

HOW TO 11

Health and Hospital Services

Carers Information Service

This factsheet is about health and hospital services in Croydon, including community health services, support with health costs and hospital discharge. 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.*



Your health as a carer

It can be a challenge to look after your health whilst caring. Let your GP know that you are a carer so they can provide you with the right support and advice. You may also be able to arrange an NHS Health Check (if eligible) with them to monitor your overall health. If you are having a Carer's Assessment, you may wish to discuss how caring affects your health and wellbeing during your assessment - see our *Getting Support from Social Care* factsheet for more information.

To help carers look after their wellbeing, we provide a range of support and activities at the Carers Support Centre. Our regular wellbeing activities for carers in Croydon include singing, dancing and massage. Contact 020 8649 9339, option 1 or visit www.carersinfo.org.uk for details.

Caring can also have an impact on your mental health. If you are concerned about your mental health, speak to your GP. Mind in Croydon offers a Carers Counselling Service (020 8763 2064), providing six free individual/group counselling sessions for any carer aged 16 or over.

Community health services

Croydon Health Services

020 8401 3000 (General)
020 8274 6300 (Croydon Community Health Services)
www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk
Provides details of community health services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry and speech and language therapy. You may need a GP referral to access the service. Can also provide details of hospital services.

Community Dental Service

020 3299 3480
kch-tr.cdsreferrals@nhs.net
www.kch.nhs.uk/service/a-z/community-special-care-dentistry
Specialist dental care for disabled adults, adults with a severe mental health problem and children with special educational needs or challenging behaviour. Referral must be made via a GP or dentist and you may be placed on a waiting list.

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk
Online information from the NHS on health issues and healthy living. Includes search tool for local health services such as GP surgeries, dentists and pharmacies.

Shirley Pharmacy

020 8654 1065
www.shirleypharmacy.co.uk
Provides free prescription collection service from any doctor's surgery in the Croydon area. Can provide home visits to patients unable to get to the pharmacy. Also provides mobility and daily living equipment for sale or hire.

Emergencies

In most emergency situations, call 999. There are other contacts for urgent but non-emergency situations:

Mental health emergencies

If the person you care for is in touch with mental health services, they can contact the community mental health team and speak to their care coordinator. For urgent or out-of-hours help or advice, you can also contact the SLaM 24-hour mental health support line on 0800 731 2864. If the person you care for needs help immediately, go to your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency (A&E) department, where the psychiatric liaison team can help you. If you are concerned the person you care for may be at immediate risk of harming themselves or others, call 999.

Minor Injuries Unit

020 8251 7225 (Parkway)

020 8401 3238 (Purley)

www.croydonmiu.co.uk

Adults and children aged over one year old can be assessed and treated for a variety of minor injuries. Open Monday to Friday, 2pm - 8pm and Saturday to Sunday, 12noon - 8pm.

NHS 111 service

111

Non-emergency NHS service available 24 hours, seven days a week.

Provides urgent or out-of-hours medical help and advice in a non-emergency, including details of out-of-hours dentists and pharmacies. In an emergency, call 999.

Urgent Care GP Hubs

111

Edridge Road walk-in centre has been replaced by three urgent care GP hubs: East Croydon Medical Centre, Purley War Memorial Hospital and Parkway Health Centre. Urgent appointments are available 8am to 8pm, seven days a week. Patients are encouraged to call NHS 111 before visiting a hub, but a walk-in service is available. The Urgent Care Centre is still open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Urgent Care Centre

020 8401 3000 (CUH)

For patients with an urgent medical problem. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mental health services

Croydon Psychological Therapies and Well-Being Service (IAPT)

020 3228 4040

croydoniapt@slam.nhs.uk

slam-iapt.nhs.uk/croydon

Provides short-term psychological interventions for people in Croydon with a mental health problem, such as low mood, depression and anxiety. The service is free for anyone aged 18 or over who lives in Croydon and is registered with a Croydon GP. IAPT is not an emergency service - see the Emergencies section for mental health emergencies.

Hear Us

020 8681 6888

info@hear-us.org

www.hear-us.org

Represents the views of people using mental health services and their carers in Croydon. Promotes positive mental health within the local community, holds regular meetings and produces a newsletter.

Mind in Croydon

020 8668 2210 (General)

020 8688 1210 (Carers' Support Service)

020 8763 2064 (Carers' Counselling Service)

www.mindincroydon.org.uk

Wide range of services for people with a mental health problem and their carers, including: information, Carer's Support Service, Carers' Counselling Service, leisure activities, employment support, social networking service and benefits advice.

