**Age UK Croydon (AUKC) Advice Service**

Age UK Croydon (AUKC) Advice Service, that will provide residents over 55s social care advice and casework support on welfare benefits which leads to income maximisation, and other financial support including advocacy and debt management, started on 1 February 2023.

This is a pilot project for 12 months, commencing 1st February 2023 to 31st January 2024.

Eligibility Criteria for the service:

* Age: 55 and above
* Croydon residents and/or registered with a Croydon GP

The service offers support on:

* Attendance Allowance advice/application
* Welfare Benefit Check
* Council Tax Support advice/application
* Travel Concessions (Blue Badge, Taxicard, Disabled Person’s / Older Person’s Freedom Pass)
* Pension Credit advice/application
* Housing Benefit advice/application
* Housing advice/application
* Community Care advice
* Financial Advocacy (including debt, LPA)

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| **Financial Advocacy – what this entails**Advocacy involves taking action to support people to say what they want, secure their rights, pursue their interests, and obtain services they need. Advocates work in partnership with the people they support and take their side, promoting social inclusion, equality and social justice. (Definition in Advocacy Charter developed by NDTI).Advocacy is the name given to the ways in which people can be enabled to get their message, views and wishes across. The emphasis is on empowering people, not solving their problems for them.  In Age UK Croydon’s Information & Advice Service, advocacy is offered alongside information and advice but is separate from them. It is not the same as legal representation.Age UK Croydon’s Financial Advocate is qualified to provide financial advocacy. This entails supporting clients and advocating for them to resolve their debt and money issues. The LPA element involves enabling clients to understand the purpose and process of applying for Lasting Power of Attorney, and helping them complete the forms. In doing so he places the client at the center of the process, ensuring that their wishes are followed.  |

Clients can self-refer by contacting AUKC directly.

ASC colleagues who wish to make a referral should fully complete the referral form (attached) and emailing them to asc@ageukcroydon.org.uk. Please note that only referrals to asc@ageukcroydon.org.uk will be accepted. Please do not contact the AUKC advisors directly.

Referrals for under 55s will be reviewed on case-by-case basis for suitability. To support with this, Croydon Adult Support will be running weekly open surgeries via Teams, every Wednesday 3-4pm to review these referrals. The team will support ASC referrers to identify alternative support for the client where possible. If the Croydon Adult Support team have triaged the case and other support is not available/appropriate, a referral can be made to AUKC with a clear reason for this exception to be given.

You can access the Age UK Croydon Advice Service – Open Surgery with Croydon Adult Support via MS Teams: [**Click here to join the meeting**](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_MTE0MjZiNDAtZmUxNy00ZDM1LThjNTQtNjM4MTI2MWM0OWVm%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%224d9493d1-6949-48eb-9717-85046eca20e8%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22f992e34b-4a9d-4550-acc9-55741dca50d4%22%7d)