

Carer Engagement 2015

**London Borough of Croydon
and
NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group**

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Executive Summary

Introduction & objectives

Carers are paramount to our health and social care economy; they help to support our vulnerable groups and they know the person they support best. Croydon Council and NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are dedicated to providing support to carers to enable them to continue caring. The Care Act 2014 places new requirements on local authorities to support and assess carers' needs. These requirements are mirrored in NHS England's Commitment to Carers 2014. This new legislation comes at a time of financial uncertainty. To help us understand the needs of carers in Croydon, this engagement exercise was conducted. The objectives were;

- a) To understand the length of time it takes carers in Croydon to recognise their caring role, and the type of support they first access
- b) To identify the needs of carers in Croydon
- c) To understand what we are doing well in Croydon for carers
- d) To identify areas for improvement to carer services in Croydon, and from this, what we should focus on over the next year

Methods

To facilitate this engagement exercise, we employed two methods of data collection; an online survey and four focus groups. Both the online survey and focus groups were designed to get feedback on the whole model of support for carers in Croydon. The online survey was coproduced with the seven organisations providing carers' support in Croydon. The four focus groups were facilitated with four different groups of carers, these were; carers in the black and minority ethnic (BME) community, carers of people with learning disabilities, carers of people with mental illnesses, and a mixed group of carers. The focus group schedule was developed and facilitated with relevant carer organisation.

Results & conclusion

In total, 170 people participated in this engagement exercise. Of these, 127 people responded to our online survey, and 43 carers attended the four focus group sessions. Results from the online survey indicated that 40% of carers in Croydon, were able to identify their caring role within six months, this was followed by 39% of carers who stated that it took between one and three years to identify themselves as a carer. Sixty three percent of carers stated that the first support service they accessed was information and advice.

Carers from this engagement recognised that there were a number of services in Croydon that were performing well, these were; the Carers' Information Service on George Street, the peer support groups, activity groups, social services, short breaks and respite, online information, lunch clubs, befriending, day centres in Croydon, the council's information and advice on direct payments and NHS information and courses.

It transpired from the focus groups that carers were unaware that the council funds the majority of services for carers in Croydon, and has chosen the independent sector to undertake this responsibility on the council's behalf. This resulted in a misconception that the council does not provide support.

When asked what Croydon could do better, eight themes transpired from the online survey, these were; better understanding of a carer's role (in health and social care), flexible opening times and borough wide access, increase respite / activity days, employment support, no need for improvement, promote current services, no support required, and increase contact with services

Recommendations

Carers from this engagement coproduced the following recommendations for Croydon:

1. For health and social care staff to have a better understanding of a caring role
2. To provide services for carers in different areas of the borough
3. To look into more flexible opening times for the Carers Information Service e.g. alternative Saturday mornings
4. To have more access to a break from caring e.g. activity days or affordable respite provision
5. To provide carers with more support in employment
6. To promote the current services provided by the council and by other organisations
7. To increase the amount of contact services have with carers where necessary
8. Follow ups from GPs for carers of people with mental illnesses
9. More training for healthcare professionals on mental health issues
10. More accessible low level mental health services (e.g. Increasing Access to Psychological Services (IAPT))
11. Being able to discuss the cared for person's information with carers e.g. set up confidentiality agreements between patients & carers in GP practices
12. Not to reduce funding to carers support services
13. More translation of information materials into other languages
14. Better continuity of social services' staff
15. More direct payments for carers
16. More activities for carers & the people they support
17. Better council branding on commissioned services

Introduction

Croydon has supported services for unpaid carers across the borough for a number of years; recognising the importance of carers within the community and their role in supporting people with health and social care needs. On 1st April 2015, the Care Act helped strengthen Croydon's commitment to carers by providing local authorities in England with a legal responsibility to assess the needs of carers, support their eligible needs and promote their wellbeing. In addition to this, the NHS has pledged its support to carers, with the publication of the NHS England's Commitment to Carers 2014, and the NHS Five Year Forward View 2014 (NHS England, 2014a; NHS England, 2014b). Both these documents recognise the role of a carer as an expert by experience and the need to engage with and support them.

The Care Act has provided a new definition for the term carer; a carer is now defined as *"an adult who provides or intends to provide care for an adult needing care... [who] is not under or by virtue of a contract, or as [part of] voluntary work."* (Care Act 2014, p.10)

This change in legislation comes at a time when council and NHS resources are faced with new financial challenges and opportunities to change the way they work. Croydon Council alone has £100 million of savings to make over the next three years.

The 2011 census shows that there are currently six million unpaid carers in England and Wales. Unpaid carers save the UK economy £119 billion per annum (University of Leeds, 2011). The State of Caring survey last year reported that 82% of carers report that caring negatively impacts on their health (Carers UK, 2015). Providing support to unpaid carers is the best way to help prevent a care breakdown, which can result in an emergency admission for the cared for person and/or the carer (RCGP, 2013b). Moreover, new research indicates that for every £1 spend on carers, creates £4 of long-term cost savings (RCGP, 2015). Approximately 6,000 carers transition into and out of a caring role annually (RCGP, 2013b). In Croydon, there are 33,683 carers, which makes up 10% of the total population of Croydon; this is higher than many other London boroughs including Merton, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (ONS, 2011).