Rethink Croydon Carers Support Service

020 8649 6294

blaise.haylock@rethink.org

www.rethink.org

Support, advice, information and advocacy for carers of adults with a severe mental health problem.

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM)

020 3228 6000 (General Enquiries)

0800 731 2864 (Mental Health Support Line)

www.slam.nhs.uk

Provides mental health services for people in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Croydon. Provides information, support and advice on mental health and medication, and runs a 24-hour Mental Health Support Line. SLaM Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS) offers advice and information for SLaM service users and carers.

Home visits

GPs are not required to provide home visits but will do so if they believe the person's medical condition requires it. If the person you care for is eligible for a free NHS eye test and cannot visit an optician unaccompanied due to illness or disability, they may be able to have an eye test at home. Ask your optician for more details.

Confidentiality

Whilst medical professionals must respect patient confidentiality, they can share information with carers with the consent of the patient. As a carer, you can also attend appointments with the person you care for with their permission.

In some cases, the person you care for may not wish to share information but lacks the mental capacity (ability) to understand the consequences of their choice. Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, it must always be assumed that the patient can make this choice, with support if necessary, unless it can be shown otherwise.

If the person you care for lacks mental capacity to choose to share information, the decision will need to be made in their 'best interests'. During a 'best interests' decision, you as the carer should be consulted and the person's past wishes (when they had mental capacity) taken into account. If the person lacks mental capacity, has Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare and has appointed you as their attorney, you will make choices about their healthcare. For more information, contact the Office of the Public Guardian on 0300 456 0300.



Medical records



From April 2015, GP surgeries should give patients access to a summary of their medical records, known as a Summary Care Record (SCR). Your GP can explain how to view your SCR.

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives patients the right to access their own full health records. You may not need to apply formally, as your GP can voluntarily show you a copy of your medical record.

To formally request full copies of, or arrange an appointment to view, your full health records, you need to make a Subject Access Request. You can send this request to the relevant health professional, such as your GP or optician.

To access the medical records of the person you care for, you must be acting on their behalf with their written consent. If they lack the mental capacity to provide consent, you will need a Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare or a Deputyship from the Court of Protection.

According to the Data Protection Act, you should be given access to relevant records within 40 days, though government guidance says that this should happen within 21 days. You may need to pay a fee, so check before applying.



Health costs

The NHS Low Income Scheme supports people on a low-income with NHS dental treatment, NHS wigs and fabric supports, eye tests, glasses and contact lenses and travel to NHS treatment if referred by a doctor or dentist. You can claim on behalf of yourself, your partner or your children.

You can get help with health costs if you have less than £16,000 in savings, investments or property (not counting your own home), or less than £23,250 if you live permanently in a care home. If eligible, you may receive full help or partial help, depending on your financial circumstances. You can apply for the scheme by filling in the HC1 form, available from your GP or at www.nhs.uk. You do not need to fill in the form if you receive certain income-support benefits or if you have a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate. Ask your GP if you may be eligible.

Free prescriptions

You can automatically get free NHS prescriptions if you are aged 60 and over, aged under 16, aged 16-18 and in full-time education, an NHS inpatient or have a maternity exemption certificate (MatEx).

If the person you care for has a specified medical condition or a physical disability that prevents them from leaving their home without support, they can get free prescriptions with a valid medical exemption certificate. You can find a list of exempted conditions online, at your GP surgery or a local pharmacy. Ask your GP or pharmacist for an FP92A form to apply.

You are also entitled to free prescriptions if you or your partner receive, or if you are under 20 and the dependant of someone receiving, certain income-related benefits. Visit www.nhs.uk or speak to your GP for more information.

Hospital services

The following information refers to Croydon University Hospital (CUH) services. If you are using a different hospital, contact the individual hospital directly.

Full details of available support for carers at CUH can be found in the CUH Visitors and Carers Guidelines. Ask ward staff for a copy or find the guidelines online at www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/patients-visitors. This document also has details of general visitor guidelines.

Support for patients with cancer

Croydon Cancer Counselling Service

020 8401 3000 ext 4904

Free counselling for all inpatients, outpatients and carers affected by a diagnosis of cancer.

