

REPORT TO:	Cabinet 18 January 2016
AGENDA ITEM:	12
SUBJECT:	Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015
LEAD OFFICER:	Sarah Ireland Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Watson Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

The Council's Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 provides an update on the progress made in implementing the statutory equality objectives that are set out in the Interim Equality and Inclusion Policy 2014-16 to reduce inequality and promote opportunity and fairness for all communities in the borough. It is aligned with the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan. The Equality and Inclusion Annual Report sets out the progress made in line with the statutory duty to publish information each year.

AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON AND WHY ARE WE DOING THIS:

This Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 supports the Council's ambition to reduce inequality and promote opportunity and fairness for all of our communities by working with partners in the public, business and voluntary sectors in order to secure better outcomes for all.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The financial implications of the Council's plans and annual report for achieving its corporate equality objectives are contained within the Council's budget and Financial Strategy. Beyond the reports production costs, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO:

This is not a key executive decision.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1 Approve the Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015.
- 2 Agree that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice to make minor amendments or add additional information to the draft Equality and Inclusion Annual Report and to agree the report for publication by the 31 January 2016.
- 3 To note the information required to be published in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 (the report) provides an update on the progress made in implementing the statutory equality and inclusion priorities as set out in the Interim Equality and Inclusion Policy agreed by Cabinet in March 2015. (Cabinet Minutes section 41/15).

2.2 The Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 supports the Council to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in the Equality Act 2010. The PSED is made up of a **general equality duty** which is supported by **specific duties**. The general equality duty requires the Council, in the exercise of functions, to have “due regard” to the need to:

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.

The **specific duty** requires the council to:

- Annually publish information to demonstrate how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This information must relate to people who are affected by the Council's policies and practices such as service users and employees
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years

2.3 The information included in this report is drawn from a range of sources from across the Council, including work delivered through the:

- The themed partnerships and the Council's contractors.
- Review of updates on the corporate plan
- Departmental service plans

2.4 It has also involved identifying activities that demonstrate good practice on equality and working with activity leads to gather more detailed information on how these initiatives have delivered positive outcomes for local people, particularly those that are most vulnerable and may experience exclusion. This information has been used to produce some good practice stories that describe the positive impact of some of the equality and inclusion initiatives that the Council implemented during the previous year.

2.5 The Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 is structured around six strategic priorities:

- Make Croydon a place of opportunity and fairness by tackling inequality, disadvantage and exclusion.
- Foster good community relations and cohesion by getting to know our diverse communities and understand their needs.
- Encourage local people to be independent and resilient by providing responsive and accessible services offering excellent customer care.
- Improve empowerment and participation by strengthening partnership work with community, faith and voluntary sectors.
- Provide strong leadership, partnership and organisational commitment by enabling staff and communities to find solutions to the things that matter most to them.
- Become an employer of choice by recruiting, developing and retaining an efficient, talented and motivated workforce that broadly reflects the communities that we serve at all levels.

Each section of the report sets out the current equality and inclusion policy priorities (listed above) and a summary of the key activities and projects that the Council has focused on over the last year to deliver them.

It also contains good practice stories that aim to provide an overview of how the Council has worked in partnership with our statutory, voluntary and community partners and engaged with our customers to deliver equality initiatives that support work on improving service outcomes for diverse communities in the borough.

2.6 The Council's current equality and inclusion policy priorities 2014 -16, follow from the enactment of the Equality Act 2010 (Act), which includes the public sector equality duty (PSED), further details are set out in section 3 of this report.

2.7 The priorities set out in the Interim Equality and Inclusion Policy provide a framework for taking forward the Council's agenda and cover all the Council's functions as a community leader, a provider and commissioner of services and an employer.

2.8 The Council aims to ensure that equality performance and analysis is explicitly integrated into existing sources of published information. In June 2014 Cabinet agreed the corporate plan setting out its ambitions supported by a set of outcomes and performance measures which is reported to cabinet separately. The good practice examples found in the annual Equality and Inclusion Report 2015 describes the initiatives that support progress towards delivering corporate outcomes.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act), contains the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Act that came into force on 5 April 2011. The duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. Nine characteristics are protected in law and these include age, gender, disability, race, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, and gender reassignment
- 3.2 The Act and PSED support good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.
- 3.3 The PSED is made up of a general equality duty which is supported by specific duties. The 'public sector equality duty' is the formal title of the duty, the 'general equality duty' is the overarching requirement or substance of the duty, and the 'specific duties' are intended to enable better performance of the general equality duty.
- 3.4 The general equality duty requires the Council, in the exercise of functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- 3.5 The Council is also required to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty. In addition:
- All listed bodies (except schools and pupil referral units) must do this at least annually by 31 January;
 - Schools and pupil referral units must do this, at least annually by 6 April
- 3.6 This information must relate to people who are:
- The Council's employees
 - Affected by its policies and practices (for example, service users).
- 3.7 The Council, like most public sector organisations, publishes an annual report setting out the progress it makes implementing the equality objectives and its arrangements for publishing information. At **appendix one** is the Council's Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 (minor updates to the draft report will be completed by the date of final publication 31 January 2016).

