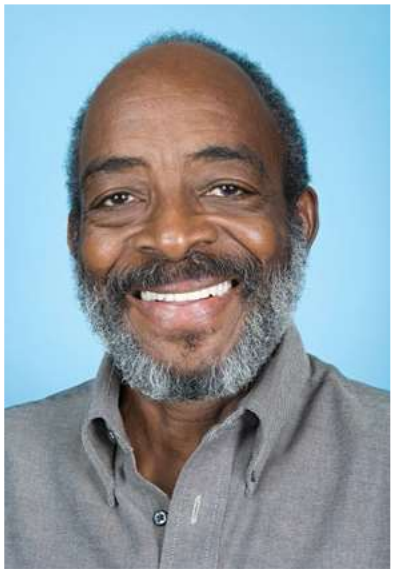
Croydon Carers' Strategy 2018 - 2022











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Acknowledgements

Croydon Council and NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group would like to give a huge thank you to the 239 carers, professionals and stakeholders that helped to co-produce the outcomes, commissioning intentions and work plan in this strategy.

In addition to this, we would also like to thank Croydon Off the Record, Croydon Mencap, Mind in Croydon, The Whitgift Foundation Carers' Information Service, the Alzheimer's Society, Parents in Partnership and Horizon Care & Welfare Association for co-facilitating the workshops and to the Carers Partnership Group in Croydon for their continued input into this strategy and to achieving positive outcomes for carers.

Prepared by: Stephen Bahooshy,
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Date: March 2018

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Helen Thompson
Manager, Carers Support Centre

I am confident that this strategy has been informed by the voice of Croydon's carers and that it recognises the diversity of carers' individual experiences and the support they need. When carers are asked to share their personal experiences and offer feedback on services, it is vital that those who commission and deliver services respect this voice and ensure that it remains at the heart of service delivery.

The strategy demonstrates this commitment, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside our colleagues and most importantly, carers, to ensure that this strategy is put into practice over the next five years.

Carers' Forewords

Roxanna Kishore-Bigord

Parent carer from the Parents in Partnership Forum

Although most parents can understand the caring responsibility that comes with having children, only a few truly understand what it is like to have your life changed drastically overnight. With a sudden illness striking my son in the summer of 2014, I was propelled into a life of round the clock caring, watching and worrying as his condition deteriorated.

The status quo faced daily is the strain of living with the unknown. How to juggle? How to cope? What to do? Is this going to get better? What does the future hold?

The Carers Strategy is a step in the right direction with regards to providing support and there is still more that can be done to ensure the pathway to navigate support and services is more user friendly to those who need it so desperately.

By taking part in consultations regarding the Carers Strategy I hope that I was able to share the concerns, hopes and visions of myself and of all carers. In time I hope this will make a real shift in how the cared for person and the carer are supported in Croydon.

I am an active member of the community, attending a number of different meetings supporting the local authority and third sector organisations. I frequently hear how Croydon looks at other boroughs to see what they are doing and how we can learn from them. I believe this strategy will be the start for the London Borough of Croydon to be the borough that people look to for guidance and advice on how to engage with carers and how to coproduce and deliver a strategy effectively.

Patricia Knight

Carer and member of the Carers' Partnership Group

As a carer member of the Carers Partnership Group I feel honoured to be asked to write an introduction to the strategy. I would first like to thank and congratulate all the carers who gave their time and volunteered their expertise to participate and make key recommendations.

When, a few years ago, my husband developed symptoms of dementia, I already had some knowledge of this devastating illness. But I would have faced difficulties had we not had a GP who made an immediate referral to an agency which, together with the Alzheimer's Society provided invaluable support in the following months.

I hesitate to single out specific areas among so many equally important recommendations, but would like to highlight financial support, respite, young carers and employment rights where I hope work will continue with employers to establish policies for carers at work.

I would like to conclude by endorsing the recommendations and action plan. For the strategy to succeed, carers, who best know the challenges of their role, must be central to its implementation.

Nicky Selwyn

Family carer representative, Learning Disability Partnership Board

Carers are a diverse bunch of people, as are the people we care for. Many of the challenges we face are similar, but our life stages, personal circumstances and our caring responsibilities may be very different. I am pleased that this strategy recognises that fact and acknowledges that 'one size doesn't fit all.' I appreciate the work that has gone into producing this strategy, above all the real focus on working co-productively with carers. This has meant that the strategy has genuinely been informed by the views and experiences of those on whom it will most impact. I look forward to seeing carers and professionals continue to work together to implement the action plan, as well as to evaluate the outcomes of the plan and of the commissioning principles.

Carers' Forewords

Freda Pearce

Parent carer representing Croydon Mencap and the Learning Disability Partnership Board

An excellent and in-depth report on Croydon Carers Strategy. A mammoth exercise where one hopes the recommendations can be achieved. We are already heading in the right direction, for instance we now have Walk in Our Shoes and carers' help and advice centres.

In addition to this, in Croydon we have a project to support young people with a learning disability to engage with others, learn new skills, support them into work and to engage with local organisations and business to promote learning disability awareness.

This report refers to carers and therefore we must remember to:

- Listen to carers
- Provide training for all NHS staff and carers.
- Undertake carer assessments

I hope that this strategy will result in improved health and wellbeing for both carers and the person they support.

Huda Ibrahim

Carer representative from Horizon Care & Welfare Association's Carer Support Service for black & minority ethnic carers.

I have participated in the discussion meetings conducted at Horizon Care & Welfare Association office along with a group of carers and suggested ways in which the services available for carers can be improved and how this improvement will be implemented. This has been my first experience in which I have participated in a focus group where we had a voice and a say and contributed to issues we believed needed to be addressed.

It has been a positive experience where our thoughts and ideas were taken into consideration. I have also gained an insight of the various services available for carers such as myself where we can get support.

Alfonso Greenbrook

Young carer, Off the Record

Having reviewed the draft for the Carers Strategy, and having had input at the young carers consultation group, I've determined that – from what I've read – the report would cater for all carers needs over the next four years. Personally, the introduction of working with general practices (GPs) to identify carers earlier is valuable, as this collaborative working will allow carers to access services easier and to be directed where to go to get them.

Providing more flexible opening times for the carers support centre is important as it allows carers to access services at a time which could be better and easier for them. Looking into opening on Saturday mornings will allow those at work or school during the week to access services easily. Different areas of the borough currently don't have services in the local area for carers, young and old, to use. By introducing services around the borough, carers (who may not live near Croydon town centre) will be able to access services easier without the trouble of travelling into central Croydon.

In addition, consultation groups will allow service users to be involved in the planning, design, monitoring and evaluation of services. This will allow users to shape the services they use.

Jonathan Mooney

Young adult carer, Off the Record

I was glad to see that there would be more support regarding employment, as leaving school to look for work with an already tight schedule can put a lot of stress on a young carer. I also agree with the fact that more will be done to help schools, colleges and the workplace understand what being a carer means and what they can do to help or understand the situation. I am happy to hear that more will be done in the advice clinics to help with things such as CVs and applications whether that be for work or legal documents. Personally I found that the help with my CV was invaluable as it finally set me up for helping get my first job and boosted my confidence regarding what I had done in my life so far in terms of skills.

Generally Young Carers has been a great use to me, it gives me a source of escape and support I'm grateful to have. It's a great service and has helped me in so many ways it's unbelievable, I would recommend to anyone who is a carer in a heartbeat.

Councillors' Forewords



Carers in Croydon provide a fundamental role within our local community. Many provide support to a parent, grandparent, sibling, son or daughter, friend or neighbour. They often go unrecognised for their invaluable support, for which Croydon Council is grateful. Carers often do not realise they are carers and they can come from any background. Frequently, carers balance busy schedules of work and/or school or education, home life and caring for a person who needs their support. They may do this daily or weekly and it may extend to many hours of support for the cared for person.

Caring can be at times stressful but it can also be very rewarding to the carer and the cared for person. Carers often provide better care than can be provided by a care worker, as they know the cared for person best. They are experts in their field and often they are the person whom the cared for person would prefer to be supported by.

It is important that we support our carers to continue supporting the cared for person. Supporting carers can reduce their stress and anxiety, and can enable them to increase their social networks, as caring can sometimes feel quite isolating to a carer. Initiatives such as peer support groups, activity groups, exercise groups, one-to-one support, and information, advice and guidance can be hugely supportive to carers, which is why in Croydon we are committed to funding these initiatives. We have an excellent Carers Support Centre on George Street, which is regularly used by carers and acts as a hub for various services to be based, such as legal advice, benefits advice, health and wellbeing advice, carer assessments, mental health support, and many more.

By working together we believe that we can deliver the outcomes identified within this strategy which has been coproduced by so many carers in Croydon. I would like to thank all of those who have given their valuable time to help shape this strategy. This strategy sets out our plans for funding services over the next five years and also the work we need to do in partnership with other organisations to ensure that our carers are best supported in school, college, university, employment, home and leisure.

Councillor Louisa Woodley
Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care



Young people are the future of Croydon. Often young carers and young adult carers juggle their caring role with school, college, education or work. This can mean that they miss out on social activities that their peers do not.

In Croydon we are committed to supporting young carers and young adult carers. Through a charitable organisation, we provide support services to these groups of carers to support them during their schooling and higher or further education. We support them to find employment and provide information and advice for other issues such as housing or welfare and help them navigate the sometimes complex health and social care system. In addition to this, we provide counselling to support young carers in Croydon. We recognise that young carers and young adult carers are Croydon's future.

By continuing to support young carers, young adult carers and their parents and families, we hope to be able to provide these young people with the best start in life in Croydon in order for them to achieve their ambitions and form the next generation of healthy adults in Croydon.

Councillor Alisa Flemming
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning



GP Clinical Chair Foreword

Carers across Croydon provide significant support to our health and social care system. Many are providing support to an elderly person or a young son/daughter. Anyone can be a carer, sometimes it can happen overnight, other times it can occur over a prolonged period of time. Carers support our medical teams to better understand the cared for person's needs and take on a large role in supporting someone to regain health or to continue their daily routine.

The NHS Commitment to Carers and the Five Year Forward View sets out how we would like to be working with carers in Croydon and this strategy helps to pull this information together with more localised knowledge of what is needed in Croydon over the next five years. We are lucky to have had so much input from the local community and from our partners in the NHS, third sector and local authority.

NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group works with Croydon Council to provide support for our young carers. We have built partnerships across education, and between schools and the Young Carers Project are working to raise awareness and support identifying children and young people who have a caring role. Schools play a major part in supporting this work and ensuring we are meeting the needs of children and young people. The Young Carers Project has been supported by London and Quadrant housing for 2 years to implement the Young Carers in Schools Award.

The jointly commissioned Young Carers Project has recruited 6 schools last year and a further 5 schools this current year. As part of this process school staff are offered training and consultation from the Young Carers Project team and can work towards an award based on their progress in relation to understanding, informing, identifying, listening and supporting young carers.