In Croydon, the council and NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) conducted an engagement exercise with local carers and those with an interest in carers to better understand the needs of carers in Croydon and to see if our current provision of commissioned services is meeting carers' needs in addition to the services independent of Croydon Council and NHS Croydon CCG. To do this, we worked with The Whitgift Foundation's Cares' Information Service, which runs the Carers' Support Centre, Mind in Croydon, Croydon Mencap, Croydon Parents in Partnership, Horizon Care and Welfare Association, Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (CNCA), and South Thames Crossroads Care.

This engagement is focussed on the following groups of carers; adult carers, carers of people with mental illnesses, carers of older people, black and minority ethnic carers (BME), and carers of people with a learning disability. Young carers and young adult carers are therefore outside the scope of this report and it was decided that they would be invited to a separate engagement. It should also be noted that the recommendations generated in this report are from carers, and will be used by the council and CCG to aid the development of their work plans. After consultation with the independent sector, the following objectives were developed.

Objectives

- a) To understand the length of time it takes carers in Croydon to recognise their caring role, and the type of support they first access
- b) To identify the needs of carers in Croydon
- c) To understand what we are doing well in Croydon for carers
- d) To identify areas for improvement to carer services in Croydon, and from this, what we should focus on over the next year

Methods

To facilitate this engagement exercise, we employed two methods of data collection; an online survey and four focus groups. Instead of focusing on the NHS Croydon CCG's and Croydon Council's commissioned services, both the online survey and focus groups were designed to get feedback on the whole model of support for carers in Croydon. This therefore reduces confusion of participants having to differentiate between a commissioned service and a non commissioned service, in addition to this; it enables us to develop a better picture of the support network available to carers in Croydon, thus allowing any potential gaps to be identified.

The online survey was coproduced with the seven organisations providing carers' support in Croydon (Carers' Information Service, Mind in Croydon, Croydon Mencap, Croydon Parents in Partnership, Horizon Care and Welfare Association, CNCA, and South Thames Crossroads Care) and was conducted for a 16 day period in August 2015. To increase uptake, the seven carer organisations disseminated the online survey link out to their client databases, this included the 2,053 carers registered with the Carers' Information Service for their electronic newsletter and CNCA facilitating this survey to their carers who receive telephone befriending. All responses were anonymous and to encourage people to complete the survey and to reduce the number of questions asked. In addition to this, the survey design was kept short and as unobtrusive as possible as it was noted that some carers in Croydon may have already responded to a statutory survey this year from the Department of Health. The survey utilised a mixture of multiple choice and open questions. A copy of the survey schedule is in appendix one.

In addition to the online survey, four focus groups were facilitated with four different groups of carers, these were; carers in the black and minority ethnic (BME) community, carers of people with learning disabilities, carers of people with mental illnesses, and a mixed group of carers. The focus groups were held at existing carers' groups to increase participation rates and to ensure that the views of those who would not usually engage with the local authority were heard. The focus group schedule was coproduced with the seven carer organisations in Croydon and the groups were either facilitated by the council or co-facilitated by the council and a third sector representative. They were designed to be semi-structured, therefore allowing the facilitator to adapt to each individual situation, see appendix two for an example of the schedule. The focus groups utilised an impact versus feasibility matrix, in order to allow carers the opportunity to select areas for improvement that they want the council to focus on; by deciding which would have the greatest impact on their caring role, and which suggestion would be feasible given the current climate. The recommendations in this report have therefore been generated by carers in Croydon.

Results and discussion

In total, 170 people participated in this engagement exercise. Of these, 127 people responded to our online survey, and 43 carers attended the four focus group sessions; see table one for a breakdown of focus group attendees and those who responded to the online survey.

Table one – engagement respondents

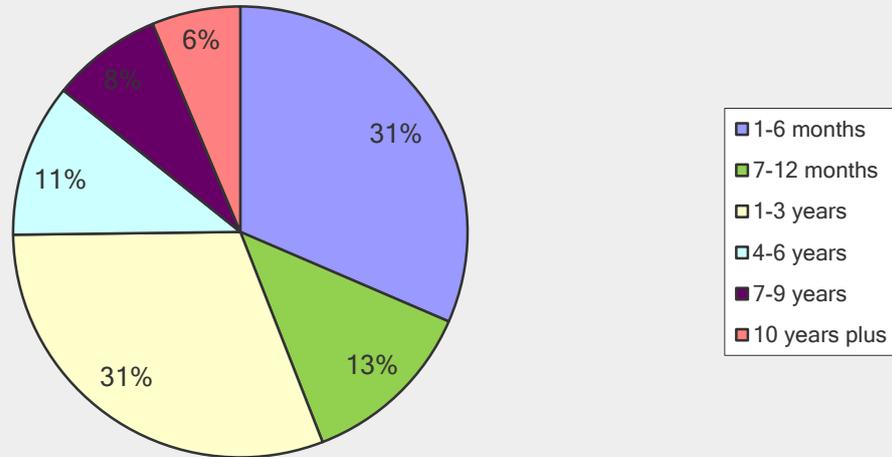
Carer type	Number of attendees/respondents
Mixed carers	15
Carers from the BME community	9
Carers of people with mental illnesses	8
Carers of people with learning disabilities	11
Total	43
Online respondents	127
Engagement total	170

