with Mind in Croydon Mental Health Carers Support Service. Any issue or concern relating to caring for someone with a mental health problem.

Shelter Housing Advice Surgery
Monthly on a Wednesday, appointments 1pm - 2.30pm, drop-in 3pm - 3.45pm on: 25 May, 22 June & 27 July
30 minute appointment with an advisor from Shelter for advice and assistance on any aspect of housing.

Disclaimer:
We cannot accept any responsibility for any goods or services mentioned in or enclosed with this newsletter

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