"In Croydon, carers save the local economy an estimated £654 million per year.

We hope this good work can continue in Croydon and that we can continue to work together with our NHS clinical providers, social care and community organisations to provide support to carers and to learn from our experiences to ensure our services are always improving. Our aim is to ensure carers feel recognised and listened to by the NHS and that the information and advice we provide supports carers to continue the work that they do in the community.



Dr Agnelo Fernandes
Clinical Chair



Executive Summary

Carers are a valuable part of our health and social care environment. Croydon Council and NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are committed to supporting carers. Carers are experts by experience, and their support ensures that the person they care for is receiving support from the person they would like to receive support from and in the place they would like to receive support.

The Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014 gave local authorities in England a legal responsibility to assess the needs of carers, support their eligible needs and promote their wellbeing. In addition to this, the Care Act and Children and Families Act require councils to provide personalised support and to prevent, reduce and delay future needs for support.

Carers are people who provide unpaid support to a family member, friend or neighbour. Many carers do not see themselves as carers as they may feel that it is a normal part of life. This support might include: personal care such as assistance with bathing and dressing, help with medication, cooking, grocery shopping and domestic tasks, accompanying to appointments, translating language, transport, help managing finances, emotional support, and telephone support.

In Croydon, carers save the local economy an estimated £654 million per year. Croydon is one of the largest boroughs in London, with an estimated population of 382,304. Of these, around 33,683 residents in Croydon are carers. This makes up 10% of the population. Around 31% of carers in Croydon have been caring for more than 20 years (these are likely to be parent carers supporting their son/daughter into adulthood) and 23% have been caring for between 5 and 10 years. Approximately 42% of carers in Croydon are male and 58% are female and the majority of carers are aged between 45 and 64 years old.

74% of carers in Croydon live with the person that they provide support for and many of them have their own health condition. 48% of carers are supporting someone with a physical disability, 29% are supporting someone with a learning disability, 29% are supporting someone with a dementia, 30% are supporting someone with age related illnesses and 26% of carers are supporting someone with a mental health problem.

Caring can have a negative impact on a carer's health and wellbeing. In Croydon, 72% of carers report feeling tired, 60% report feelings of stress, 60% report disturbed sleep and 35% report physical strain e.g. back pain as a result of their caring role. In addition to this, 24% of carers report that they have developed their own health condition and 24% report that their existing health condition has been made worse as a result of caring. Providing support to carers is the best way to help prevent a care breakdown, which can otherwise result in an emergency admission for the cared for person and/or the carer.

Support services in Croydon



Coproducing this strategy

The outcomes, action plan and outcome measurements of this strategy were co-produced with both young and adult carers, professionals and other key stakeholders. In total, 239 carers and professionals were engaged through 22 workshops. This was made up of 111 carers and professionals attending 13 workshops to coproduce the themes, ideas on service provision and commissioning. They helped to identify gaps in the current system that have informed the development of this strategy. This was accompanied by an online survey open for six weeks. Following this period, 9 further workshops were held with a total of 95 carers and professionals to feedback and listen to the community to ensure we had successfully captured the views and experiences of carers in Croydon. This too was accompanied by an online survey which was open for 6 weeks.

Action Plan

From these workshops, the following action plan was created.

NB When delivering this action plan it is important to note that while many support services for carers can be delivered by a general service, attention should be paid to certain services and certain groups which may need more specialist and individual support services, for example; young adult carers, parent carers, black and minority ethnic carers, older carers, carers of someone with a learning disability, carers of someone with a dementia, carers of someone with substance misuse and carers of someone with a mental illness.



Executive Summary

Priority one

Continue providing the current level of support for carers, this includes;

- Carer assessments, parent carer assessments and young carer assessments.
- Activity groups, peer support, physical activity sessions, therapy sessions, health and wellbeing sessions, education/psychoeducation groups which are (where appropriate) targeted towards different groups of carers.
- The Carers Support Centre on George Street.
- Benefits advice, legal advice and other one-to-one information and advice.
- Online information & advice and improve its accessibility and promotion
- Encouraging employers to become carer friendly, support carers into employment and supporting those in employment to stay in work.
- Support for young carers and young adult carers
- Counselling for carers.
- Support eligible carers with a carer's personal budget.
- Keep engaging with carers.

In addition to this, we should focus on:

- Increasing awareness of carers in schools and colleges to ensure they are being supported.
- Ensure funded services are promoted as council funded so carers are aware that they meet a certain standard.
- Review the provision of respite services in the borough and respond to the changing need of carers.
- Increase the promotion of current services to ensure more carers benefit from them.
- Increase identification of carers.
- Improve the Council's online directory of services.
- Promote the positive aspects of caring and in addition to this, initiatives such as opportunities for mentoring.
- Improve integration of services in health and social care.
- Work with the CCG to improve the accessibility of the psychological therapies services for carers in Croydon.

Priority two

- Showcase examples of successful carers who manage to run a business whilst caring.
- Increase use of information technology for consultations and develop an online community.
- Ensure adult social care provide information packs for carers to include carers information. This should be both online and in paper format.
- Provide more training for carers to reflect the changing needs of carers in Croydon.
- Review support for former carers including bereavement support.
- Ensure staff in the council and NHS are carer aware.
- Support the development of a carer card/ passport for young carers and young adult carers.
- Provide discounts for carers in Croydon.
- Work with the NHS to better identify carers, e.g. from general practice.
- Hold more engagement events with young adult carers to allow them to directly feedback.
- Increase awareness of carers in health and social care to ensure carers are identified earlier and involved in discussions. This includes awareness of young carers.
- Support ways to reduce the stigma associated with male carers.



Priority three

Our third priority should be to:

- Encourage businesses to get involved and sponsor events for carers in Croydon.
- Produce a policy for Croydon Council staff to enable them to promote services in their emails.
- Work with local pharmacies and dentists to identify carers earlier.
- Work with NHS Croydon CCG to improve information & advice provided at hospital discharge and ensure that carers are consulted in the process.
- Better promote Croydon Council's volunteering policy to enable more staff to volunteer during work time.
- Extend free swimming scheme for under 16s in the holidays to young carers all year round.
- Review schools' & colleges' understanding and support for young carers in Croydon.

Next Steps

This strategy has been co-produced with carers and professionals in Croydon. Moving this action plan foreword will be the task of Croydon Council and NHS Croydon CCG, however there are a number of actions and opportunities for others to get involved in ensuring that these actions are delivered.

To help ensure these actions are delivered, it will be the task of the Carers Partnership Group to scrutinise the actions and where necessary support the delivery of the strategy.

These outcomes will be evaluated annually by Croydon Council to ensure the delivery of this strategy. This will be supported and scrutinised by the Carers Partnership Group.

Introduction

Croydon Council and NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are committed to supporting carers. We recognise the invaluable input carers have on our health and social care system. Carers are experts by experience, and their support ensures that the person they care for is receiving support from the person they would like to receive support from and in the place they would like to receive support.





Carers can help prevent people from needing to move into residential care and they can provide a more personalised approach to care because they know the cared for person better than health and social care professionals. Supporting carers to continue to undertake this valuable role, is therefore paramount to our health and social care environment. This strategy shows Croydon's commitment to carers over the next five years.

The Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014 gave local authorities in England a legal responsibility to assess the needs of carers, support their eligible needs and promote their wellbeing. In addition to this, the Care Act and Children and Families Act require councils to provide personalised support, something that has been recently highlighted in a report by Healthwatch Croydon which looked into carers who support someone over the age of 65 years (Healthwatch Croydon, 2016). Furthermore, 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 of these documents recognise the role of a carer as an expert by experience and the need to engage with and support them. Locally, the Croydon Opportunity & Fairness Commission Report highlighted the need to support carers in Croydon to prevent them from becoming socially isolated (Opportunity & Fairness Commission, 2016) and various local research has helped us identify ways to support carers.

The 2011 census shows that there are currently six million unpaid carers in England and Wales. Unpaid carers save the UK economy £132 billion per annum. In Croydon, carers save the local economy an estimated £654 million per year (Bucker & Yeandle, 2015). Providing support to carers is the best way to help prevent a care breakdown, which can otherwise result in an emergency admission for the cared for person and/or the carer (RCGP, 2013). Moreover, research indicates that for every £1 spent on carers, creates £4 of long-term cost savings to health and social care (RCGP, 2015).

What is a Carer?

Carers are people who provide unpaid support to a family member, friend or neighbour. Many carers do not see themselves as carers as they may feel that is a normal part of life. This support might include: personal care such as assistance with bathing and dressing, help with medication, cooking, grocery shopping and domestic tasks, accompanying to appointments, transport, help managing finances, emotional support, and telephone support.

For the purpose of this strategy, we are defining carers in the same way as described in the Care Act and the Children and Families Act. The Care Act defines a carer 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)

The Children and Families Act defines a young carer as "a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person" (Children and Families Act, p. 72) and the Act defines a parent carer as "a person aged 18 or over who provides or intends to provide care for a disabled child for whom the person has parental responsibility" (Children and Families Act, p. 74).

For the purpose of this strategy, when discussing carers, unless specified we are referring to these groups of carers:

1. **Adult carer:** an adult carer is someone aged 18 years and over who is caring for another adult with support needs, this could be a partner, parent, relative friend or neighbour.
2. **Parent carer:** a parent or guardian who provides care to an ill or disabled child or young person under the age of 18 to a greater extent than would be expected in a parenting role.
3. **Young adult carer:** is someone aged between 18 and 25 who is caring for another child, a young person or an adult with support needs.
4. **Young carer:** a child or young person under 18 years who provides regular, ongoing care and emotional support to a parent, sibling, relative, friend or neighbour with a support need. The care provided is over and above "helping out", or the usual caring for an adult or sibling within the family.
5. **Former carers:** those no longer actively undertaking a caring role; this is usually as a result of a change in condition of the person they care for. This includes the death of the person, the person recovering and no longer needing care, or the carer wanting/having to stop providing care.

Carers from these groups may be supporting someone with a physical disability, frailty, mental health condition, learning disability, drug and/or alcohol issues or another long term and/or fluctuating condition. Carers can be from any ethnicity, faith or social background and of any sexual orientation. Carers can care for more than one person, may be studying, working or unemployed, and may have their own disabilities or illnesses. This strategy covers carers who are:

- living in Croydon and supporting someone living in Croydon
- living outside of Croydon and supporting someone living in Croydon
- former carers e.g. any of the above groups of carers for up to a year after they cease their caring role.

This strategy does not cover and should not be confused with the following groups; personal assistants, care workers, shared lives carers, or any other paid or volunteer care worker.

> **Carers are people who provide unpaid support to a family member, friend or neighbour.**

About Croydon

Current population estimates from the Office for National Statistics suggests there are 382,304 residents in Croydon (ONS, 2016 cited in Croydon Council, 2017) this is an increase of 18,904 from 2010 where the census showed that there were 363,400 residents in Croydon (ONS, 2011).