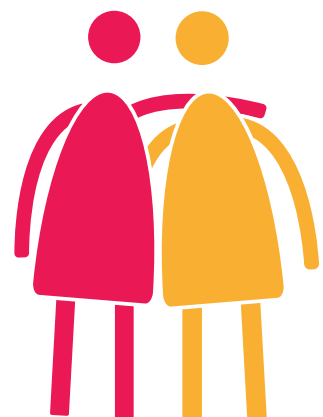
Counselling sessions take place in the Woodcroft Wing at CUH.

Macmillan Centre

020 8401 3441

benny.millier@nhs.net

Information, support, counselling and complementary therapies for cancer patients and their carers. Offers a support group for carers, workshops, art classes, walking for health, meditation and yoga. Drop-in centre based at Nightingale House, CUH.



Support for patients with a learning disability

Acute Liaison Nurse

020 8726 6500 ext 84369

020 8726 6500 (Joint Community Learning Disability Team)

Supports adults with a learning disability and their carers using hospital services at CUH. Part of the Community Learning Disability Team.

Healthcare Passport

020 8726 6500 ext 84369

Healthcare Passports are available for patients with a learning disability. The passport contains personal information about the person, details of how to support and communicate with them and contact details for any carers.

Patient Buddy Scheme

020 8401 3436

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/support-for-people-with-learning-disabilities.htm

Matches disabled patients with a trained volunteer who will meet them at the hospital to help them attend outpatient appointments. Must be booked in advance.

Visiting

At CUH, visiting hours are generally between 2pm - 5pm and 6pm - 8pm. Speak to the nurse in charge of the ward if you wish to visit outside those times. For more details on visitor guidelines, check online or speak to the hospital: www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/Visitors-Guide.htm

Car parking

If you have a blue badge, car parking is free. If you are not a blue badge holder, car parking rates apply. If the person you care for is likely to be in hospital long-term (over a week), speak to the nurse in charge of the ward for a weekly permit (£8.50 a week). Find the latest parking charges online: www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

Translation services

Croydon Health Services can provide translation and interpretation for patients in more than 50 languages - either over the telephone or in person, including British Sign Language. Speak to a member of staff to discuss your needs or the needs of the person you care for. The NHS 111 service also offers a confidential interpretation service.

Chaplaincy and spiritual care

Chaplaincy Team

020 8401 3105

h.fife@nhs.net / andrew.dovey@nhs.net

Provides religious and sacramental care, religious and spiritual support, pastoral care and counselling, bereavement support, crisis support and resources on ethical issues at CUH. Service is available for patients from all faith communities. Hospital Chapel is open daily for prayer or reflection to patients of all faiths and none.

Bereavement services

Croydon Health Services

Bereavement Service

020 8401 3134/44

(Bereavement Service)

020 8401 3105 (Chaplaincy Bereavement Counselling)

Offers support to adult relatives of someone who has died at CUH.

This is an answerphone service and calls will be returned. Chaplains can also offer help and advice with making funeral arrangements.

Going into hospital as a carer

If you are going into hospital as a carer, you can arrange alternative care until you are well enough to continue your caring role.

Arranging alternative care can take several weeks, so try to start the process as soon as possible. Ask

Croydon Adult Social Care for an urgent Needs Assessment of the person you care for. If they have a care plan, ask for an urgent review. Make sure the assessor knows how long you will be in hospital for and the full length of recovery time you need. For more information, see our *Getting Support from Social Care* factsheet for an adult and *Caring for a Child* factsheet for a child aged under 18.

If you are arranging care yourself, the Carers' Information Service holds a list of approved providers. Contact 020 8649 9339, option 1 or email enquiries@carersinfo.org.uk for details.

Croycare

0208 654 7166 (CarelinePlus)

careline@croydon.gov.uk

Free carers' emergency card service operated by Croydon Council. If you register as a carer in Croydon, you can call the CarelinePlus team if you have an accident, emergency or are taken seriously ill. A team member will visit the person you care for, for up to two hours, until more long-term care can be arranged.

Benefits

Going into hospital can affect your benefits and the benefits of the person you care for. You will need to inform the department who pays the benefits. Failure to do so may result in overpayment, which will later be reclaimed.

Disability benefits

Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Attendance Allowance (AA) normally stop after four weeks in a hospital. For a child receiving DLA, payments will continue as normal for as long as they are still eligible for DLA. Once the disability benefit has stopped, you will lose any entitlement to Carer's Allowance. However, payments may continue if the person you care for is:

- A private patient not receiving support from the NHS.
- Terminally ill and in a hospice.

Carer's Allowance

If you are admitted to hospital as a carer, you will continue to receive Carer's Allowance for 12 weeks.

