



## CROYDON EPILEPSY SOCIETY

### Autumn NEWSLETTER

We hope that all our members are keeping well and managing to continue with their daily lives despite the continued restrictions still on us as a result of COVID 19.

It is important to keep positive despite the recent government announcements that we may be due to have a second phase and that necessary action will be taken to stop this from happening.

It is important that we all try and follow government advice on wearing masks and social distancing. **Please find time to download the new free NHS COVID19 app on your mobile phone as part of the Test and Trace Service.**

<https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/>

Our **2020 AGM** was due to take place on the 19th May during **National Epilepsy Week**. We were going to rearrange it, however, due to the latest Government policy of limiting meetings to six people, we have decided to cancel the AGM this year and perhaps hold an online update through Zoom at a later date.

We are not sure if many of you managed to get away for a break during the summer. I was intending to go away with my partner for two weeks at the end of June to Cornwall. Due to travel restrictions in place at the time this was cancelled but I managed to rearrange for early September when restrictions were relaxed. I was apprehensive about what would be available but we managed to visit most of the places we wanted such as the Eden Project and the Gardens of Heligan.

We have all been going through a difficult time as a result of the pandemic. Many people have had to self isolate alone. Others have been furloughed or lost their jobs as a result. **Chancellor Rishi Sunak** has revealed details of a **Job Support Scheme** that will replace furlough when it closes on 31 October.

The Job Support Scheme will run for six months from 1 November. It will top up salaries in firms which can't take employees back full-time.

To be eligible, employees must work for at least one-third of their normal hours. For the hours not worked, the government and employer will each pay one-third of the remaining wages. This means the employee would get at least 77% of their pay. Also the government has now changed their advice about encouraging workers to return to their workplaces if possible and are now saying to continue to work from home.



Families and friends have not been able to see or hug each other for a long period of time. Hopefully the majority of our members have not fallen to the COVID19 symptoms and have remained well and have not had to suffer losing loved ones.

But can we find any uplifting or positive elements that have emerged from all this difficult time? There are some to consider. I am sure we all have played an important part in trying to get back to the “new” norm...wearing our masks, social distancing and supporting our beloved NHS.

Here a few **uplifting thoughts** from our Chairman Marco:

### **Love thy neighbour**

In modern times never before have we been more aware about our neighbours wellbeing. From doing the shopping for your elderly neighbour to picking up medications for those who can't leave their homes.

### **Free Virtual Concerts**

Musicians, poets, dancers and entertainers giving their time and showing their talents for FREE online to their neighbours. And libraries throughout the country including Croydon are continuing with the Children's Rhyme Time sessions for parents and carers to look at via the internet.

### **Nature has had time to breath and heal**

For a short period with fewer vehicles on the roads, planes in the air, trains on tracks and Cruise Ships in our waters Mother Earth has gone through a brief healing process. Wildlife has had a boost across the UK. wildlife has benefitted from the lack of pollution from vehicles and presence of humans. With the return of children to school, traffic levels have begun to increase again with the school run. But we can still think about walking more rather than use the car for a short journey and to follow the countryside code when out and about.

### **New Norm = New Hobbies**

Those who have had to stay indoors, for whatever reason, have had the time to learn new skills, take up new hobbies. There has been a big demand for cooking utensils as households try new dishes. Some have taken up a new instrument. Others have tried to learn a new language. People have new computer and digital skills to stay in touch with their loved ones via Zoom, Facebook or Whatsapp. Others have decided to keep fit or start a fitness regime..from a simple walk in the park to free keep fit sessions online.However some venues are beginning to open again like our local libraries although with limited hours and access.

### **Finally - Appreciation for our Key workers**

NHS staff, cleaners, Carehomes staff, refuse collectors, post workers, volunteers, doctors, dentists, bus drivers, train drivers, emergency social welfare workers and even milkmen to name but a few are the real heroes. They continue to be in the frontline in the battle against Coronavirus. Working long hours attending to patients, cleaning surfaces and toilets, collecting our rubbish, delivering our posts, feeding the homeless and the vulnerable, taking people to work, visiting domestic abuse victims and delivering our milk and eggs. Under very difficult and demanding circumstances they kept us going and made our days easier. Where would we be without them?