This makes Croydon the second largest borough by population in London. In comparison to Greater London, Croydon has a higher percentage of people under 19 years and a higher percentage of people in every age group over 45 years. This means that where London on average has a higher percentage of people aged 20 to 44 year olds, Croydon does not share this same proportion of working age adults (ONS, 2016 cited in Croydon Council, 2017) who are less likely to access health and social care services. Croydon is a diverse borough, with 55% of residents stating that they are White, 16% Asian and 20% are Black/Caribbean/ African/Black British (ONS, 2011). In total, 56% of residents are Christian, 6% Hindu, 8% Muslim and 20% have no religion.

Male life expectancy in Croydon is 80.4 years, while for females it is 83.4 years. If born today, men and women in Croydon can expect 63 and 64 years of healthy life expectancy respectively. Forty eight percent of residents in Croydon report having very good health, 35% state they have good health, 12% say they have fair health and 5% state they either have poor or very poor health (ONS, 2011). 64.7% of residents in Croydon are overweight. This is similar to the England average of 64.8% and higher than the London average of 58.8% (Sport England 2017, cited in Croydon Council 2017). Furthermore, 15% of males aged 18+ and 11.4% of females aged 18+ in Croydon are smokers. This is lower than both the national and London average smoking prevalence (ONS, 2016, cited in Croydon Council 2017).

Carers in Croydon

The 2011 census tells us there are 33,683 carers in Croydon, which makes up 10% of the total population of Croydon; this is higher than many other London boroughs including Merton, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. Using the latest population estimates of Croydon, this means that there are around 35,000 carers in Croydon at present. Around 31% of carers in Croydon have been caring for more than 20 years (these are likely to be parent carers supporting their son/daughter into adulthood) and 23% have been caring for between 5 and 10 years (NHS Digital, 2017).

In Croydon, approximately 19,000 carers are in employment, of which over 2,000 are in employment and provide more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week. Approximately 42% of carers in Croydon are male and 58% are female. The majority of carers are aged between 45 and 64 years old (ONS, 2011), however new research from Age UK estimates that nationally, there are over 2 million carers aged 65 years and over, an increase of 300,000 from 2009 (Age UK, 2016). In Croydon, this is around 6,000 carers (ONS, 2011) and it is likely that many of these carers do not identify themselves as a carer.

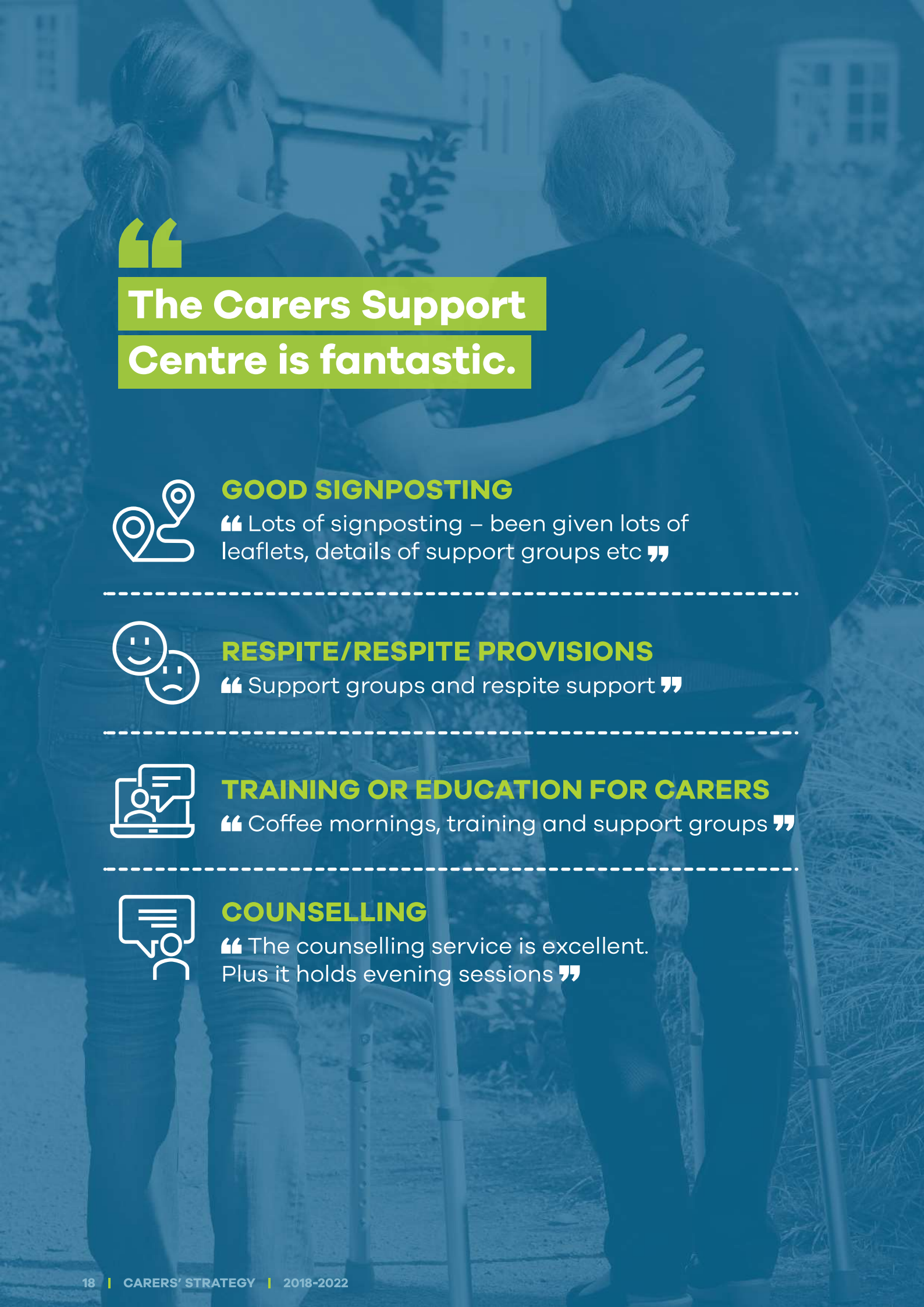
Croydon has around 2,500 young people aged between 16 and 24 years that have a caring role and out of our total number of carers, approximately 7,000 provide over 50 hours of unpaid support each week (ONS, 2011). Interestingly, 74% of carers in Croydon live with the person that they provide support for and many of them have their own health condition. 48% of carers are supporting someone with a physical disability, 29% are supporting someone with a learning disability, 29% are supporting someone with a dementia, 30% are supporting someone with age related illnesses and 26% of carers are supporting someone with a mental health problem. (Note these percentages do not add up to 100 because many conditions overlap and some carers may be supporting someone with more than one health condition.) (NHS Digital, 2017)

In 2015 Croydon Council's Carer Engagement identified that 40% of respondents were able to identify themselves as a carer within six months of providing care (Bahooshy, 2015), which is significantly better than the two year national average that has previously been identified (Carers Trust Cambridgeshire, 2015).

In 2017, carers in Croydon identified three types of support that had the greatest impact on a caring role in the past 12 months. These were: a break from caring (45%), having a friend or relative who is able to help (38%), and having health professionals that listen and understand their caring role (33%) (Bahooshy & Welch, 2017). This is a slight change from the 2015 survey which showed that the top three types of support were; benefits (44%), a break from caring (48%), and having the right information available (35%) (Bahooshy, 2015).

Carers frequently report that our current services are good, for example when asked what we are doing well in Croydon, comments from carers were themed and included; good carer services "The Carers Support Centre is fantastic", they state that we have good signposting "Lots of signposting – been given lots of leaflets, details of support groups etc", respite/respite provisions "Support groups and respite support", training or education for carers "Coffee mornings, training and support groups" and counselling "The counselling service is excellent. Plus it holds evening sessions" (Bahooshy & Welch, 2017).

> **"Interestingly, 74% of carers in Croydon live with the person that they provide support for and many of them have their own health condition.**



“The Carers Support Centre is fantastic.

GOOD SIGNPOSTING

“Lots of signposting – been given lots of leaflets, details of support groups etc”

RESPITE/RESPITE PROVISIONS

“Support groups and respite support”

TRAINING OR EDUCATION FOR CARERS

“Coffee mornings, training and support groups”

COUNSELLING

“The counselling service is excellent. Plus it holds evening sessions”

Impact of Caring

The State of Caring survey reported that:

73% of respondents to a recent State of Caring survey in 2017 felt that their contribution is not understood or valued by the government (Carers UK, 2017).

82% of carers report that caring negatively impacts on their health (Carers UK, 2015).



69% find it difficult to get a good night's sleep as a result of their caring role.

45% found it difficult to maintain a balanced diet.

54% of carers had reduced the amount of exercise that they take because of their caring role. (Carers UK, 2017)

Locally, a recent survey shows that over the last 12 months:

72% of carers in Croydon reported feeling tired as a result of caring.

60% felt stressed.

35% had to see their own GP as a result of their caring role.

35% of carers in Croydon have felt physical strain e.g. back strain, as a result of their caring role.

60% disturbed sleep.



52% of carers reported that their caring role had caused them some or a lot of financial difficulties in the past 12 months (NHS Digital', 2017).

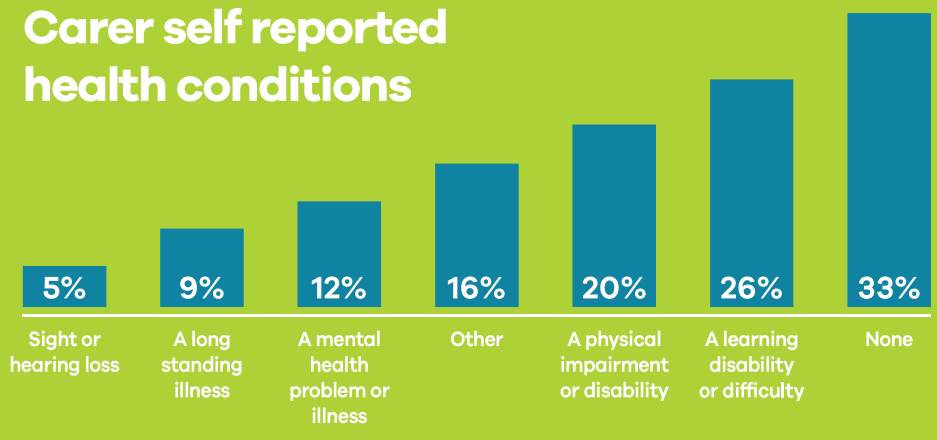
44% have feelings of depression as a result of caring.

24% felt that their caring role had made an existing condition of theirs worse.