Child benefit

If your child is admitted to hospital, child benefit stops after 12 weeks, unless you are continuing to spend money on the child's behalf (e.g. clothes, pocket money, etc.)

Income-related and out-of-work benefits

- Severe Disability Premium/Addition stops after four weeks in hospital – unless you and the person you care for both qualify for it, in which case the single rate will be paid.
- Carer Premium/Addition stops eight weeks after Carer's Allowance stops being paid.
- Contributionary Employment Support Allowance (ESA) will continue whilst a person is in hospital, as long as they continue to meet the criteria. Certain parts of income-related ESA may be affected.
- Jobseeker's Allowance stops two weeks after going into hospital. Once JSA stops, you might be able to claim ESA.
- After 52 weeks in hospital, other elements of income-related benefits may be stopped, such as help with housing costs. Partners will be treated as a separate claimant, as they are no longer seen as part of the same 'household'.

Universal Credit

If you go into hospital, your Universal Credit will continue. However, if your partner or child goes into hospital for over six months, they will no longer be included in your Universal Credit award. If the person you care for goes into hospital, the carer element will no longer be included once your Carer's Allowance ends (see section on Carer's Allowance).

Useful contacts

Croydon Welfare Rights Team
0800 731 5920
(Advice Line)

www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/welfare-benefits/project
Provides advice on welfare benefits and financial support to Croydon residents. Advice line is open Mondays 2pm - 7pm, Tuesdays 3pm - 4.30pm, Wednesdays 11am - 2pm and Fridays 9am - 12noon.



Financial help to visit someone in hospital

Florence Nightingale Aid in Sickness Trust

020 7998 8817
ann.griffiths@fnaist.org.uk
www.fnaist.org.uk

Grants to people with an illness or disability to pay for medical items or services that improve quality of life, such as convalescent care. Applications must be made by a health or care professional, such as a doctor or social worker.

The Heinz, Anna and Carol Kroch Foundation

01524 263 001
hakf50@hotmail.com
Grants to people who have ongoing medical problems and are in severe financial hardship. Applications must be made via a professional, in writing.

React (Rapid Effective Assistance for Children with Potentially Terminal Illnesses)

020 8940 2575
react@reactcharity.org
www.reactcharity.org
Grants for children with a life-limiting or life-threatening illness, including hospital expenses such as food and travel.

For details of other charities that may be able to help, see our *Grant-Giving Organisations* factsheet or contact Turn2us (0808 802 2000, www.turn2us.org.uk).

Queries and complaints

Complaints can be made for yourself or on behalf of the person you care for, with their consent. If you have a question or concern, speak to the nurse in charge of the ward or a senior manager. If this does not solve the issue or you do not feel comfortable doing this, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) to raise the issue informally.

Stage 1

If you have a question, comment or concern, speak to the nurse in charge of the ward or a senior manager. If this does not solve the issue or you do not feel comfortable doing this, you may wish to contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) to raise the issue informally.

You may wish to make a formal complaint to the Complaints Team. Try to make your complaint in writing to ensure there is a written record. Be as brief, clear and polite as possible, explaining what happened, who was involved, the impact this had on you/the person you care for and any action you would like taken.

Complaints and Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Team

020 8401 3210/3352
ch-tr.complaints@nhs.net (Complaints)
ch-tr.pals@nhs.net (PALS)
www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/compliments_complaints.htm
Handles complaints and concerns about Croydon NHS services. PALS can help resolve concerns and complaints informally. To make a formal complaint, contact the Complaints Team.

Healthwatch Croydon

020 8663 5648
www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk
info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk
Cannot look into individual complaints but can feed into future local decision-making on health and social care services.

VoiceAbility (NHS Complaints Advocacy Service)

0300 330 5454

nhscomplaints@voiceability.org

www.nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org

Independent NHS complaint resolution service offering information, advice and advocacy. Offers a self-help pack, including a template letter.

Stage 2

If you are unhappy with the final response to your complaint, you can ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to review it.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

0345 015 4033

www.ombudsman.org.uk

Independent organisation which helps resolve complaints about the NHS. Will only investigate complaints after the first stage (local resolution) has been completed. Must request a review within 12 months of receiving a final response from the NHS provider, unless there are good reasons for delay.

Coming out of hospital

The process of leaving hospital is called being discharged. Discharge from hospital should always be properly planned and managed. As a carer, the hospital should involve you and keep you informed as much as possible. No one should be discharged from hospital until their treatment is complete, the medical team assess them as medically fit to go home and any appropriate support has been put in place for when they leave.

