

# Becoming a short break carer or scheme worker for a child with disabilities



**SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**  
RESOURCE TEAM



## Becoming a Short Break Carer or Scheme Worker for a child with disabilities

We offer a range of short break services for children and young people who have a disability and have undergone an assessment of need. We are looking to recruit people to fill the following roles:

- Short Break Carer (home based); where a child/young person visits the carer's home for a number of hours per week or an overnight stay
- Activity Scheme Worker during school holidays and on Saturdays.

These services are intended to offer children/young people positive opportunities and provide a break for parents from their caring responsibilities.

Services are registered and inspected by Ofsted and we aim to offer a high quality service which involves parents and young people in development and review.

*Carers/Scheme Worker will receive an allowance /payment and support.*

### ● What types of people are thought suitable to be carers?

We need people from all backgrounds reflecting Croydon's diverse population both male and female.

Some of our existing carers have families with children still at home, some with grown up children, some are single.

We need carers/scheme workers from a range of ethnicities, cultures and religious backgrounds so that we can meet the differing needs of those requiring a service.

Previous experience with children/young people who have a disability is an advantage but not essential.

We currently have a shortage of carers who can support those with challenging behaviour or provide for a severely physically disabled child/young person with medical needs. (See later for more details about schemes and requirements of scheme workers.)



## Home Based Short Break Carers

### ● With how many children/young people would I be linked?

A new carer is linked initially with one child/young person. As carers become more experienced, they may feel able to take on another link and some of our most experienced carers support three children/young people or more.

### ● How often would I care for the child/young person?

This would depend on your availability, life style, other commitments and the needs of the child/young person. Some people offer a number of hours every week e.g. after school for tea; others a weekend each month.

The main demand for links is after school, during the holidays and at weekends. What matters most is the regularity of the breaks which allows parents to plan a day or night out in advance and enables the child/young person to become used to the routine.

We need carers with availability and flexibility to respond to children's and families needs.

### ● What would I have to do?

The child would visit your home and become involved in activities with you at home or in the local community. Tasks might include dressing, feeding, bathing, changing, toileting her/him, play, learning new skills and developing a greater independence. You might be taking the child/young person out to an activity, sport or a special event. It is important that all your immediate family is involved in the assessment process.

### ● With whom would I be linked?

We will establish your own views about the needs and age of a child/young person that you feel would best fit in with your life style and with whom you would feel most comfortable. Practical issues such as wheelchair access are taken into account in developing a link between a carer and a child/young person.



## How do I apply to become a carer?

- Stage 1** If having read this leaflet you wish to apply ring 020 8726 6400 and ask to speak to the Duty Officer (Resource Team). The Duty Officer will take some details from you about your interest, motivation and experience and you will have the opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the contribution which carers make.
- Stage 2** You will be sent an application form to complete and return to us. You will then be contacted by a member of the Team who will arrange to visit you. They would begin to explore what you and your family feel you have to offer a family who have a disabled child.
- Stage 3** You will then be asked to take part in a short series of preparation/ training groups (two Saturdays) to learn more about the task, service and issues relating to disability.
- Stage 4** After this training a Team member will complete a detailed formal assessment (including Criminal Records Bureau and other checks, medical and personal references) to ensure that a safe and suitable link can be made supported by all parties. The report is submitted to Croydon's Foster Panel who considers and approves carers. Following this links are made with children and families.

First Aid and Moving and Handling training must be undertaken before a link is made. Applicants will be expected to attend training on an ongoing basis.

### ● How do Home Based Carers meet their linked child/young person?

First we will discuss potential links with you and determine which child/young person seems to be the most suitable link.

We will then give you written information provided by the child/young person and her/his family which will contain all the practical details you might need, e.g. about eating, sleeping patterns, essential medical information and emergency numbers.



We arrange meetings, at which one of our Supervising Social Workers will be present, in your home and in the child/young person's home. You may also visit the child/young person at school.

At this stage you, or perhaps the child/young person's family, may conclude that the link would not work. If this happens, the link would not progress.

If both families wish to go ahead we will arrange a series of short introductory visits, and the Supervising Social Worker will be in regular contact to offer advice and assistance.

## Activity Schemes

There are a number of Schemes, available to children/young people with disabilities, managed by the Resource Team Service for Children with Disabilities.

- **Summer Schemes and Half Term Schemes**

Schemes take place during school holidays. Over the summer holidays the scheme runs for 3 weeks. During other holidays activities are available for a number of days each week.

The scheme for secondary school age youngsters is held at Shirley High School. The one for primary school age children is held at Oasis Children's Centre, Shirley Park.

- **Saturday Schemes**

The Saturday Schemes run during term time only; on alternate weeks for the different age groups listed above. The scheme for secondary age youngsters takes place at the Peppermint Centre in Valley Park. The scheme for primary age children takes place at Oasis Children's Centre, Shirley Park.

The schemes offer activities and social opportunities for children with a wide range of disabilities and are open to children/young people referred by the Service for Children with Disabilities.



## ● How do I apply to become a Scheme Worker?

- Stage 1** If having read this leaflet you wish to apply ring 020 8726 6400 and ask to speak to the Duty Officer (Resource Team). Applicants must be over the age of 18 years. Details will be taken from you by the Duty Officer including information about your interest, motivation and experience.
- Stage 2** You will be sent an application form to complete and return to us. You will then be invited for interview at the office. A Criminal Records Bureau check, medical details and personal references will be required.
- Stage 3** If successful you will be invited to attend training including First Aid and Moving and Handling.

## What does Croydon Council offer carers/scheme workers?

You are paid an allowance which is related to the length of time a child/young person spends with you or the hours you work on the Scheme.

Carers can also be provided with equipment e.g. car seats, special chairs, or extra bedding.

We will offer training and support throughout and have an expectation of attendance at these activities. Home based carers work to meet the Children's Workforce Development Council Standards for short break carers. You will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker who will visit you and the family with whom you are linked at regular intervals and offer whatever advice and assistance is required.

Scheme Workers are supported by the Scheme Co-ordinators.

Annual Reviews take place for carers and Scheme Workers.



## Contact details

If you enjoy the company of children and think that you have the time to include a child/young person with a disability in your life, please contact:

The Duty Officer at Services for Children with Disabilities  
(Resource Team), CYPL

Croydon Council, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon CR9 1TP  
☎ **020 8726 6400** 🌐 **[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)**

### ● **Comments, Complaints and Compliments:**

We welcome your ideas and comments; if you receive an excellent service or have suggestions about how services can be improved, please let us know.

### ● **Access to records**

In order to provide help it is necessary to collect information about you. This information is confidential and will not ordinarily be disclosed without your agreement.

A leaflet which explains in more detail what rights you have and how to gain access is available from the Service.