Impact of Caring



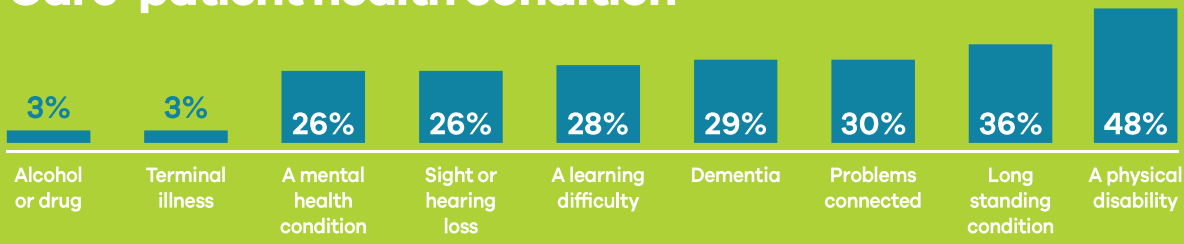
Carer self reported health conditions



Having a health condition is negativley related to carer quality of life scores[4]

On average carers witha health condition will score 2 points (on a 12 point scale) lower in quality of life than carers without a health condition[1]

Care-patient health condition



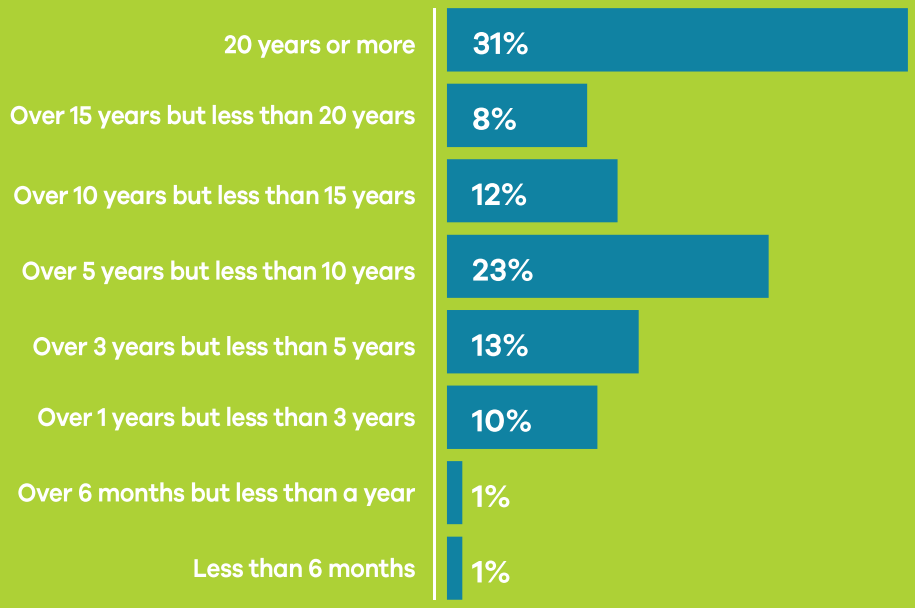
Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because carers questioned could select more than one response. Furthermore, this sample is only representative of carers who have received a service from Adult Social Care within the last 12 months.
Data source: NHS Digital 201

Health Impact of Caring



Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because carers questioned could select more than one response.

Duration of caring roles in Croydon



How do carers spend their time?



- I'm able to spend my time as I want, doing things I value or enjoy.
- I do some things I value or enjoy with my time but not enough.
- I don't do anything I value or enjoy with my time.

Legislation, Literature & Policies

The Care Act 2014 and Children & Families Act 2014 are the most notable pieces of legislation that provide the foundations for local authorities and providers to support carers. These two pieces of statute have laid the foundations for a number of key policy documents to be written on carers and have provided us with a growing source of information about what carers want and how we can support them. Here are a few of these sources of information that has helped to shape this Carers' Strategy including the outcomes, action plan and outcome measures, and the support available for carers in Croydon.

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 came into effect on 1st April 2015. Replacing the existing laws surrounding support for carers, the Care Act made it easier for local authorities to understand their role in supporting carers whilst giving them a legal duty to do so. The Care Act provided local authorities with a new definition of what a carer is, moving away from terms such as 'providing regular and substantial care' to focusing on a carer's wellbeing. The Care Act gave local authorities a duty to undertake carer assessments and to meet the eligible needs of carers through personalised support. A local authority is responsible for supporting carers over 18 who are providing support to an adult who is an ordinary resident within that local authority. In addition to this, the Care Act provided a duty on the local authority to promote carer wellbeing and to prevent, reduce and delay future needs for support.

The Children & Families Act 2014

The Children & Families Act came into effect on 1st April 2015. This piece of legislation complemented the Care Act in the sense that it provides local authorities with a new definition of young carers and parent carers of someone under 18 years. Like the Care Act, the Children & Families Act gave local authorities a duty to give young carers the right to a carer's assessment and to have their eligible needs met. In addition to this, the local authority has a duty to provide parent carers with a needs assessment, should they request one or where it appears they have a need.

NHS England's Commitment to Carers

In 2014, NHS England published two notable documents that showed its intentions to support carers, these were the Five Year Forward View and NHS England's Commitment to Carers. Both of these documents highlighted the hugely important role that carers play to assist the NHS and acknowledged that they are not always recognised for their efforts. From this, the NHS promised to support carer wellbeing and by meeting outcomes such as recognising their role, respecting and involving carers in discussions about the cared for person, share information with carers, provide flexible care wherever possible and signpost to the relevant services.

The Opportunity & Fairness Commission Report 2016

This report was commissioned by the local authority in order for it to better understand the needs of its residents. The researchers spoke to over 3,000 residents in Croydon and employers. The report made a number of key recommendations for Croydon Council to consider, these were laid out into key themes, and these were;

- Vibrant, responsible and connected communities. Here the report recommended that the council sets an example by encouraging staff to volunteer on social priorities, support the idea of an online community, support asset based community development and to support devolution and providing communities with the power to make the necessary decisions that will affect them.

Legislation, Literature & Policies

- A town centre that lifts the whole borough. The report recommended that Croydon becomes a London Living Wage zone, that it supports young people into work and to support flexible working arrangements.
- Leaving no child behind. Here the report recommended more openness to sharing best practice, more engagement with schools and sharing best practice on wellbeing within schools and to move towards an outcomes based commissioning approach for services for young people, parents and pupils.
- A connected borough where no one is isolated. Here the report recommended that the council and NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) work together to reduce social isolation, work with communities to help them become dementia friendly, support outreach services in GP practices, to implement the council tax precept to provide additional funds to adult social care, and to prevent carers from becoming socially isolated.
- Supporting residents towards better times. The report recommended more work experience for college students, GP services extended into the community wherever possible, debt consolidation and benefits advice and to offer businesses reductions in council tax if they sign up to paying the London Living Wage.

Carers Survey 2016 - 2017

Every 2 years, Adult Social Care undertakes a survey for carers across Croydon who have been in receipt of a service within the previous year. This is a postal survey. This year, 396 carers responded (response rate 24.8%). From this, we found that 42% of these carers are in paid employment and 24.8% were not in employment due to their caring role. The majority of carers (54%) spend more than 35 hours per week caring and 31% carers reported that they had been caring for 20 years or more.

18% of carers reported that they have little social contact and feel socially isolated, however 100% of 18 to 24 year old carers felt they have as much social contact as they would like. 39% of carers felt that they did not find information and support easily. The survey reported that carers quality of life and satisfaction with services has declined in Croydon. Unfortunately this trend is in line with the national picture for England and for London (Gamble, 2017).

Carer Engagement 2017

In 2016, Croydon Council undertook some research to better understand the needs of carers and to help develop this strategy, the objectives of this research were: to identify the needs of carers in Croydon; to understand what we are doing well in Croydon for carers; to identify areas for improvement to carer services, and what we should focus on over the next year; and to support the development of the Carers Strategy 2017-2021. Two methods of data collection were utilised: an online and paper survey and seven focus groups. These were co-designed with the support of the nine carer organisations in Croydon. To increase uptake, the nine carer organisations shared the online survey link out to their client databases. Of the focus groups, six were conducted in existing groups to ensure that carers who may not usually attend engagement events were heard.

322 people participated. Of these, 262 people responded to our online/paper survey and 60 carers attended the seven focus group sessions. When asked to state the three types of support that had the greatest impact on a caring role in the past 12 months, the top three were: a break from caring (45%), having a friend or relative who is able to help (38%), and having health professionals that listen and understand their caring role (33%). This is a slight change from the 2015 survey which showed the top three types of support were; benefits (44%), and break from caring (48%), and having the right information available (35%).



Carers came up with a number of recommendations:

1. To provide more flexible opening times for carer support services
2. To provide services for carers in different areas of the borough
3. To provide equitable financial support for carers
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 e.g. promote flexible working, provide a carer support group for working carers
6. Better promotion of the current services for carers in the borough
7. To provide support for carers after their caring role has ended
8. Feedback to NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) the issues relating to Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services in Croydon
9. Work with general practices (GPs) to identify carers earlier
10. To promote the commissioned services clearly stating that they are funded by Croydon Council
11. To work with the hospitals in Croydon to enable better communication during patient discharge
12. To provide one-to-one support and group activities for young adult carers and promote awareness of young adult carers to the local colleges and sixth form colleges.
13. For health, social care and all council staff to have a better understanding of a caring role
14. To provide carer assessments and financial support to parent carers of someone under 18 years

It was identified that there was some overlap between the Carer Engagement 2017 and 2015, in terms of carers making similar recommendations. The recommendations were made by carers and were therefore their perception at the time of the research. If a project had been undertaken as a result of a recommendation in the Carer Engagement 2015, but carers in the focus groups or those responding to the survey mentioned this again in 2017, this would still have been reported as a recommendation, however carers would have been informed that progress was made in this area. Duplicating the recommendation therefore highlights the need for this action.

Carer Engagement Report 2015

In 2015, Croydon Council undertook some research to better understand the local carer population. The objectives of this research were: to understand the length of time it takes carers in Croydon to recognise their caring role, and the type of support they first access; to identify the needs of carers in Croydon; to understand what we are doing well in Croydon for carers; and to identify areas for improvement to carer services in Croydon, and from this, what we should focus on over the next year.

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. 63% of carers stated that the first support service they accessed was information and advice.

Legislation, Literature & Policies

Carers from this engagement recognised that there were a number of services in Croydon that were performing well: 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.

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 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. IAPT)
11. Being able to discuss the cared for person's information with carers e.g. set up confidentiality agreements between patients and 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 and the people they support
17. Better council branding on commissioned services

Carers' Information Service: Not just a patient report

In 20017 the Carers' Information Service undertook some research to better understand the views of carers on GP services in Croydon. They surveyed 205 adult carers registered with a GP in Croydon and found that in general, carers view the support they receive by the healthcare system as positive, usually naming a particular GP or practice member as being understanding of their situation.

They found that 61% of carers say that their GP knows about their caring role although unfortunately only 18% of carers had been informed of the carer support available in Croydon, while 49% said that their GP would be a useful person to inform them. Only a third of carers stated that they had not been informed of their eligibility for an annual flu vaccine.