Steps to successful hospital discharge

The hospital should:

1. Inform patients and carers how the discharge will be managed.
2. Assess the patient for NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) if appropriate.
3. If the patient has care and support needs, refer them to the Adult Care Team for a Needs Assessment by a social worker.

The social care team should:

4. Discuss with you to what extent, if any, you wish to support the patient, as well as offering you a Carer's Assessment.
5. Create a care plan if the person has assessed eligible needs.

Step 1: Information

It is important to start planning discharge from hospital as soon as possible to ensure the right support is put in place. Ideally staff should inform patients when they expect to discharge them within 48 hours of admission.

Social workers are available at CUH to speak to patients and their carers. You or the patient can ask ward staff to arrange to speak to a social worker to discuss managing after leaving hospital.

Step 2: NHS Continuing Healthcare

NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) is NHS-funded care for people with ongoing health care needs after leaving hospital. This can include both health and care services, and can be provided at home or in a care home.

If someone receives CHC in their own home, the NHS will pay for care workers to help with tasks such as personal care, food preparation and shopping, in addition to health care. If someone receives CHC in a care home, the NHS will pay for the care home fees, including board and accommodation, in addition to health care. CHC is provided free of charge and is not means-tested, unlike social care provided by local councils.

Am I eligible?

The majority of people with support needs will not receive CHC. Instead, they may receive support from adult social care. To receive CHC, a person must:

- Be over 18.
- Have a complex medical condition with substantial, ongoing care needs.
- Have a primary health need – the main reason for needing care is related to a health condition.

Eligibility for CHC is reviewed annually and can change if the person's health needs change. If CHC is withdrawn, it will be done in partnership with social care to ensure there are no gaps in support. If someone is no longer eligible for CHC and their needs increase, they can request a reassessment.

Assessment

The Discharge Team will do an initial screening check. If screened as potentially eligible, the patient will be assessed using the NHS Continuing Healthcare Checklist.

If the checklist suggests they might be eligible, they will receive a full CHC assessment. The assessment will be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team, typically including the CHC team, social care team, any carers and relevant health professionals. This team will make a recommendation either for or against CHC eligibility. You can appeal this decision if you disagree – details of the appeals process are provided in the decision letter.

Bye...



Step 3: Needs Assessment by social care

If the patient may have care and support needs when they leave hospital, the ward should refer them to the hospital's Adult Care Team for a Needs Assessment. This referral can only be made with patient or carer consent. The Adult Care Team can only become involved once they have received a notification of assessment from the ward.

The team will assess the patient to see what care and support may be needed to enable them to return home. To be assessed as needing support, they will need to meet the national eligibility criteria. If returning home is not possible, the team will discuss other options with you and the patient, such as moving into a residential or nursing care home.

Step 4: Carer's Assessment

As a carer, you should be offered a Carer's Assessment before the patient is discharged. The assessment should look at your needs as a carer and your ability/willingness to provide support. It should not be assumed that you are able or willing to meet the person's support needs after they leave hospital, and you are under no obligation to take up, increase or continue in a caring role. Make sure you are clear with hospital staff and social workers what you are and what you are not able and willing to do.

It is vital that patients and staff do not 'volunteer' carers for caring responsibilities without checking that they are willing to take them on. Carers should never be pressured into taking on a caring role.

Step 5: Care plan

If the patient is assessed as eligible for support, a care plan will be created, explaining what their care needs are, the support needed to meet these needs and how this support will be provided.

All care packages should be reviewed by a Care Manager/social worker within six weeks. If the care package is not adequate, contact Croydon Council on 020 8726 6500 and ask for a review. Please note that if ongoing support from social care is required after the reablement period, the person you care for will be financially assessed for their ability to pay for support.

Don't leave too soon!

Do not feel pressured by the person you care for or by hospital staff to agree discharge before the right care is in place. Make sure that a proper care plan has been created and that your own needs as a carer are properly assessed.

If the person you support leaves hospital without a care package, support will need to be requested from adult social care- for more details, see our *Getting Support from Social Care* factsheet.

Disputes

If the person you care for has been deemed medically fit for discharge but you feel appropriate support is not yet in place, ward staff should contact the Integrated Discharge Team (IDT) as soon as possible. If the IDT is unable to resolve the dispute, approach the Director of Operations at the hospital for guidance.

