

HOW TO 11

Health and Hospital Services

Carers Information Service

This factsheet is about health and hospital services in Croydon, including 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.*



Health services

It can be a challenge to look after your health while caring. Let your GP know that you are a carer so they can provide you with the right support and advice. If caring is affecting your health, you may need to arrange further support for the person you care for. 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. Regular activities for carers in Croydon include singing, dancing and massage. Call 020 8663 5674 and leave a message, 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. If you would like counselling support, Mind in Croydon offers a Carers Counselling Service (020 8763 2064), providing six free individual or group counselling sessions for any Croydon 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. Please note that some services require a GP referral.

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.

Health Help Now

croydon.healthhelpnow.nhs.uk
Website and free app offering health information and signposting to local health services in Croydon.

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk
Online information from the NHS on health issues and healthy living. Includes search tool for local health services including 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 Croydon. Can provide home visits to patients unable to get to the pharmacy. Also provides mobility and daily living equipment for sale or hire.



Emergencies and urgent care

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

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-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 at 530 London Road, Thornton Heath CR7 7YE is still open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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 call the South London and Maudsley (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.

NHS 111 service

111
Non-emergency NHS service available 24 hours a day, all year round. Call 111 if you need urgent or out-of-hours medical help and advice in a non-emergency. Can provide details for out-of-hours dentists and pharmacies.

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 Talking Therapies (IAPT)

020 3228 4040
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 previous listing on mental health emergencies. Patients can self-refer for a telephone assessment.

Hear Us

020 8681 6888
info@hear-us.org
www.hear-us.org

Croydon's Mental Health Service User Group which acts as a coordinating body to facilitate and ensure service users are involved in the planning, delivery and monitoring of mental health services in Croydon. The service also aims to improve the quality of the services commissioned and delivered in Croydon.

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, including: information, counselling service, social networking service, leisure activities, employment support, advocacy and a welfare benefits advice service. Carers' Support Service for carers aged 16 and over provides information on services, support to access help, advocacy, emotional support, events, workshops and carers support groups. Carers Counselling Service offers any Croydon carer aged 16 and over six free counselling sessions and/or group sessions.

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 and those who care for them. Provides information, support and advice on mental health and medication, and runs a 24-hour mental health crisis line for patients and carers. 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.

Second opinions

Patients do not have the right to a second opinion, but a health professional will generally refer you if you ask for one. You can ask for a second opinion on behalf of the person you care for with their consent. Asking for a second opinion may delay treatment, so it is important to discuss the options with the relevant health professional before making a decision.

Confidentiality and decision making

While 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.

If you care for someone with a mental health problem, you may not always be told about the medical treatment that person is receiving due to patient confidentiality. Visit www.rethink.org/carers-family-friends/what-you-need-to-know/confidentiality-for-family-friends for more information.

In some cases, the patient may lack the mental capacity (decision-making ability) to make a choice about whether or not to share information. Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, it must always be assumed that the patient can make this choice, and must be supported to do so if necessary. If the patient lacks mental capacity to choose to share information and cannot be supported to make that decision, the decision to share information 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 you are the patient's Health and Welfare Attorney, then health professionals must share relevant information with you so you can make health and care decisions on the patient's behalf. For more information, call the Office of the Public Guardian on 0300 456 0300.

Medical records



If you are registered with a GP in England, a Summary Care Record (SCR) will be created for you, unless you choose to opt out. Your SCR contains a short summary of your GP medical records. This allows you to receive better healthcare when receiving treatment outside your GP surgery, such as in an emergency. Staff will ask your permission to access your SCR except in an emergency e.g. if you are unconscious.

If you would like to see your SCR, speak to your GP. You can ask your GP to add additional information to your SCR, including details of any carers. You can access your medical records using GP online services. Confidential patient information is sometimes used for health research and planning purposes. From 25 May 2018, you can opt out of this by visiting www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/manage-your-choice.

To formally request 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. Under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), this should be free of charge and you should be given access to relevant records within a month.

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.

Support with 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 or your partner have under £16,000 in savings, investments or property (not counting your own home), or under £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-related 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 (MatEx) or tax credit exemption certificate. 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.

If the person you care for has a specified medical condition or 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.