From this, carers stated that they would like more support in general practice and to see a more proactive approach to identifying carers (Deakin, 2017).

Croydon Council as an Employer

Croydon Council has a number of policies designed to support carers in our workplace. Croydon Council is passionate about supporting carers to continue working whilst caring. Staying in work can be valuable for some carers. Carers state that this can help take their mind off their caring role, can help prevent social isolation, supports the household finances and is better for the local economy. If you work in Croydon Council you can expect your rights as a carer to be supported. Croydon is an agile working employer and this is encouraged subject to service needs. You also are able to request flexible working from the start of employment, where appropriate, this could include flexible working hours or even working from home on some occasions. In addition to this, Croydon Council employs a large number of part-time staff and those in job sharing position. Our staff with a caring role value our policies that enable them to continue working whilst caring. We have a Staff Carers Support Network Group which meets every 6 to 8 weeks and also connects carers virtually. The network provides carers with the opportunity to share concerns, experiences and knowledge, support one another and also benefit from a number of guest speakers.

Healthwatch Croydon 2016 & 2017

In 2017, Healthwatch Croydon undertook some research to gain the views of black and minority ethnic (BME) carers in Croydon. They spoke to 52 BME carers and found that BME carers identified the need for GPs to identify and refer BME carers to the Carers Support Centre on George Street. In addition to this, they highlighted the issues around communication and language, where a number of people form the BME community either have English as their second language or do not speak English at all. Therefore there is a reliance on the carer to communicate for the cared for person.

Moreover, in 2016, Healthwatch Croydon undertook some research on carers of people over 65 in Croydon. Engaging with 46 carers, they identified that carers wanted support with the following;

- Hospital discharge: Carers stated that there were issues with hospital discharge, such as poor communication, not sharing information, patients confused at the point of discharge and carers/family members not involved in decision making. Carers were also confused by the advice around the cared for person's medication.
- Support at home: Carers said that they find it difficult to access support as and when they need it. Carers had concerns with care workers not always informing families if they are going to be late, or not coming at all.
- Care planning: Carers stated their frustration at the different care plans used by health, mental health and social care professionals, which often do not link together well. They feel that this prevents integration of these services.
- Allowances and assessments: Carers felt that they did not know their entitlements under the Care Act.

Making it Real for Carers

In 2013, ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services), Carers Trust and Think Local Act Personal worked together to coproduce a guidance document with carers. A national co-production advisory group was used, with workshops across the country. The resources consist of a series of 'I' statements which describe what carers need. These needs are split into six themes:

- Information and advice: having the information I need, when I need it.
- Active and supportive communities: keeping friend and family.
- Flexible and integrated support: my support, my own way.
- Workforce: my support staff.
- Risk enablement: feeling in control and safe.
- Personal budget and self-funding: my money.

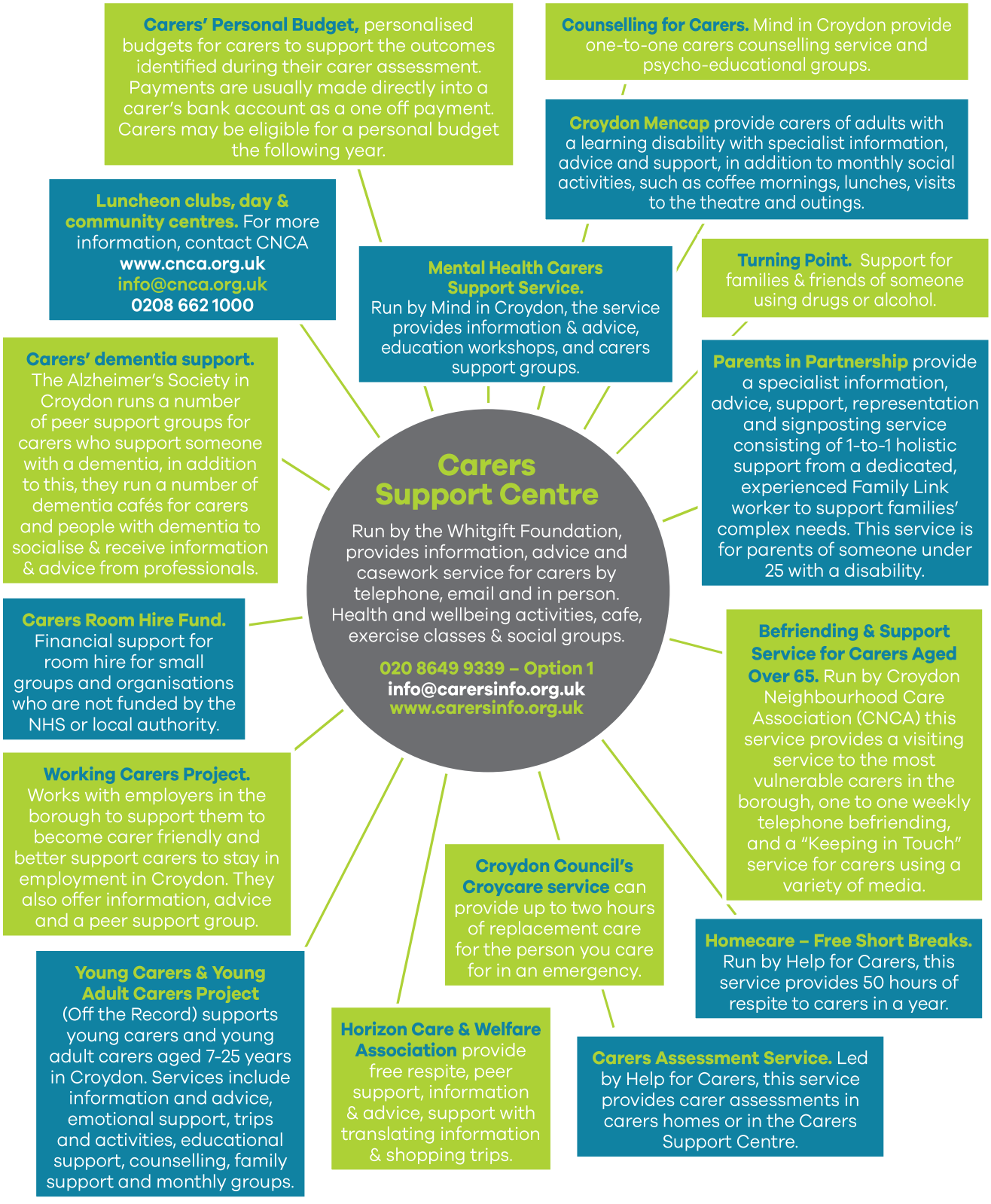
Legislation, Literature & Policies

State of Caring

Every year, Carers UK undertakes a State of Caring report to collect evidence on a range of issues affecting carers' lives in the UK. In 2017, 7,000 people shared their views and experiences on what life is like for carers in 2017. The survey identified that 61% of carers reported that their physical health had deteriorated as a result of caring, while 70% of carers had said they have suffered mental ill health. 45% of carers stated that they found it difficult to maintain a balanced diet and 54% of carers have reduced the amount of physical activity they undertake as a result of caring. 68% of carers stated that their GP was aware that they were a carer, but did not feel that they had done anything as a result. The report found that 40% of carers stated that they had not had a day off in a year and 29% of carers were worried that the practical support they currently receive may be reduced in the future.



Current Services for Carers in Croydon, Funded by Croydon Council



Croydon Council Commissioning Principles

Croydon Council's Commissioning Framework 2016 sets out our approach for commissioning all services for our residents. These are to;

Focus on outcomes: We will commission for sustainable and effective outcomes that deliver beyond service and organisational structures.

Asset based: We will take an asset based commissioning approach, which takes account of the existing strengths, skills and resources to ensure that investment decisions support community empowerment.

Cooperative: We will engage in open and honest dialogue with our communities about how and why we commission and be transparent with our processes, involving citizens, customers and service users in planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating our services.

Equalities and fairness: We will embed equalities and fairness considerations in all aspects of commissioning practice.

Social value: We will use the Council's purchasing power to maximise social value, fostering local employment, promoting fair pay, encouraging local business growth and supporting community priorities.

Diverse economy of providers: We will support and shape the local market to ensure there is a diverse economy of service providers that embrace the public service delivery ethos, intervening where market disruption will increase choice and resilience.

Alternative service delivery models: Where it is efficient, effective and delivers greater social value, we will encourage commissioning through not for profit trading companies, co-operatives, mutuals and the voluntary sector.

Integration and partnerships: We integrate or work jointly with other local and regional organisations to ensure improved outcomes and value for money for our residents.

Risk aware: We will embed a commissioning culture that embraces a new approach to risk which is risk aware, not risk averse, encouraging social innovation, commercial astuteness and sustainable change.

NHS Commissioning for Carers Principles

The NHS has 10 principles for commissioning for carers, these are important to help NHS Croydon CCG to commission services and implement practices to support carers in Croydon. These are;

- Principle 1, Think Carer, Think Family; Make Every Contact Count
- Principle 2, Support what works for carers, share and learn from others
- Principle 3, Right care, right time, right place for carers
- Principle 4, Measure what matters to carers
- Principle 5, Support for carers depends on partnership working
- Principle 6, Leadership for carers at all levels
- Principle 7, Train staff to identify and support carers
- Principle 8, Prioritise carers' health and wellbeing
- Principle 9, Invest in carers to sustain and save
- Principle 10, Support carers to access local resources (NHS England, 2014a)

Co-producing the Strategy with Carers and Professionals

This strategy was co-produced with both young and adult carers, professionals and other key stakeholders.

Number of workshops to develop strategy	**13**	**Number of attendees**	**111**
Number of workshops to feedback	**9**	**Number of attendees**	**95**
Number of online responses	**31**	**Total participants**	**239**

In total, 329 carers and professionals were engaged through 22 workshops. This was made of 111 carers and professionals attending 13 workshops to coproduce the themes, ideas on service provision and commissioning. They helped to identify gaps in the current system that have informed the development of this strategy.

In addition to this, results from the Carer Engagement 2015, Carer Engagement 2017 and the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework 2017 survey results have helped to shape this strategy. Moreover, a recent report entitled 'Walk in Our Shoes', highlighted some of the concerns carers have with services that support someone with a learning disability in Croydon (Ballantyne & Kennedy, 2017) and a Healthwatch Croydon report in 2016 entitled 'Carers of the over 65s' provided additional insights into the views of carers locally, these views have also been taken into account when developing this strategy.

The workshops were held in a variety of locations including at the Croydon Council's Staff Carers Support Network, the Carers Support Centre on George Street, Croydon Mencap carer support group, Mind in Croydon's carer support group, Horizon Care & Welfare Association's carer support group, Croydon Council adult social care staff, the Carers Partnership Group in Croydon, and Off the Record's young carer support group and their young adult carer support group.

In addition to this, carers were able to feedback via a comments board at the Carers Support Centre.