Online survey results

The following results are from the 127 people in Croydon who responded to the online carers' survey. These results help to answer the objectives of this report which are to; a) to understand the length of time it takes carers in Croydon to recognise their caring role, and the type of support they first access; b) to identify the needs of carers in Croydon; c) to understand what we are doing well in Croydon for carers; d) to identify areas for improvement to carer services in Croydon.

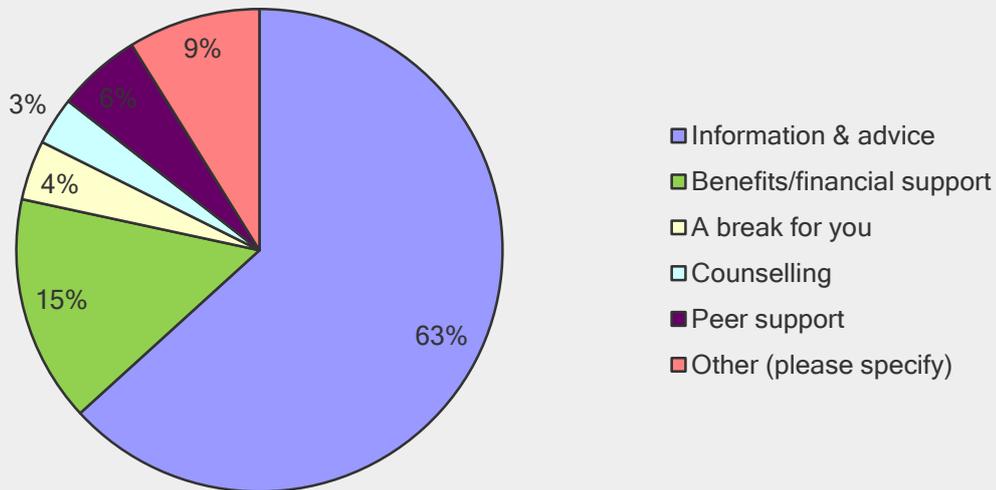
The majority of carers who responded (40%), were able to identify their caring role within six months, this was followed by 39% of carers who stated that it took between one and three years to identify themselves as a carer. Nationally, this figure is an average of two years (Carers Trust Cambridgeshire, 2015), which indicates that these carers in Croydon are identifying themselves as carers more quickly than the national average; this could be due to better information and advice from healthcare professionals, third sector colleagues and on print & online media in Croydon than is available nationally. See figure one for a full breakdown of the length of time it took these carers in Croydon to identify as a carer. Of these carers, 18% stated that they were informed about their caring role from a friend, 24% were informed by a medical professional (e.g. nurse, GP or other doctor), 9% found out from the Carers' Information Service, 17% stated from another social care support organisation, and 17% self-identified themselves as carers.

Figure one - How long did it take you to realise that you were a carer?