If you are not entitled to free prescriptions and require regular prescription medications, you can apply for a prepayment certificate at a set cost. See www.nhs.uk for current charges.



Winter flu vaccine

The flu vaccination, or flu jab, is available every winter for people whose health may be more at risk if they caught flu. This includes adults aged 65 and over, pregnant women, people with certain long-term health conditions and people with weaker immune systems. Visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-flu-vaccine for a full list.

If you are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person who may be at risk if you fall ill, or if you receive Carer's Allowance, you should be offered a free flu vaccine. If you think you need the flu vaccine, speak to your GP or local pharmacist.

For more information on the flu vaccine, visit www.nhs.uk or speak to your GP or pharmacist. We also offer free carer flu vaccinations at the Carers Support Centre every autumn. Vaccinations are provided by local pharmacies.

Healthy lifestyles

Just Be Croydon

www.justbecroydon.org

Provides information and advice on healthy lifestyles in Croydon. Offers online information and a Health MOT questionnaire to provide personalised health and wellbeing suggestions. Just Live Well service offers 12 months of face-to-face support for individuals who struggle to make lifestyle changes on their own. Health MOT questionnaire checks eligibility for this service. Also offers opportunities to speak to a Live Well Advisor at various drop-in hubs around Croydon.

Sexual health

Croydon offers a range of free sexual health services, available to all. You can find local services by entering your postcode on www.swish.nhs.uk.

Hospital services

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

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, walking for health, meditation and yoga. Drop-in centre based at Nightingale House, CUH.

Support for patients with a learning disability

Acute Liaison Nurse (Joint Community Learning Disability Team)

ch-tr.learningdis@nhs.net

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

Healthcare Passport

020 8401 3210 (PALS)

Healthcare Passports are available for patients with a learning disability. The passport contains personal information about the person, their health needs and medication, how they communicate and how best to support them. The passport also identifies any carers who can provide more information.

Patient Buddy Scheme

020 8401 3000

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

Matches disabled patients with a trained volunteer who will meet them at the hospital, help them attend appointments and offer support and information. The scheme is available for outpatient appointments only and 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. Visitor numbers are generally limited to two visitors per patient at a time, and visitors are asked to respect the privacy of other patients on the ward. There are some restrictions around giving flowers and mobile phone use on particular wards, so check online or speak to the hospital for more information: www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk.

Car parking

There are a number of disabled parking bays at CUH. If you are a blue badge holder, you may park in these spaces for free. If there are no disabled bays available, you will need to pay normal parking costs. 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 (currently £10 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 for the person you care for. NHS Direct also offers a confidential interpretation service.

Chaplaincy and spiritual care

Chaplaincy Team

020 8401 3105

Provides religious and sacramental care, religious and spiritual support, pastoral care and counselling, bereavement support, crisis support and resources on ethical issues at CUH. The 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. A copy of the *Bereavement Support Service at Croydon University Hospital* leaflet can be sent to you on request. Chaplains can also offer help and advice with making funeral arrangements.

We produce a factsheet for carers who are preparing for or who have experienced a bereavement. Visit the Carers Support Centre or email amydeakin@carersinfo.org.uk for a copy.

We also offer regular bereavement support groups at the Carers Support Centre. For more information, call Tanya Fitzgerald on 020 8649 6280 or email tanya Fitzgerald@carersinfo.org.uk.

Going into hospital as a carer

If you are going into hospital as a carer, you may worry about what will happen to the person you care for. 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.

It may be useful to have a Carer's Emergency Plan so you have greater peace of mind if you have a sudden accident or fall ill. This records a list of emergency contacts who can provide replacement care in an emergency, as well as information about the person you care for which may be helpful to emergency services.

The Carers Information Service has a template Carer's Emergency Plan you can use. To request a copy or for more information, call 020 8649 9339, option 1 or email enquiries@carersinfo.org.uk.

Croycare

0208 654 7166 (CarelinePlus)

careline@croydon.gov.uk

Free carer's emergency card service operated by Croydon Council. If you register as a carer in Croydon, you will be provided with a card with your name, unique ID number and an emergency phone number. If you have an accident, emergency or are taken seriously ill, you can call the 24-hour CarelinePlus team. A team member will visit the person you care for and stay with them for up to two hours.