To support the co-production of this strategy the workshops used the table in appendix one as a tool to identify what we are doing well in the borough and should therefore keep doing and then what we should do additionally to meet the identified outcomes. Using the themes identified in the Opportunity & Fairness Commission Report in 2016, the workshop tool linked the Opportunity & Fairness Commission report to the Carers Strategy by enabling us the build on the outcomes that had previously been developed in partnership with the Carers Partnership Group in 2016 in preparation for the recommissioning of carer services which took place via the Community Fund. The Community Fund services commenced in October 2016 and are due to run until 30th September 2019. During the workshops carers and professionals were able to comment on and suggest new outcomes for this strategy for Croydon. Furthermore, carers and professionals could comment on prospective outcome measurement.

Once the draft report was complete a further 9 focus groups were held, this is represented in the timeline below. The purpose of these focus groups was for the strategy to be reported back to the community in order to provide them with an opportunity to comment on any areas including the previously unwritten action plan, and to provide any further details that they may have missed during the first set of focus groups. 95 carers and professionals attended these workshops which were held with various groups such as; the Carers Partnership Group, Adult Social Care & NHS staff, working carers, parent carers, black & minority ethnic carers, and carers of people with dementia. In addition to this, 31 carers fed back online.

Furthermore, both Carers UK and Carers Trust were given the opportunity to provide feedback on this report.

Co-production Timeline

Data collection

Peer review, feedback and listening

Planning

Analysis and report writing

Strategy launch

Croydon Council and NHS Croydon CCG

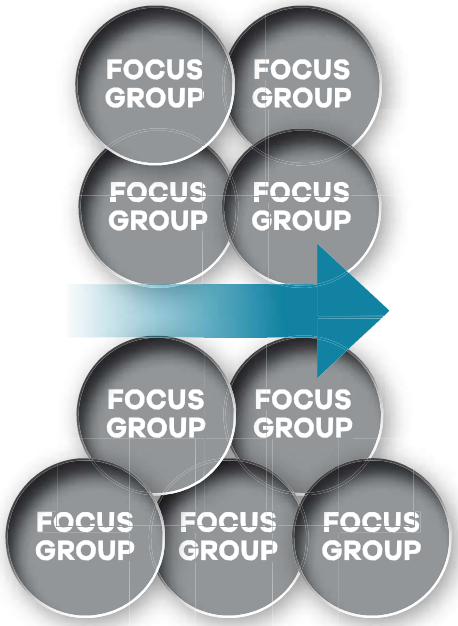
Croydon Council

6 WEEKS



Online feedback available

6 WEEKS



Online feedback available

Co-produced outcomes, actions and outcome measures

From the workshops the following outcomes, actions and outcome measures were developed to support carers in Croydon. These were themed into the key themes identified from the Opportunity and Fairness Commission Report.

1. **Vibrant, responsible and connected communities**
2. **A connected borough where no one is isolated**
3. **Supporting residents towards better times**
4. **Leaving no child behind**
5. **A town centre that lifts the whole borough**

Please see table below for more information on how we will meet these outcomes in Croydon.





Theme	Vibrant, responsible & connected communities
Outcomes for carers	• Improved carer wellbeing through physical activity, peer support and education • A place that carers are proud of and want to look after as their community
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Continue to fund carer peer support groups for a variety of groups of carers. This is important as different groups of carers have different needs. Continue to consult with carers on a regular basis and offer opportunities for young carers such as apprenticeships, in addition to opportunities for carers to volunteer. Promoting the current services available for carers. Continue to fund activity groups such as sports and education, and social events for carers. In addition to this, we should continue the Young Carer in Schools Award.
What we should do additionally	Look for ways to work with the Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service to increase accessibility of the service. Look for ways to increase the number of events held throughout the year (not just during Carers Week). Encourage local business to get involved and sponsor events for carers in Croydon. Showcase successful carers in Croydon for example, if they are self-employed and successfully managed to run a business whilst undertaking a caring role. Ensure all schools and colleges in Croydon are best able to support young carers and young adult carers so that they can reach a better attainment level during exams.
How success will be measured	Record number of carers referred to IAPT and record number of carers receiving an IAPT assessment. Record activity levels of wellbeing activities, physical activity sessions, peer support groups, education groups, apprenticeships, volunteers and therapy sessions. Record the percentage of carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools. Having a policy approved to promote services in emails. Percentage of staff conferences where the volunteering policy is promoted. Number of businesses who sponsored events. Create and implement a policy document to support teachers in schools and colleges.

Theme	A connected borough where no one is isolated
Outcomes for carers	• **A thriving and lively cultural offer which engages carers** • **A supportive network for carers that enables them to sustain relationships whilst continuing their caring role** • **Up-to-date information and advice for carers to support their needs** • **Carers report that they have as much social contact as they would like**
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Continue to provide respite services, peer support groups, activity days/day trips, homework clubs, home visits and transportation services to various groups of carers. Continue to fund the information and advice services provided in the borough, e.g. the Carers Support Centre and Advice Services Croydon. Continue to fund the carer assessment service in Croydon which is able to provide personalised support for carers to help meet their identified outcomes.
What we should do additionally	Increase use of computers/information technology to ensure carers are able to stay connected with family members and friends. This could also be used to speak to professionals, e.g. via Skype, and also an online community network for carers. Improve promotion of current services available in Croydon. Ensure that services commissioned by Croydon Council are explicitly promoted as Council funded to ensure carers understand which services are publically funded and ensure carers understand which organisations we are in partnership with and that meet the required standard to deliver a reputable service. Improve the respite provision in the borough by increasing the range of choices and flexibility of respite available to carers, this includes hosting events for carers, where the carer can bring the cared for person while they participate in an activity, knowing that their cared for person in is a room nearby. Information in accessible formats such as paper formats, and not solely relying on electronic copies. E.g. information provided by adult social care services and information for young adult carers. Improve its online directory of all services in the borough. Develop a carer passport for young carers and young adult carers to help them to identify themselves as carers and to provide a range of discounts.
How success will be measured	Capture event feedback and record activity e.g. Carers' Week. Record activity levels of wellbeing activities, physical activity sessions, peer support groups, education groups, apprenticeships, volunteers, 1-to-1 sessions, and therapy sessions. Record the percentage of carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools. Number of consultations offered via Skype and the number of Skype consultations held. Provide a 6 monthly update for the local offer website to ensure information about carers is up-to-date. Use the NHS Digital Carers' Survey

Theme	Supporting residents towards better times
Outcomes for carers	• Carers are more financially resilient and live affordable lives. • Carers from all communities live longer, healthier lives through positive lifestyle choices. • Carers feel included or consulted in the discussions about the person they care for. • Carers are satisfied with social care services including commissioned support services.
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Continue to support carers in the workplace and supporting carers into work, for example the Working Carers Project and the Employment Support Service. Continue to support the development of death cafés in Croydon. Provide recognition to the palliative team at Croydon University Hospital whose work has been described as valuable and supportive. Continue to run benefits advice clinics from the Carers Support Centre on George Street and other benefits advice services to support income maximisation of carers. Continue to support eligible carers with a carer's personal budget. Commend our colleagues who are already involving carers in consultations and support others to develop these skills. Croydon Council should continue to engage with and listen to carers' views. Provide discounts for carers and look for ways to improve this scheme. The council should continue working with the CCG on health promotion initiatives such as the CCG's 'Together for Health' and the 'Just Be' website.
What we should do additionally	Increase the variety of training sessions available at the Carers Support Centre to ensure it best reflects the changing needs of carers in Croydon for example, stress management and managing challenging behaviour. Improve the integration of services in health and social care. Improve the discount scheme available for carers, potentially linking in with the rest of London to improve the discounts available for carers. Ensure Croydon Council funded services are properly branded as being funded by the council and better promoted to ensure more carers benefit from the support. Identifying the council as the funder is key to showing the good standard of the service, so carers know they can trust the organisation, but also to show carers and residents of Croydon, what we are spending their money on. Increase identification of male carers in Croydon. Work with commissioners to improve reliability of community care workers. Croydon Council should work with the NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Trusts to ensure a better hospital discharge. For example, better information at point of discharge and better notice periods prior to discharge. Increase awareness of issues surrounding confidentiality and carers which can prevent carers from gaining access to the cared for person's records, collecting results, or even providing additional information about the client. To support this, South London & Maudsley have produced a guide to confidentiality and carers which could be promoted by Croydon. Provide additional support for former carers to support these carers to re-establish their lives after their caring role has ceased. It was noted that Croydon Council should work with the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and local general practices to enable them to better identify and support carers. For example, they could include a question on their new patient registration form to help identify carers in Croydon. Ensure all groups of carers and support projects are able to 'meet the commissioner'. More should be done to promote the positive aspects of caring and in addition to this, initiatives such as opportunities for mentoring.
How success will be measured	Number of carers receiving benefits advice and the amount of benefits identified (£) for carers. Number of carers receiving a discount card and the number of discounts available for carers. Use the NHS Digital Carers' Survey. Increase identification methods for referring carers from health and social care professionals.

Theme	Leaving no child behind
Outcomes for carers	• **Young carers are supported into adulthood and able to lead independent lives.** • **Increased identification of and support for young carers and young adult carers in schools and colleges.** • **Parent carers are supported to best enable them to care for their ill or disabled child.**
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Continue to provide support for young carers, young adult carers and parent carers in Croydon. Support includes information, advice, guidance, peer support, activities, carer assessments, activity days, events and socials for carers and families, 1-to-1 support and holistic support. Continue to provide counselling for young people in schools and colleges and the funded support that many young carers are able to receive from their schools. Continue to provide free swimming for under 16s during the summer holidays. Support schools to be able to identify and support young carers and young adult carers throughout their education. For example, homework clubs are particularly useful for this group. Continue to support young adult carers in college and at university. Continue to provide support to carers to help them return to work or to find employment. Undertake a review of support available for young carers and young adult carers in schools across Croydon to ensure they are all supporting carers and where necessary, provide additional support to those identified as needing support. Increase provision of parent carer assessments. Currently there is a reliance on combined assessments. Ways should be explored to increase the availability of individual assessments and independent assessments completed by a third sector organisation.
What we should do additionally	Increase awareness raising of young carers and young adult carers in schools and colleges. Look into ways to tackle the stigma of young people and males coming forward for support. Improve understanding of the needs of young carers and young adult carers in general practice (GP) and adult social care to increase identification of these groups from GPs and adult social care. Improve understand of the needs of all groups of carers for all customer facing council departments. Work with local pharmacies and dentists to raise awareness of carers and identify and refer them to the Carers Support Centre. Look into extending the free swimming scheme for under 16s in the summer holidays to young carers all year round to enable them to stay active and if this could be extended for 17 and 18 year olds. In addition to this, other activities could be explored for inclusion within this scheme.
How success will be measured	Increased number of young carers and young adult carers being referred for support, specifically looking at the gender divide. Record the percentage of young carers and young adult carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools. Record the percentage of parent carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools.