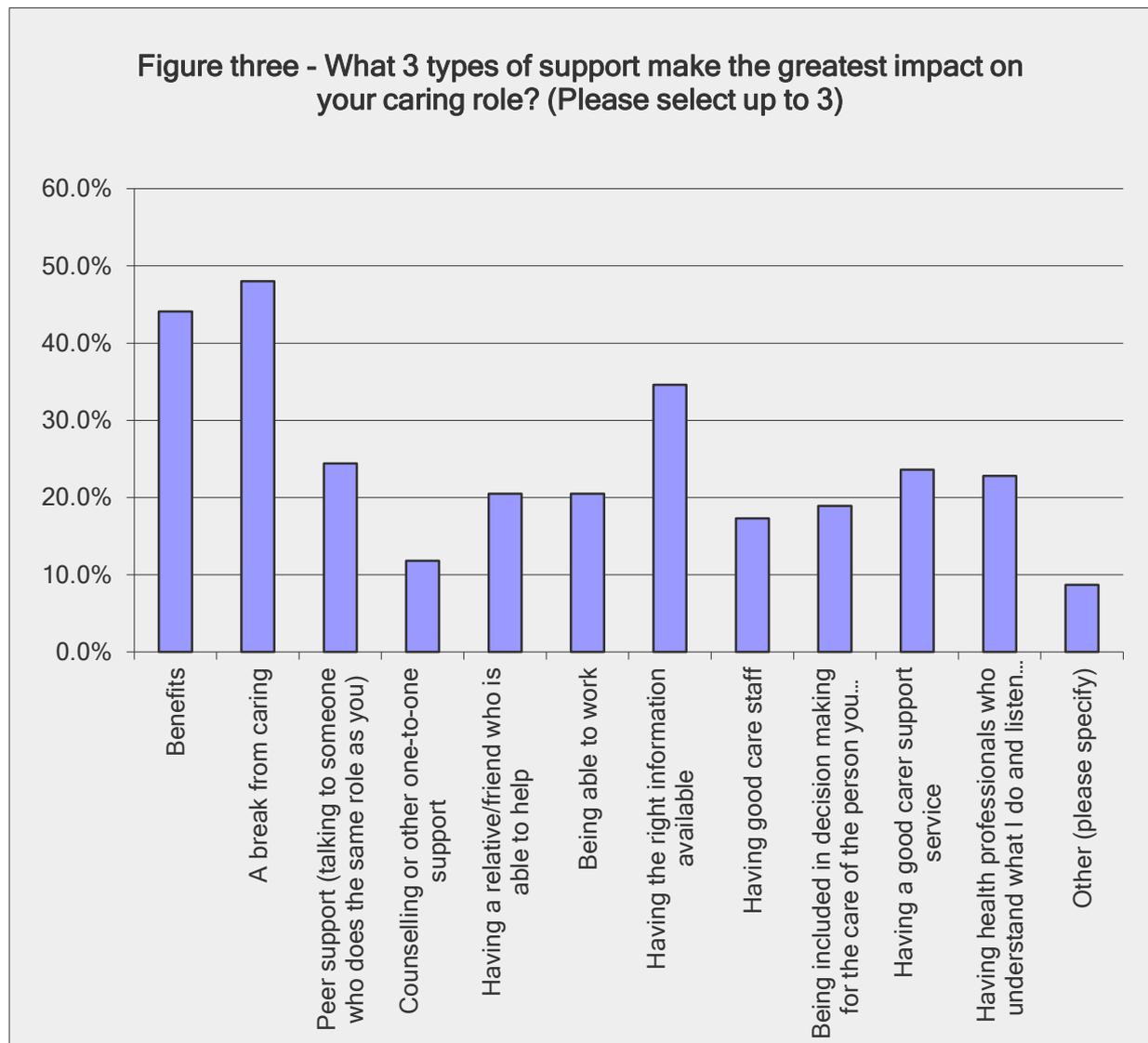
When asked what the first service was that carers accessed when seeking support, 63% of respondents stated that they first tried to access information and advice, thus highlighting the importance of our online information and advice, and our Carers' Information Service. See figure two for a full breakdown of responses.

Figure two - What type of support did you first try to access?



Further to this, when asked the three main types of support that make the greatest impact on their caring role, these carers stated that benefits (44%), a break from caring (48%) and having the right information (35%) had the greatest impact. This relates closely to the *Making it Real for Carers* guidance, which states that carers want timely access to information and advice, reliable support staff and the ability to manage their own finances and have access to the right financial support

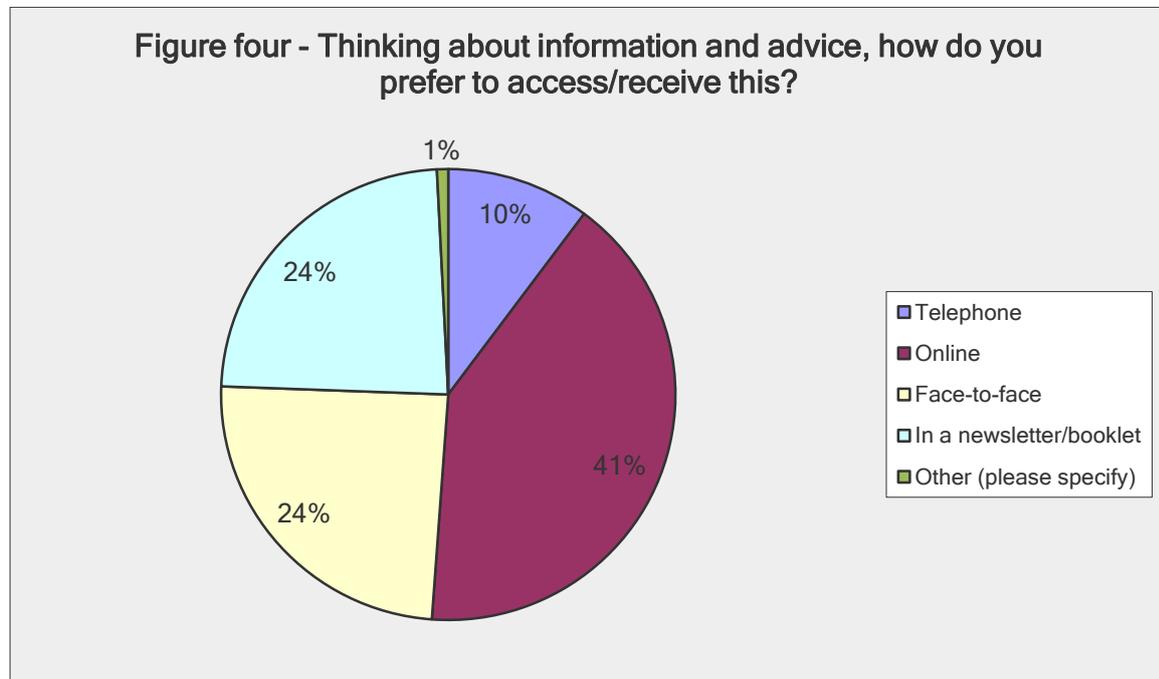
(ADASS, 2013). See figure three for other types of support that carers find have a great impact on their caring role. Further to this, when asked for their preferred time for the Carers' Information Service to be open, 8% stated that Saturday morning would be preferable, 9% stated weekday evenings and 74% preferred its current opening schedule.