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 as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in overpayment, which will later be reclaimed.

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

You can continue to receive Child Benefit if you are spending the benefit on the child's behalf.

Income-related and out-of-work benefits

- Severe Disability Premium/Addition stops after 28 days 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 while a person is in hospital, as long as they continue to meet the criteria. Certain parts of income-related ESA may be affected.
- Contributions-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) stops two weeks after going into hospital. However, you can be treated as being capable of, available for, and actively seeking work for up to 13 continuous weeks in any rolling 12 month period. 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'.

Disability benefits

Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Attendance Allowance (AA) normally stop after 28 days in 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.

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).

Carers UK

0808 808 7777

www.carersuk.org

Advice line conducts benefit checks and can advise on financial matters related to caring.

Croydon Welfare Rights Team

0800 731 5920 (Advice Line)

020 8663 5608 (Carers Support Centre Appointments)

www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/welfare-benefits/project

Provides advice on welfare benefits and financial support to Croydon residents who meet certain criteria. Also offers pre-booked advice surgery for carers at the Carers Support Centre. Call the number above to request an appointment.

Entitled To

www.entitledto.co.uk

Online benefits calculator to help you calculate your benefits entitlement.

Turn2us

0808 802 2000

info@turn2us.org.uk

www.turn2us.org.uk

Helps people in financial need access welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help. Website includes an online benefits calculator, a grants search database and information on all welfare benefits. Helpline provides advice to people without internet access or who need help online.

For more information on welfare benefits, see our *Money Matters* factsheet.

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 individuals of any age 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 social care professional.

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

020 8940 2575

react@reactcharity.org

www.reactcharity.org

Mobility, medical and sensory equipment, household items, education or entertainment items, hospital or travel expenses and respite breaks for children aged 0-17 with a life-limiting condition.

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

Stage One

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. When making your complaint, 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.

Advocacy for Croydon

0345 310 1812

www.advocacyforcroydon.org

Offers advocacy in Croydon, including Independent Health Complaints Advocacy. The service can support you to make a complaint about NHS services, including private healthcare settings paid for by the NHS.

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/compliments-complaints-and-feedback

Handles complaints and concerns about Croydon NHS healthcare services. Complaints can be made on behalf of the person you care for with their consent. PALS can help resolve concerns and complaints informally. To make a formal complaint, contact the Complaints team.

Healthwatch Croydon

020 8663 5648

info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

Cannot look into individual complaints but can feed into future local decision-making on health and social care services.

The Patients Association

020 8424 8999

www.patients-association.org.uk

Information, advice and signposting on health and social care, including support with complaints.

Action Against Medical Accidents (AvMA)

0845 123 2352

www.avma.org.uk

Provides independent advice and support to people affected by avoidable healthcare harm and failures in patient safety to help them achieve justice and to promote safer healthcare for all.

Stage Two

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 medical 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. Provide a discharge assessment, looking at whether the patient is eligible for NHS-funded care. This may include NHS Continuing Healthcare or reablement.

The discharge team should:

3. Consider your needs as a carer and whether you are able/willing to support the patient.
4. Create a care and support plan if the person has assessed eligible needs.
5. Provide a copy of the care plan to the patient and/or their carer.

Step one: information

Patients will only be discharged from hospital when their medical team believes are medically fit to do so. 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, if appropriate.

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 two: Discharge Assessment

Patients should be assessed to see if they need any support after they leave hospital. This may include NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), reablement or rehabilitation.

NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC)

NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) is care arranged and funded by the NHS for patients with ongoing health care needs after leaving hospital. This can include social care services as well as health services, and can be provided at home or in a care home.

If a patient 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 a patient receives CHC in a nursing home, the NHS will pay for the nursing 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 authorities.

The criteria to receive CHC is very tight. To receive CHC, a patient 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).

If a person is assessed as eligible for CHC, they will be reassessed after three months, then annually thereafter. If CHC is withdrawn, it will be done in partnership with social care to ensure there are no gaps in support. If someone is not eligible for CHC but their healthcare needs increase, they can request a re-assessment.