Theme	A town centre that lifts the whole borough
Outcomes for carers	• Encourage employers in Croydon to become carer friendly, to better support carers in work to stay in work and to support those who would like to get into work • Provide a central hub for all carers to be supported
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Continue to fund the Working Carers Project which encourages employers to become carer friendly, supports carers to stay in work and provides them with a forum in which to share experiences with other carers in similar situations to them. Continue to fund the Carers Support Centre on George Street which provides face-to-face support to carers, online or via the telephone, enables carers to meet other carers and enjoy a variety of the health and wellbeing activities, workshops and education sessions provided at the centre. In addition to this, continue to fund the hub and spoke model of support for carers which includes a number of third sector organisations. Continue to provide support for different groups of carers in Croydon.
What we should do additionally	Croydon should increase the support available to support people with disabilities to volunteer or take paid work. Work with community groups and the police to support carers to feel safer in the borough. Explore options for the Carers Support Centre to open at different times outside of Monday to Friday 10:00 till 16:00. For example, some Saturday mornings would be useful and some evenings. Additional opening hours could therefore be piloted. Increase promotion of the Working Carers Project. Croydon is one of a few boroughs that has this type of project, we therefore need additional effort to promote this to ensure it achieves its outcomes. Croydon Council should be a flagship organisation in terms of implementing its carer friendly workplace policies. There are supportive policies such as agile working, these need to be implemented equally across all departments where possible. Therefore managers should be better informed of these policies. In addition to this, we could explore Employee Assistance Programme to increase the offer for 6 face-to-face counselling sessions for carers, especially those undertaking a long term or intensive caring role.
How success will be measured	Record the number of organisations that engage with the Working Carers' Project and the number that sign up to being carer friendly. Record activity levels for employment advice sessions and record the number of carers supported into work. Record activity levels of attendance at the Carers Support Centre on George Street and hold a centralised carers' register. Varied opening times at the Carers Support Centre that responds to carer need.

Action Plan

NB When delivering this action plan it is important to note that while many support services for carers can be delivered by a general service, attention should be paid to certain services and certain groups which may need more specialist and individual support services, for example; young adult carers, parent carers, black and minority ethnic carers, older carers, carers of someone with a learning disability, carers of someone with a dementia, carers of someone with substance misuse and carers of someone with a mental illness.

Priority one

Continue providing the current level of support for carers, this includes;

- Carer assessments, parent carer assessments and young carer assessments.
- Activity groups, peer support, physical activity sessions, therapy sessions, health and wellbeing sessions, education/psychoeducation groups which are (where appropriate) targeted towards different groups of carers.
- The Carers Support Centre on George Street.
- Benefits advice, legal advice and other one-to-one information and advice.
- Online information and advice and improve its accessibility and promotion
- Encouraging employers to become carer friendly, support carers into employment and supporting those in employment to stay in work.
- Support for young carers and young adult carers
- Counselling for carers.
- Support eligible carers with a carer's personal budget.
- Keep engaging with carers.

In addition to this, we should focus on:

- Increasing awareness of carers in schools and colleges to ensure they are being supported.
- Ensure funded services are promoted as council funded so carers are aware that they meet a certain standard.
- Review the provision of respite services in the borough and respond to the changing need of carers.
- Increase the promotion of current services to ensure more carers benefit from them.
- Increase identification of carers.
- Improve the Council's online directory of services.
- Promote the positive aspects of caring and in addition to this, initiatives such as opportunities for mentoring.
- Improve integration of services in health and social care.
- Work with the CCG to improve the accessibility of the psychological therapies services for carers in Croydon.

Priority two

Our second priority should be to:

- Showcase examples of successful carers who manage to run a business whilst caring.
- Increase use of information technology for consultations and developed an online community.
- Ensure adult social care provide information packs for carers to include carers information. This should be both online and in paper format.
- Provide more training for carers to reflect the changing needs of carers in Croydon.
- Review support for former carers including bereavement support.
- Ensure staff in the council and NHS are carer aware.
- Support the development of a carer card/passport for young carers and young adult carers.
- Provide discounts for carers in Croydon.
- Work with the NHS to better identify carers, e.g. from general practice.
- Hold more engagement events with young adult carers to allow them to directly feedback.
- Increase awareness of carers in health and social care to ensure carers are identified earlier and involved in discussions. This includes awareness of young carers.
- Support ways to reduce the stigma associated with male carers.

Action Plan

Priority three

Our third priority should be to:

- Encourage businesses to get involved and sponsor events for carers in Croydon.
- Produce a policy for Croydon Council staff to enable them to promote services in their emails.
- Work with local pharmacies and dentists to identify carers earlier.
- Work with NHS Croydon CCG to improve information & advice provided at hospital discharge and ensure that carers are consulted in the process.
- Better promote Croydon Council's volunteering policy to enable more staff to volunteer during work time.
- Extend free swimming scheme for under 16s in the holidays to young carers all year round.
- Review schools' & colleges' understanding and support for young carers in Croydon.

Next Steps

This strategy has been co-produced with carers and professionals in Croydon. Moving this action plan foreword will be the task of Croydon Council and NHS Croydon CCG, however there are a number of actions and opportunities for others to get involved in ensuring that these actions are delivered.

To help ensure these actions are delivered, it will be the task of the Carers Partnership Group to scrutinise the actions and where necessary support the delivery of the strategy.

These outcomes will be evaluated annually by Croydon Council to ensure the delivery of this strategy. This will be supported and scrutinised by the Carers Partnership Group.



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Appendix One

Summary of carer and stakeholder focus groups

Below is a combined summary of all 22 focus groups, this includes the discussions from the 13 focus groups to develop this strategy and the additional 9 focus groups to feedback and listen. The online responses have also been incorporated into this summary. In total 239 stakeholders participated. During these discussions carers and key stakeholders had the opportunity to comment and advise on all areas of this table, this includes; what the outcomes are for carers, how we meet outcomes, what we are already doing, what we need to do additionally, and how success will be measured.

Theme	Vibrant, responsible and connected communities
Outcomes for carers	• Improved carer wellbeing through physical activity, peer support and education • A place that carers are proud of and want to look after as their community
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Carers and professionals recognised that there are a variety of services in Croydon that support their wellbeing. These include the carers café and the Carers Support Centre, and the numerous peer support groups across the services, e.g. Mind in Croydon, Parents in Partnership, Croydon Mencap, Horizon, Alzheimer's Society. In addition to this, carers stated that they found the wellbeing activities at the Carers Support Centre useful, e.g. Pilates, singing groups, education workshops, psychoeducation groups, IT support, massage therapy and the information and advice services in Croydon e.g. Advice Services Croydon and the Carers Support Centre. It was noted that Croydon has a good range of support services for different groups of carers and from different backgrounds, this is something that is important to carers and that they would like to see continue. Carers acknowledged the work that Croydon are doing in terms of consulting carers and keeping them involved in developments and plans for carer services and stated that this should continue. Furthermore, opportunities such as apprenticeships and volunteering were identified as keys ways that carers can be proud of their community. In addition to the work services do to promote themselves to ensure more carers receive support and at promoting carer assessments. In addition to this, young carers and young adult carers recognised that there were a number of sports clubs, exercise classes, peer support, parents coffee mornings and education work to support their needs in the borough. These carers also stated that they thought the Young Carer in Schools Award was something that was beneficial to support their recognition.
What we should do additionally	Carers and professionals felt that the Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) was not accessible to many carers due to various service issues, such as not responding to calls and long waiting lists. It was later identified (during consultation with SLaM) that due to patient confidentiality, SLaM do not leave messages (so therefore a carer would not know if they have called and their number is withheld, which may discourage carers from answering the phone. Carers therefore want to see this service improved and better able to support their needs. In addition to this, carers wanted to have more of the events we hold during Carers Week at other times of the year and in other parts of the borough, ensuring different areas have access to these events. Carers and professionals working in Croydon Council suggested that council staff could promote and support the carers' services. Suggestions for this included having a designated space in the email signature to promote services, this could be changed every three to six months. In addition to this, it was suggested that the council volunteer policy was better promoted and encouraged to enable staff to use this time to volunteer within the voluntary sector carer services. Encourage local businesses to get involved and sponsor events for carers in Croydon. Moreover, carers thought it would be useful to showcase successful carers in Croydon for example, if they are self-employed and successfully managed to run a business whilst undertaking a caring role. Ensure all schools and colleges in Croydon are best able to support young carers and young adult carers so that they can reach a better attainment level during exams.
How success will be measured	Record number of carers referred to IAPT and record number carers receiving an IAPT assessments. Record activity levels of wellbeing activities, physical activity sessions, peer support groups, education groups, apprenticeships, volunteers and therapy sessions. Record the percentage of carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools. Having a policy approved to promote services in emails. Percentage of staff conferences where the volunteering policy is promoted. Number of business who sponsored events. Create and implement a policy document to support teachers in schools and colleges.

Theme	A connected borough where no one is isolated
Outcomes for carers	• A thriving and lively cultural offer which engages carers • A supportive network for carers that enables them to sustain relationships whilst continuing their caring role • Up-to-date information and advice for carers to support their needs • Carers report that they have as much social contact as they would like
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Carers and professionals identified a number of services that support carers to remain connected and prevent isolation. These include respite services, peer support groups, activity days/day trips, home visits and transportation services. These services enable carers to meet other people in similar situations enabling them to socialise and share stories. These activities were noted as being offered via the Carers Support Centre on George Street, Mind in Croydon, Croydon Mencap, Parents in Partnership, the Alzheimer's Society, Horizon and Help for Carers. In addition to this, carers recognised the value of the information and advice services provided in the borough, e.g. the Carers Support Centre and Advice Services Croydon. Carers valued the 1-to-1 support available via different services, including the 1-to-1 home support provided through Mind in Croydon. The information and advice services were valued in terms of their face-to-face support, support online and via the telephone. Moreover, telecare was recognised as a good form of support for carers, and the counselling support services for carers provided by Mind in Croydon. Carers and professionals valued the carer assessment service in Croydon which is able to provide personalised support for carers to help meet their identified outcomes. The service is led by Help for Carers and assessments can be undertaken in carers homes or in the Carers Support Centre. In addition to this, where necessary, social workers from Croydon Council can facilitate these assessments with carers. This was mirrored by young carers who felt that personalised assessments where key to providing support to them and their family. Young carers felt that the services available to them are accessible to find online and that the regular support groups are beneficial to them. Young adult carers thought the social events available for them were good, specifically the central locations where they meet and the option for gender specific activities too. In addition to this, they find social media useful and homework clubs.
What we should do additionally	Increase use of computers/information technology to ensure carers are able to stay connected with family members and friends. This could also be used to speak to professionals, e.g. via Skype, and also an online community network for carers. Improve promotion of current services available in Croydon, it is widely recognised that there are a significant number of projects available in Croydon to support carers, however sometimes publicity for these services is insufficient. In addition to this, ensure that services commissioned by Croydon Council are explicitly promoted as such to ensure carers understand which services are publically funded and ensure carers understand which organisations we are in partnership with and that meet the required standard to deliver a reputable service. Carers felt that we needed to improve the respite provision in the borough by increasing the range of choices and flexibility of respite available to carers. This includes hosting events for carers where the cared can bring the cared for person while they participate in an activity, knowing that their cared for person in is a room nearby. Carers felt that it is important to receive information in accessible formats such as paper formats, and not solely relying on electronic copies. E.g. information provided by adult social care services. In addition to this carers felt that parent carers should be able to access carer assessments in the same way adult carers supporting an adult can. Young carers and young adult carers felt that they needed a carer passport in order to identify themselves to professionals. In addition to this, they felt it would be useful to have discounted travel across the Transport for London network. Interestingly, this group also wanted to receive information in paper form, in addition to it being available online. Carers felt that the Council needs to improve its online directory of all services in the borough, this would help carers to be able to find the right service for them, when they need it.
How success will be measured	Capture event feedback and record activity e.g. Carers' Week. Record activity levels of wellbeing activities, physical activity sessions, peer support groups, education groups, apprenticeships, volunteers, 1-to-1 sessions, and therapy sessions. Record the percentage of carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools. Number of consultations offered via Skype and the number of Skype consultations held. Provide a 6 monthly update for the local offer website to ensure information about carers is up-to-date. Use the NHS Digital Carers' Survey