The term 'break from caring' can be an ambiguous one, with different meanings to carers, commissioners and healthcare professionals. As it is known that a break for carers is an important part of their support, carers were asked for their perception of this term. From this, the majority of carers stated that a break was defined as having a couple of hours for themselves (77%), while 52% stated that having replacement care was their definition of a break, and 45% said that meeting a friend or other peer support was a break. Moreover, 22% of these carers felt that either a day trip or weekend away with the person they support would be considered a break, and 26% said going on a course is a break.

Interestingly, when asked how they prefer to access information and advice, 41% stated that their preferred medium was online, while 24% stated that they preferred a newsletter or booklet, and a further 24% preferred a face-to-face consultation. It should be noted however, that whilst the most

popular preference for receiving information and advice in this group is via the internet, the majority of this cohort of respondents completing this online survey will most probably have a good level of computer literacy, and a cohort of people with limited or no computer literacy, may well respond differently when asked this question.



When asked if “The services available for carers in Croydon are enough to meet my needs” and “I feel supported within my community (e.g. by friends, family, GP, carer services)”, on average carers responded neutrally to both (neither agreed nor disagreed), which is neither good news nor bad news for our support network for carers in Croydon. Carers were then asked to make any recommendations on how we can improve our services in a free text box. Thematic analysis was used to group these responses, see table two for these results. It should be noted that all of these responses were unprompted.

Table two – Responses to what Croydon can do better.

Theme	Response count	Description
1. Better understanding of a carer’s role	15	This themes is especially pertinent following the Care Act 2014; carers want to be recognised by healthcare professionals, have their needs understood and have their opinions taken into consideration. This knowledge can be helpful to healthcare professionals as carers know the person they support best. Fifteen percent of carers stated healthcare professionals should have a better understanding of a carer’s role. For examples, carers

	<p>stated:</p> <p><i>“I think people should make more time for carers and understand what we have to go through and how much stress we are under and how it can affect our health.”</i></p> <p><i>“See the carer as an equal/important member of the caring team.”</i></p> <p>Unfortunately, this theme is not unfamiliar. In 2014 Carers UK reported that 19% of their respondents felt that their caring role was not recognised by healthcare professionals, however, they also found that 20% of carers found that hospital staff valued and recognised their role.</p>
<p>2. Flexible opening times & borough wide access</p>	<p>11</p> <p>This theme is in relation to the opening times of the Carers’ Information Service and other support services. Here 11% of carers stated that they would like the Carers’ Support Centre to be open alternative Saturdays, on the weekends or open for longer during the week, as this will help carers who work. In addition to this, carers stated that they would like services to be available across the borough and not just in the centre, for example, one carer said:</p> <p><i>“Please could you run some things outside the town centre, where there is free parking. I hardly ever come into Croydon anymore because of the cost [of parking], so I’m never just passing.”</i></p> <p>This theme links with the <i>Making it Real for Carers</i> guidance regarding the flexibility of support for carers (2013). It is well known that carers mainly look for help and support at a time of crisis, so it is imperative that they have access to information and advice when they need it.</p>
<p>3. Increase respite / activity days</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Carers want to be able to take a break from their caring role. Eighteen percent of respondents stated that in Croydon, there could be an increase in the provision of respite and/or activity days. These include; day centres, activity days, activity groups, short breaks, affordable respite. For example, one carer wrote:</p> <p><i>“Affordable respite care. Continue groups/activities for carers”</i></p> <p>This finding complements the Think Local Act Personal guidance <i>Making it Real for Carers</i> (2013), specifically the three themes; active & supportive communities, flexible & integrated support, and having a reliable workforce.</p>
<p>Carers want to be able to return to work after caring or to be able</p>	