Assessing eligibility for CHC

There are several stages to assessing eligibility for CHC. If screened as potentially eligible, the patient will be assessed using the NHS Continuing Healthcare Checklist. If you think the person you care for may be eligible, you can also request that they receive the checklist. If the checklist suggests they might be eligible, they will receive a full assessment for CHC. Please note that the checklist may be completed after the person leaves hospital.

A CHC full assessment will be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team after the person has left hospital, typically including relevant health professionals, any carers or representatives, and a social worker. 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.) For more information on this process, contact Age UK (0800 055 6112) for a copy of their *Continuing Healthcare* factsheet.

Care and support needs

If the patient may have care and support needs when they leave hospital, the ward should refer them to the Hospital Discharge Team for a Needs Assessment. The Hospital Discharge Team can only become involved once they have received a notification of assessment from the ward.

The Hospital Discharge Team will assess the patient to see what care and support may be needed to enable them to return home. 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.

LIFE Service

If the patient may benefit from reablement or rehabilitation when they leave hospital, they will be referred to the LIFE Service. Rehabilitation and reablement services support patients with additional recovery needs who need help to regain their independence after discharge.

The LIFE Service includes community nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, health and wellbeing assessors, reablement support workers and the voluntary sector. The team also have links to specialist community health staff, including a community geriatrician and will liaise with the patient's GP and hospital consultant as necessary.

The LIFE Service supports patients who meet the following criteria:

- Are 18 or older.
- Are a Croydon resident.
- Require a health and/or social care assessment.
- Have reablement/rehabilitation potential (could benefit from support).

Patients returning to their own home must meet the following criteria:

- The person is physically safe to be left alone between visits.
- The person is cognitively safe to be left alone between visits.
- Continence can be managed throughout the day and night.
- Medication can be managed.
- Essential equipment can be put in place.

If a person may need care and support after leaving hospital, the LIFE team will do a short assessment on the ward to make sure the patient has a reablement support plan for a safe discharge from hospital, and arrange access to any physiotherapy or rehabilitation equipment they may need.

Who pays for the care?

The reablement package is funded by the NHS and should be offered free of charge to the patient for up to six weeks. If ongoing long-term care or reablement care is not suitable for the patient, then a social care service from the local authority may be offered. In this situation, the patient may be financially assessed for their ability to pay for this service.

Don't leave too soon!

Some people can be so eager to leave hospital that they want to rush through the discharge planning process. However, leaving hospital without the right support in place can create major problems. Do not feel pressured to agree to discharge before the right care is in place.



Leaving hospital without a care package

If the person you support leaves hospital without a care package, they are no longer the responsibility of the LIFE Service. Support will need to be requested from the Croydon Council Adult Social Care Team. For more details, see our *Getting Support from Social Care* factsheet.

Step three: your needs as a carer

Before the patient is discharged, the hospital should consider your needs as a carer, including whether you wish to take up or continue a caring role. They should also look at whether a full Carer's Assessment needs to be arranged. 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 four: care plan (LIFE plan)

If the patient is assessed as eligible for support after leaving hospital, a care plan (also known as a LIFE plan) will be created, explaining how their care needs will be met. The care plan should include:

- Any NHS and/or social care support that will be provided, including when and how often.
- Any support that will be provided by you as a carer (if you are willing to take on/continue with a caring role) and how you will be supported.
- Who is coordinating the care plan and who to contact in an emergency/ if services aren't meeting needs.
- How the care package will be monitored and when it will be reviewed.

Step five: deliver and monitor care plan (LIFE Service)

If the patient has been assessed as eligible for support from the LIFE Service, the LIFE team will arrange for a reablement support worker to visit the patient as soon as possible after discharge, usually within two hours of their arrival at home. The reablement support worker will help the patient settle in and ensure that they are OK.

Within two days, an assessor from the LIFE team will visit and agree a more detailed care plan with the patient and their carer. They will assess reablement potential and agree the goals to achieve over the next few weeks with the service. This includes the ability to undertake and complete everyday tasks that are needed for daily living, such as making or cooking meals and drinks, and getting washed and dressed.

The assessor will also make sure the home is as safe as possible for the patient to help them to remain independent. This could mean anything from arranging grab rails and care, to designing activities to help enhance independence.