**Coronavirus has brought us together like never before and may that community spirit long continue far into the future.**

## People First Update

In July we made a donation to People First for £500 to help set up a hub in Croydon. Due to COVID 19 the project has been delayed but we will report back when any further updates are received.

People First help and support those with disabilities in the Croydon area.

<https://www.croydonpeoplefirst.org.uk/>

## Risks to Pregnant Mothers

In July the media reported the scandal about pregnant mothers not being told of the risks of taking the **anti-epilepsy drug sodium valproate**. Hundreds of babies are being born each year to mothers who were unaware their medication could harm them in the womb. It is thought that as many as 20,000 infants were badly affected by the drug. Regulators knew of the risks as far back as 1973 but it was not until 2015 that clear warnings were published. Even now some women are taking the medication while pregnant without any knowledge of the risks, the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review found.

<https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk/sodium-valproate>

## If you need urgent support

If you are living on your own and are still unable to get out to buy food and other essentials like medications please contact local help agencies such as Help the Aged or your local council. See below for Croydon Council details.

The council continues to have a dedicated helpline for residents who need urgent help as a result of COVID-19. Call: 020 8604 7787 – open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/public/coronavirus-covid-19-message-us>

Other information can be found on-line:

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/daily-life/safety/coronavirus-covid-19>

## Register on GOV.UK for support Update

The service is not open for new registrations because people aren't being advised to shield in most of England from 1 August 2020. If you've already registered and got priority access to supermarket deliveries, you'll keep it

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

## Useful Information:

### Croydon Health Services Neurology Department:

**If you are a local support group requesting more information on epilepsy** and for a speaker to come to your group to talk about epilepsy and the support available to those who may have epilepsy or be a carer for someone who has the condition - please email for general enquiries [ch-trspecialistmedicine1@nhs.net](mailto:ch-trspecialistmedicine1@nhs.net).

**There is an Epilepsy Nurse Hotline/Advice telephone number which is open to GP's and patients (who are already known to the Epilepsy Service).** If you are registered with a Croydon GP and under the care of a Croydon Neurologist and feel

this service would benefit you please discuss with your GP who would be able to provide you with the telephone number.

**The Croydon Carers Support Centre drop in**, in George Street, Croydon is currently not open to provide support to carers. However they can still be contacted by phone on 020 8649 9339,option1 or email at [info@carersinfo.org.uk](mailto:info@carersinfo.org.uk)  
<https://www.whitgiftfoundation.co.uk/content/carers-support-centre>

**Croydon Age UK** normally offers a range of practical home services for everyone living in the local area, especially those in later life. However, these services may be reduced at present due to the corona virus so please contact Tel no: 0208 683 7120, or email [homeservices@ageukcroydon.org.uk](mailto:homeservices@ageukcroydon.org.uk), [www.ageukcroydon.org.uk](http://www.ageukcroydon.org.uk)  
There is also a Helpline no 0208 686 0066 for general enquiries.

## Croydon Epilepsy Society Contact Details

**Please contact us by phone or email.** Please leave a message on our mobile no or text us and we will get back to you asap.

**Further information can be provided by the following national support groups if you need urgent support:**

Epilepsy Action [www.epilepsy.org.uk](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk) Helpline 0808 800 5050  
Epilepsy Society [www.epilepsysociety.org.uk](http://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk) Helpline 01494 60140

Address: 64 Newlands Woods, Bardolph Avenue, Croydon CRO 9JR.  
Mobile No: 07926372711

Email Address: [croydonepilepsy@gmail.com](mailto:croydonepilepsy@gmail.com)

Visit our Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/croydonepilepsysociety](http://www.facebook.com/croydonepilepsysociety)

Web Site: [www.croydonepilepsysociety.org](http://www.croydonepilepsysociety.org)

Twitter: Follow us @croydonepilepsy ( <https://twitter.com/croydonepilepsy> )

## Elected Members

### President

Professor F M C Besag, FRCP, FRCPsych, FRCPCH.

### Vice - Presidents

Yvonne Green

### Honorary Vice - Presidents

Dr P B C Fenwick

Mrs Rosemary Aselford

Mrs Rita Richmond

### Committee Members

Mr Marco Valencia Chairman

Ms Dawn Gibbons Honorary Secretary

Mr Richard Ruffell Honorary Treasurer

## Hands, Face, and Space