<p>4. Employment support</p> <p>4</p>	<p>to work part or full time whilst managing caring responsibilities. To do this, carers need understanding employers, who value their contribution, whilst recognising the need for flexible working. This links with the <i>Making it Real</i> guidance for carers which shows that carers want active and supportive communities; being able to care and continue their personal life. For example, one carer stated that they would like to see:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“More advocacy and support re career development. Organisations that will employ carers on a voluntary or permanent basis.”</i></p> <p>Employment can be particularly important and useful for carers, in Croydon, 77% of our carers are between 18 and 64 years old, and therefore considered working age adults (Carers’ Information Service, 2015). This links with national evidence which suggests that 62% of carers are aged between 45 and 64 years of age, and 31% of carers are in paid work (Carers UK, 2015).</p>
<p>5. No need for improvement</p> <p>10</p>	<p>This theme indicates that at the time of this survey 10% of carers feel that the current services provided in Croydon are enough to meet their needs for support. Below are some positive quotes from carers:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I’m happy with the services offered.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“You do a good job.”</i></p>
<p>6. Promote current services</p> <p>17</p>	<p>This theme links with themes 1, 2, 3 and 7; promoting services will help healthcare professionals better understand the role of carers, it may enable carers to find services that they are able to attend, provide them with information regarding activity days or information and advice that they were otherwise unaware, which could make a positive impact on a carer’s role. This theme was indicated by 17% of respondents, either due to stating that better promotion of services should exist, or asking for services that are already provided, which they would know about if they were better promoted. For example, carers stated:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Contact me with the information on training.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Publicise what is available.”</i></p> <p>Training is already available through the Carers’ Information Service; therefore better promotion would have prevented this response.</p>

7. No support required	3	A small number of people stated that they do not require any support from health, social care or the Carers' Information Service. Indicating that at this time, these carers have access to all the information, advice and family support that they require in order to undertake their caring role.
8. Increased contact with services	5	<p>Some carers want to have more contact with services or to have a named worker to provide them with support. This themes links closely with the research identified from the <i>Making it Real</i> (2013) guidance around flexible integrated care and support; my support, my own way, which shows that carers would like a named worker, or someone to keep in touch to check on their situation. For example, one carer stated:</p> <p><i>"It would have been helpful if someone telephoned to check on our situation occasionally."</i></p>

Recommendations from the online survey

From this online survey, carers in Croydon would like the following recommendations:

1. •For health and social care staff to have a better understanding of a caring role
2. •To provide services for carers in different areas of the borough
3. •To look into more flexible opening times for the Carers' Support Centre e.g. alternative Saturday mornings
4. •To have more access to a break from caring e.g. activity days or affordable respite provision
5. •To provide carers with more support in employment
6. •To increase promotion of the current services provided by the council and by other organisations
7. •To increase the amount of contact services have with carers where necessary

Focus group results & recommendations

A summary of each focus group is below, these have been split into the four client groups, these are; mental health, learning disabilities, BME carers, and mixed carers. These results help to answer the objectives of this report which are to; a) to understand the length of time it takes carers in Croydon to recognise their caring role, and the type of support they first access; b) to identify the needs of carers in Croydon; c) to understand what we are doing well in Croydon for carers; d) to identify areas for improvement to carer services in Croydon. As seen with the online survey results above, a number of the recommendations from the focus groups link with the national guidance documents such as *Making it Real for Carers* (ADASS, 2013), *NHS England's Commitment to Carers* (NHS England, 2014a) and *Supporting Carers in General Practice* (RCGP, 2013b).

Mental health carers

The group discussed the length of time it took to realise that they had a caring role. This ranged from knowing instantly; to between 5 years and 38 years, with some saying that they do not define themselves as a carer as they are simply doing their role of a parent, wife or husband. Interestingly, one carer explained to the group how they realised they were a carer; that is was not until a healthcare professional asked them how they were, that they realised they had a recognised role. When asked the first type of support that was accessed, carers stated their GP, a third sector organisation (such as Mind or Rethink), self-help books or the local authority.

Following this, the group discussed the types of support that have the greatest impact on their role, the three most significant were; peer support, a couple of hours 'me time' e.g. reading, walking, the gym, and activity groups such as singing, arts or exercise classes. The group discussed the positive support services in Croydon, these were;



The group then discussed the gaps in Croydon, or where we can improve our services. The carers discussed what would have the greatest impact on their role as a carer, whilst being feasible to achieve, the suggestions for the coming year were:

8. •Follow ups from GPs for carers of people with mental illnesses
9. •More training for healthcare professionals on mental health issues
10. •More accessible low level mental health services (e.g. Increasing Access to Psychological Services (IAPT))
11. •Being able to discuss the cared for person's information with carers e.g. set up confidentiality agreements between patients & carers in GP practices

Learning disability

The group started by discussed how long it took to identify as a carer. This ranged from between less than 1 year to over 20 years. Some carers did not define themselves as carers as they are just doing the role of a parent. When asked for the first type of support that they accessed, many stated that Mencap was the first type of support service they accessed for themselves, and the majority of carers stated that benefits were the first type of support that was accessed.