During the short-term reablement period, the reablement support workers and the LIFE Service will monitor the patient's progress. A review should be held around week four to see how things are progressing and to ensure any agreed action takes place. This review may be a face-to-face visit or phone call. If good progress is being made and no further support will be required, then a plan will be put in place to end the package of care and to arrange a closure call or visit.

If the person needs more support after six weeks, or if reablement care is not appropriate, then care may need to be arranged via the local authority. Please note that if the person you care for receives support from the local authority, they will be financially assessed for their ability to pay for support.

All care packages during reablement should be reviewed by a LIFE worker within six weeks. If you or the person you care for feel the care package is not adequate, call LIFE on 020 8274 6399/6974, or Croydon Council on 020 8726 6500, and ask for a review.

Disputes about discharge

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. A nurse and health care assistant will be available to assist.

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.

Age UK

0800 169 6565

www.ageuk.org.uk

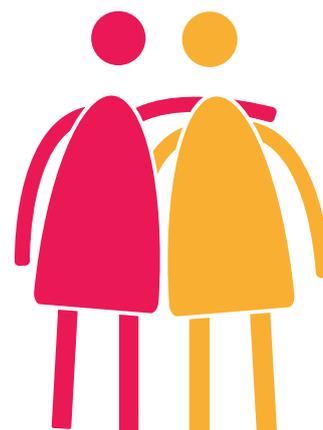
Produces a range of information guides and factsheets, including a guide on hospital discharge. Call to request a copy.

Carers UK

0808 808 7777

www.carersuk.org

Publishes *Coming Out of Hospital*. Download online or call the advice line to request a free copy.



Support after leaving hospital

Rehabilitation and reablement services support patients with additional recovery needs who need help to regain their independence after discharge. When reablement and rehabilitation are provided, the first six weeks must be free of charge. A number of voluntary organisations also offer extra help around the home and emotional support to help patients recover and increase their independence. See below for details on rehabilitation and reablement services for patients discharged from CUH.

Community Intermediate Care Service (CICS)

020 8274 6444

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-services/service/community-intermediate-care-service-68

Part of the LIFE Service. Provides rehabilitation support to discharged patients from CUH up to six weeks after discharge, funded by the NHS. If additional support is needed after six weeks within a 12 month period, the person will require a Needs Assessment by their local authority. This will also include a financial assessment to decide if they need to pay for some or all of their care costs. Make sure you cancel this care package after six weeks if support is no longer required, or you may be charged.

Croydon Support at Home

020 8401 3590 / 07739 475 733

BRCCroydonSAH@redcross.org.uk

Provides up to four weeks' of free practical and emotional support for Croydon residents aged 60 and over who have been discharged from hospital. Patients can self-refer or ask hospital staff to refer them. Please note that this service does not provide personal care or medication, and cannot provide moving and handling.

Home from Hospital and Reablement Service

020 8686 0066

asc@adviceservicescroydon.org.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk/croydon

Offers up to eight weeks' support in the home for Croydon residents aged 50 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 on the day of discharge, collecting prescriptions or GP letters, and a 'check and chat' service. Reablement Service provides support to help people develop greater independence. Activities the service can support with include improving mobility, using public transport, safely preparing meals and pursuing hobbies or community activities. Referrals to the service must be made via the adult social care team at Croydon Council or the LIFE team at CUH.

LIFE Service

020 8274 6399/6974

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-services/

[service/living-independently-for-everyone-life-services-190](http://www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-services/service/living-independently-for-everyone-life-services-190)

A combined team of health and social care professionals supporting people being discharged from hospital to recover, rehabilitate and regain greater independence. The team consists of Community Intermediate Care Service (CICS), Rapid Response and A&E Liaison (health) and Croydon Reablement Team (social care).

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 who have recently been 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 to pay for 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 the person is sectioned under a Section 3, you have the right to object to their sectioning. However, if they are sectioned under Section 2, you do not have this right.

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).
- The nearest relative should also be given seven days' notice of the end of a section or Community Treatment Order if possible.

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.

If a person detained under the Mental Health Act lacks mental capacity to make decisions and does not have a friend or family member to support them, an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) may be appointed. Mind in Croydon also has a Carers' Support Service which can provide support to the carers of people with mental health issues.

Mind

0300 123 3393

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

www.rethink.org

Advice and support for adults experiencing severe mental health problems 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.



Notes

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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Information
Service

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