Day of discharge

On the day of discharge, patients will be asked to wait in the Discharge Lounge. The patient should receive their discharge letter and up to four weeks' worth of any prescribed medicines. A nurse should explain the letter and any medication the patient needs to take. A copy of the letter should also be sent to their GP.

Patients will need to make their own transport arrangements, unless they cannot get home by any other means. In this case, they will travel by hospital transport. You as the carer will not be able to travel with them.

Useful contacts



Age UK

0800 169 6565

www.ageuk.org.uk

Produces a range of information guides and factsheets, including a guide on hospital discharge.

Carers UK

0808 808 7777

www.carersuk.org

Publishes *Coming Out of Hospital*.

Support after leaving hospital

Rehabilitation and reablement services support patients with additional recovery needs who need help to regain their independence after discharge. See below for services for discharged CUH patients.

Community Intermediate Care Service (CICS)

020 8274 6444

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/services/Community_Intermediate_Care_Service

Provides rehabilitation support to discharged patients from CUH up to six weeks after discharge, funded by the NHS. If the patient needs more than six weeks' support within 12 months, they will be financially assessed to decide if they need to pay some or all of the costs. Make sure you cancel this care package after six weeks if support is no longer required, or you may be charged.

Home from Hospital and Reablement Service

020 8401 3590

www.ageuk.org.uk/croydon/our-services1/home-from-hospital-and-reablement-service

Short-term (up to eight weeks') support in the home for Croydon residents aged five and over who have been discharged from hospital. If a person is discharged without a care package, the service can

provide short-term support in the home to help regain independence. Home from Hospital Service can help with tasks such as essential shopping, collecting prescriptions or GP letters and a 'check and chat' service. Reablement Service provides support with improving mobility, shopping, using public transport, meal preparation and pursuing hobbies or community activities. Referrals must be made to the hospital or council adult social care team.

Staying Put's Enhanced Reablement Service

020 8760 5505 / 020 8407 1337
hsg-stayingput@croydon.gov.uk
Practical assistance with household tasks and repairs for people recently discharged from hospital who find it difficult to manage at home. Support is free of charge for people on income-related benefits, but people with savings over a certain threshold may be asked pay some or all of the service costs.

Mental health inpatient treatment

Croydon residents who need inpatient treatment for a mental health problem will usually be admitted to Bethlem Royal Hospital, part of South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM). If the person you care for is sectioned under the Mental Health Act, important legal rights are given to their 'nearest relative'. In most cases this will be you as the carer. Occasionally the 'nearest relative' will not be the next of kin.

If you are the 'nearest relative', your legal rights under the Mental Health Act include:

- The right to request that the patient is discharged from hospital.
- The right to information about the patient's discharge from hospital (unless the patient requests otherwise).

Guidance on the Mental Health Act suggests that patients should not be discharged from hospital until arrangements have been made to support them once they leave. Before discharge, the patient, the nearest relative/s and you as the carer should be involved in creating a discharge and relapse prevention plan, detailing what arrangements have been made to support the patient post-discharge.

If the person you care for is detained under a Section 3, the Mental Health Act Section 117 imposes a duty on health and social services to provide aftercare services to patients detained in hospital under certain sections of the Act. These aftercare services are free of charge and not financially assessed, unlike council-funded social care.

As a carer, you are entitled to a Carer's Assessment to explore whether you wish to continue/start being a carer, and if you do, what support you will need. You can request a Carer's Assessment from the patient's care coordinator.

Some patients who have been sectioned might be discharged under a community treatment order (CTO). A CTO means the patient will

receive supervised treatment in the community and can be recalled to hospital if necessary. For more information on Bethlem Royal Hospital and SLaM mental health services, contact SLaM on 0800 7312 864.

Mind

0300 123 3393 (9am- 6pm, Monday to Friday)
info@mind.org.uk
www.mind.org.uk
National charity providing advice and support for people with a mental health problem and their carers.

Mind in Croydon

020 8668 2210
admin@mindincroydon.org.uk
www.mindincroydon.org.uk
Provides a range of information and support for people with a mental health problem and their carers. Advocates are available to support with issues such as hospital admission and discharge.

Rethink

0300 5000 927 (Monday to Friday, 10am - 2pm)
www.rethink.org
Advice and support for adults with a severe mental health problem and their carers.

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM)

0800 7312 864 (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)
pals@slam.nhs.uk
www.slam.nhs.uk
Provides mental health services for people in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Croydon.

HOW TO 11

Health and Hospital Services

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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Written by Amy Deakin
Communications and Publications Officer at the Carers' Information Service



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