Theme	Supporting residents towards better times
Outcomes for carers	• Carers are more financially resilient and live affordable lives. • Carers from all communities live longer, healthier lives through positive lifestyle choices. • Carers feel included or consulted in the discussions about the person they care for. • Carers are satisfied with social care services including commissioned support services.
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Carers and professionals were able to identify a number of initiatives in the borough to support carers towards better times. Examples of these were the Working Carers Project, which supports carers to stay in work, the employment support offered at the Carers Support Centre, the community based advocacy support available to carers through the various commissioned and non-commissioned services which can help carers with form filling and translating documents etc. Carers noted the value of the death cafés in Croydon and the support that they provide. Furthermore, it was noted that the palliative team at Croydon University Hospital were particularly useful and supportive. In addition to this, carers value the benefits' advice provided in the Carers Support Centre and across the borough which ensure carers are maximising their income wherever possible. Young adult carers also noted that the Mind in Croydon benefits team was a useful service for them. Carers noted a mixed response for feeling consulted in the discussions about the person they care for with examples such as; social workers, general practitioners and mental health services provided by South London & Maudsley. Carers noted the importance for the council to listen to their views and how this has been the case in recent years. Carers stated that this was important for them to be able to have a voice in shaping the support services available for them and to be able to have a contact with someone in the council. Young cares valued the carer card and the discount card which enables carers to go free for certain activities. The council should continue working with the CCG on health promotion initiatives such as the CCG's 'Together for Health' and the 'Just Be' website.
What we should do additionally	Increase the variety of training sessions available at the Carers Support Centre to ensure it best reflects the changing needs of carers in Croydon for example, stress management and managing challenging behaviour. Carers should be able to get discounts in a variety of locations across Croydon and London, this includes, large retail chains, supermarkets, DIY shops, leisure activities and Fairfield Halls. In addition to this, it was widely acknowledged that there are a number of good support services available in Croydon. However these need to be properly branded as funded by the council and better promoted to ensure more carers benefit from the support. Identifying the council as the funder is key to showing the good standard of the service, so carers know they can trust the organisation, but also to show carers and residents of Croydon, what we are spending their money on. Carers noted that the reliability of the care staff needed to improve, carers identified issues such as care workers not arriving on time or having to cancel at the last minute. Elsewhere, it was noted that the identification of male carers needs to increase, it was therefore suggested that effort was made to raise awareness of male carers in the borough. Croydon Council should work with the NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Trusts to ensure a better hospital discharge as this was identified as an area for development. Concerns were raised over lack of information and advice provided at point of discharge and short notice times provided by the hospital. In addition to this, concerns were raised over the issue of confidentiality and how this can prevent carers from gaining access to the cared for person's records, collecting results, or even providing additional information about the client, this is especially prevalent in mental health service. To support this, South London & Maudsley have produced a guide to confidentiality and carers which could be promoted by Croydon. An area identified for additional support was for former carers, whilst these are still supported by services including Alzheimer's Society, the Carers Support Centre and St Christopher's, it was noted that a small project focussing on supporting these carers to re-establish their lives after their caring role has ceased, would be helpful.

What we should do additionally	It was noted that Croydon Council should work with the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and local general practices to enable them to better identify and support carers. For example, they could include a question on their new patient registration form to help identify carers in Croydon. Young adult carers felt that they wanted to have some 'meet the commissioner' and consultation events in order for them to provide feedback and speak directly to those in charge. This could include a variety of commissioners and senior social workers. In addition to this, they wanted to have healthy living/cookery courses. Interestingly, carers said that we focus too much on the negatives of caring, and that more should be done to promote the positive aspects of caring. From this carers suggested initiatives such as opportunities for mentoring.
How success will be measured	Number of carers receiving benefits advice and the amount of benefits identified (£) for carers. Number of carers receiving a discount card and the number of discounts available for carers. Use the NHS Digital Carers' Survey. Increase identification methods for referring carers from health and social care professionals.

Theme	Leaving no child behind
Outcomes for carers	• Young carers are supported into adulthood and able to lead independent lives. • Increased identification of and support for young carers and young adult carers in schools and colleges. • Parent carers are supported to best enable them to care for their ill or disabled child.
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Carers and professionals noted there are a number of useful projects in Croydon to support young carers, young adult carers and parent carers. For example, Off the Record who provide peer support to both young carers and young adult carers, in addition to providing information and advice, assessments for young carers and activity days, events and socials for carers and families. Moreover it was noted that in Croydon we have good provision of counselling for young people in schools and colleges and many young carers are able to receive funded support from their schools. Carers also found the free swimming for under 16s a useful initiative during the summer holidays. Elsewhere, carers and professionals noted that Parents in Partnership (among many other services) are good at supporting parent carers in Croydon by providing peer support, information and advice, and 1-to-1 holistic support. Some carers felt that they had been support well in their school and identified early. They also noted homework clubs were a useful resource. In addition to this, the support provided for young adult carers in college and at university was helpful and should continue. Croydon provides support to help people return to work or to find employment. It was noted that this service needs to be better publicised so that parent carers can make use of this service, for example after a period of caring for a young person.
What we should do additionally	Increase awareness raising of young carers and young adult carers in schools and colleges e.g. with talks from Off the Record. Moreover it was suggested that Croydon Council works with the schools to undertake a competition for Croydon schools, to enable us to identify more young carers and provide them with the necessary support. Look into ways to tackle the stigma of young people and males coming forward for support. Carers identified that general practitioners need a greater understanding of young carers and young adult carers. It was noted that they needed a better understanding of how to identify young carers and young adult carers and what support is available for them. Furthermore, carers discussed the importance of all adult social care staff having knowledge and an understanding of young carers and young adult carers; knowing that it is not just the responsibility of children's services and that many young carers are supporting a parent and therefore would not be known to children's services. Moreover, carers stated that all Croydon Council staff should have some knowledge and understanding, especially those in public face roles and housing departments. Elsewhere, carers suggested that the council should work with the local pharmacies and dentists in Croydon to help identify and refer carers to the Carers Support Centre. Carers suggested that we extend the free swimming scheme for under 16s in the summer holidays to young carers all year round to enable them to stay active and if this could be extended for 17 and 18 year olds. In addition to this, it was suggested that other activities could be explored for inclusion within this scheme. Young adult carers felt that there may be differences in experiences of young carers/young adult carers in the schools in Croydon. To support this, they suggest a review of the support in different schools to ensure we are providing a consistent approach. They suggested that more awareness could be raise via school assemblies etc. Parent carers and professionals noted that Croydon needs to do more work to provide parent carer assessments to better support them in their caring role. Whilst assessments are being done in a combined manner, carers have difficulty accessing parent carer self-assessments or an assessment by an independent organisation. This would be helpful in issues where disputes arise or where parents want to be assessed alone.
How success will be measured	Increased number of young carers and young adult carers being referred for support, specifically looking at the gender divide. Record the percentage of young carers and young adult carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools. Record the percentage of parent carers whose wellbeing has improved using self-report measurement tools.

Theme	A town centre that lifts the whole borough
Outcomes for carers	• Encourage employers in Croydon to become carer friendly, to better support carers in work to stay in work and to support those who would like to get into work • Provide a central hub for all carers to be supported • Meeting these outcomes discussion
	MEETING THESE OUTCOMES
What we should keep doing	Carers and professionals identified a number of services that support this theme, such as the Working Carers Project which encourages employers to become carer friendly, supports carers to stay in work and provides them with a forum in which to share experiences with other carers in similar situations to them. In addition to this, it was noted that the Carers Support Centre was a great facility in the town centre that is able to support carers face-to-face, online or via the telephone, whilst enabling carers to meet other carers and enjoy a variety of the health and wellbeing activities, workshops and education sessions provided at the centre. Furthermore, carers noted that Croydon Mencap's office, Mind in Croydon and Horizon Care & Welfare Association have useful bases in various areas in the town centre. Generally it was considered that services for carers are inclusive for all groups, ethnicities and religions. Carers stated that this was imperative and that work should continue to ensure that this is the case.
What we should do additionally	Croydon should increase the support available to support people with disabilities to volunteer or take paid work. Work with community groups and the police to support carers to feel safer in the borough. Carers noted that it would be more accessible for them if the Carers Support Centre was open at different times outside of Monday to Friday 10:00 till 16:00. For example, some Saturday mornings would be useful and some evenings. Additional opening hours could therefore be piloted. Croydon Council staff want to see Croydon Council as a flagship organisation in terms of implementing its carer friendly workplace policies. Working carers at the council recognised that it has supportive policies such as agile working, however the implementation of these policies was dependent on the individual line manager. Therefore managers should be better informed to ensure that these policies are fully implemented. It was noted that Croydon Council's Employee Assistance Programme is supportive to all staff including carers, especially the offer for 6 face-to-face counselling sessions, consideration was suggested here to increase this number for carers, especially those undertaking a long term or intensive caring role. Increase promotion of the Working Carers Project. It was noted that Croydon is one of a few boroughs that has this type of project, we therefore need additional effort to promote this to ensure it achieves its outcomes.
How success will be measured	Record the number of organisations that engage with the Working Carers' Project and the number that sign up to being carer friendly. Record activity levels for employment advice sessions and record the number of carers supported into work. Record activity levels of attendance at the Carers Support Centre on George Street and hold a centralised carers' register. Varied opening times at the Carers Support Centre that responds to carer need

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Carers Information Service

CROYDON HELP FOR CARERS
We help carers to care

pip PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP Croydon

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Croydon Neighbourhood Care