Following from this, carers discussed the three types of support that have the greatest impact on their caring role, these were; having the right information, a break from caring, and activity days for carers and the cared for person. When asked to discuss what services in Croydon are good, carers said the following were good services:



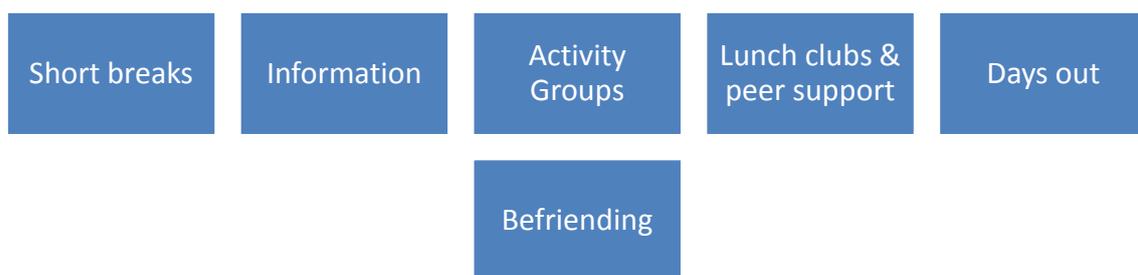
The group then discussed the gaps in Croydon, or where we can improve services. The carers discussed what would have the greatest impact on their role as a carer, whilst being feasible to achieve, the suggestions for the coming year were:

- 12. •Not to reduce funding to carers support services

Black & minority ethnic carers

When discussing the length of time it takes to identify as a carer, the group agreed that it can take a number of years, with some stating that they do not consider themselves as carers. This correlates strongly with national evidence which suggests that carers do not like the term ‘carer’ and believe that it detracts from their identity as son, daughters, parents, partners, siblings or friends (RCGP, 2013a). Carers stated that the first type of support they accessed was either their GP or social services. Following this, they accessed peer support or local community services. When asked what the types of services were that had the greatest impact on their caring role, carers stated that these were; a break from caring, having the right information available, and good social services.

After discussing the services available in Croydon, the carers agreed that the following were examples of good services in Croydon:



From this, the carers discussed the gaps in the current model, and the areas that should be focused on within the next year. These ideas were compared against feasibility and the impact on their caring role. Carers suggested that the council should focus on the following:

- 4. • To have more access to a break from caring e.g. activity days or affordable respite provision
- 6. • To increase promotion of the current services provided by the council and by other organisations
- 13. • More translation of information materials

Mixed carers group

The group discussed the length of time it took to identify themselves as a carer, this varied from between a few months to a few years. One carer stated how she did not like be called a carer, as she was fulfilling a role in life. Carers then considered the first type of service they accessed, this ranged from, information and advice, to their GP or social services. When discussing the types of support that had the most impact on their caring role, the three main forms were; information & advice, peer support, and respite. The group then discussed the support services in Croydon that they found useful, these were;



Following this, the group then discussed the main areas that should be focussed on in the next twelve months, these were;

- 14. • Better continuity of social services' staff
- 15. • More direct payments for carers
- 16. • More activities for carers & the people they support

Conclusion

In total, this engagement has had responses from 170 carers who provide support in the London Borough of Croydon. Of these, 127 responded to the online survey and 43 carers attended the carer focus groups that were hosted a co-facilitated by; Mind in Croydon, Horizon Care and Welfare Association, Croydon Mencap, and South Thames Crossroads Care.

Results from the online survey indicated that 40% of carers in Croydon, were able to identify their caring role within six months, this was followed by 39% of carers who stated that it took between one and three years to identify themselves as a carer. Nationally, this figure is an average of two years (Carers Trust Cambridgeshire, 2015), thus carers in Croydon appear to be able to identify themselves more quickly than their national counterparts, this could be due to the information and advice available in the borough and/or the signposting from our health and social care professionals.

Interestingly, from the focus groups, carers of people with mental illnesses, took between 5 and 38 years to identify, this could perhaps be due to them supporting someone without a visible illness.

However all caring groups acknowledged that they may not necessarily recognised themselves as carers, as they are simply fulfilling their roles as siblings, sons, daughters, parents and/or spouses; the term carer is more affiliated with healthcare professionals, rather than the carers themselves. From the survey, 18% of carers stated that they were informed about their caring role from a friend, 24% were informed by a medical professional (e.g. nurse, GP or other doctor) and 9% found out from the Carers' Information Service.

Sixty three percent of carers stated that the first support service they accessed was information and advice. Forty one percent of carers stated that they preferred to access information and advice online, while 24% stated that they preferred a newsletter or booklet, and a further 24% preferred a face-to-face consultation. The accompanying focus groups identified that carers are very happy with the Carers Information Service, and with the online information available for carers. Having this information available to carers when they need it is essential, as we know that without support, there could be a breakdown in care (RCGP, 2013a; RCGP, 2013b). It is therefore positive to hear that in Croydon, we are meeting this need for this cohort. Other types of support that were considered important were; benefits, peer support and access to a break from caring.

Carers from this engagement recognised that there were a number of services in Croydon that were performing well and that they were happy with, these were; the Carers' Information Service on George Street, the peer support groups, activity groups, social services, short breaks and respite, online information, lunch clubs, befriending, day centres in Croydon, the council's information and advice on direct payments and NHS information and courses. Interestingly, there was some confusion over how much support Croydon Council provides to carers. This could have arisen from carers not knowing that the council funds the majority of services for carers in Croydon, and has chosen the independent sector to undertake this responsibility on the council's behalf.

When asked what Croydon could do better, eight themes transpired from the online survey, these were; better understanding of a carer's role (in health and social care), flexible opening times and borough wide access, increase respite / activity days, employment support, no need for improvement, promote current services, no support required, and increase contact with services. These, in addition to the recommendations developed with carers at the focus groups, led to the development of the recommendations for future practice.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the carers in this engagement are:

1. •For health and social care staff to have a better understanding of a caring role
2. •To provide services for carers in different areas of the borough
3. •To look into more flexible opening times for the Carers' Support Centre e.g. alternative Saturday mornings
4. •To have more access to a break from caring e.g. activity days or affordable respite provision
5. •To provide carers with more support in employment
6. •To promote the current services provided by the council and by other organisations
7. •To increase the amount of contact services have with carers where necessary
8. •Follow ups from GPs for carers of people with mental illnesses
9. •More training for healthcare professionals on mental health issues
10. •More accessible low level mental health services (e.g. Increasing Access to Psychological Services (IAPT))
11. •Being able to discuss the cared for person's information with carers e.g. set up confidentiality agreements between patients & carers in GP practices
12. •Not to reduce funding to carers support services
13. •More translation of information materials into other languages
14. •Better continuity of social services' staff
15. •More direct payments for carers
16. • More activities for carers & the people they support
17. •Better council branding on commissioned services

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Appendix One – Online Survey

This year is an exciting time for carers. The Care Act has put carers firmly on the agenda, with local authorities having a duty to assess carers' needs and support their eligible needs. London Borough of Croydon are currently reviewing their services for carers, and would greatly appreciate your feedback. Your comments will help shape the services that are commissioned by the council and therefore help to support other carers. Please could you spend a few minutes completing our short survey. The survey has 10 questions. Your response is completely anonymous as we will not ask for any of your personal information. Thank you for taking part in this survey.

1. How long did it take you to realise that you were a carer?

- 1-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10 years plus

2. How did you realise that you were a carer?

- A friend told me
- My GP told me
- A hospital consultant/doctor told me
- A nurse told me
- I read about it online
- The Carers' Support Centre informed me
- Other (please specify)

3. What type of support did you first try to access?

- Information & advice
- Benefits/financial support
- A break for you
- Counselling
- Peer support
- Other (please specify)

4. What 3 types of support make the greatest impact on your caring role? (Please select up to 3)

- Benefits
- A break from caring
- Peer support (talking to someone who does the same role as you)
- Counselling or other one-to-one support
- Having a relative/friend who is able to help
- Being able to work
- Having the right information available
- Having good care staff
- Being included in decision making for the care of the person you support
- Having a good carer support service
- Having health professionals who understand what I do and listen to me
- Other (please specify)

5. What would you describe as a break? (Select as many options that apply.)

- Going on a training course
- Replacement care (a break from caring)
- Going away for a weekend (with the person you support)
- Going on a day trip (with the person you support)
- Going to counselling
- Other one-to-one support
- Meeting up with a friend or other peer support
- Having a few hours for you
- Other (please specify)

6. Thinking about the Carers Support Centre on George Street, when is the most convenient time for you to contact/visit the centre? (Please select only 1 option)

- Monday – Friday 10:00 – 16:00
- Monday – Friday 16:00 – 18:00
- Monday – Friday 18:00 – 20:00
- Saturday morning 10:00 – 13:00

7. Thinking about information and advice, how do you prefer to access/receive this? (Please select only 1 option.)

- Telephone
- Online
- Face-to-face
- In a newsletter/booklet
- Other (please specify)

8. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The services available for carers in Croydon are enough to meet my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported within my community (e.g. by friends, family, GP, carer services).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please explain your answer.

10. What could we do better?

Appendix Two – Focus Group Schedule

Carers' Focus Group

1. How long did it take you to realise that you were a carer?

Facilitator's note: open question to the group, note down responses on flipchart

2. What type of support did you first try to access? E.g. Information & advice, help accessing benefit, a break for you, counselling

Facilitator's note: hand out post it notes, collect responses on a flipchart

3. What 3 types of support make the greatest impact on your caring role?

Facilitator's note: collect responses on flipchart, tally results

- Benefits
- A break from caring
- Peer support (talking to someone who does the same role as you)
- Counselling or other one-to-one support
- Having a relative/friend who is able to help
- Being able to work
- Having the right information available
- Having good care staff
- Being included in decision making for the care of the person you support
- Having health professionals who understand what I do and listen to me

4. What is missing in Croydon & what are we doing well?

Facilitator's note: hand out post it notes, draw a table on the flipchart, allow people to stick suggestions on the flipchart.

5. Given the current financial environment for local authorities in England, what do you think the council should provide for carers? What should we prioritise?

Facilitator's note: Use matrix below on a flipchart, use post it notes collected in question 4 (or create new ones) and allow the group to decide what recommendations they would make in Croydon.