4. REASON FOR DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO AMEND THE REPORT

- 4.1 There may a need to add in additional information in the form of case studies or make minor amendments to the draft Equality and Inclusion Annual Report before it is published on 31 January 2016.

This is necessary because the case studies in the report are recent and some of the information may need to be updated.

5. ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLISHING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council is required to publish information which demonstrates compliance with the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (paragraph 3.4 above) annually by 31 January. The annual Equality and Inclusion Report 2015 is the document that contains information on the Council's good practice and demonstrates compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Schools are also required to publish information by 6 April annually.

- 4.2 The Council uses existing routes for publication rather than establishing new ones. This will involve making information available on its website (internal and external). Also Equality Analysis information is included in reports for decision at cabinet and other Council committees as well as in the Croydon Observatory.

- 4.3 To demonstrate and comply with the Equality Duty, the Council publishes information including needs assessments, workforce profiles, access to and the take-up of services, performance, satisfaction surveys, complaints and engagement. All information where available and appropriate to do so is disaggregated or broken down by protected characteristics as well as making explicit reference to the aims of the public sector equality duty. This information is free and accessible to the public.

- 4.4 The types of information includes Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA); Crime Assessments, Children's Needs Analysis, Local Account of Social Care, an Economic bulletin, a Public Health Annual Report as well as data about the boroughs demographic and deprivation profiles found on the Croydon's Observatory. The workforce profile and staff survey results are also published using existing communication channels.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Croydon Council aims to be an excellent authority for all of its communities, working with partners in the public, business, voluntary and community sectors to deliver the highest standard of equalities practice in securing better outcomes for local people.

- 5.2 The Council will use the Opportunity and Fairness Commission's (OFC) research and findings on the key areas of inequality in the borough, the recommendations that will be set out in the OFC final report and the information on issues of deprivation and disadvantage that are highlighted in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015) to set its statutory equality and objectives for 2016-20. A report will be presented at

cabinet in March 2016 setting out the council's new equality objectives that will define the borough's longer term vision for fairness and will set out the outcomes and performance measures that the Council will focus on to address inequality.

5.3 The Council's ambition is to be recognised for its excellent equality and inclusion policy and practice. The Council's equality and inclusion objectives for 2016 onwards will be closely aligned to the strategic themes of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The EFLG is a national benchmark that many local authorities and other public bodies use to measure their organisational performance on equality and inclusion and put in place improvement plans. The EFLG consists of five cross-cutting and performance driven principles which are aligned with the PSED. These are:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

It has three levels of achievement; 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent'.

5.4 The EFLG principles will be adopted and translated into our equality and inclusion objectives for 2016 onwards and will provide a framework to manage performance and service improvement across the council and the Local Strategic Partnership. They will also enable Croydon Council to continue its journey to be an excellent authority for all of its communities.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation was carried out when drafting the Interim Equality and Inclusion Policy. Please see Cabinet Reports, 16 March 2015, Item 14 (section7)) for further details.

<https://secure.croydon.gov.uk/akscroydon/users/public/admin/kabatt.pl?cmte=CAB&meet=34&href=/akscroydon/images/att5186.doc>

6.2 The Council's programme of equality analysis for 2015-16 is also used to consult with residents and other stakeholders on equality and inclusion issues. This is set out in the **Equality and Inclusion Report** at **appendix 1**. The Council's governance framework for equality analysis places a responsibility on Directors, Head of Service and Officers to ensure that robust consultation takes place to support the equality analysis programme for 2015-16.

7. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The Council's Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 incorporates the council's public sector equality duties as well as the national equality service improvement framework. It demonstrates the Council's compliance with the current legal framework.

- 7.2 Failure to implement and annually report on the Council's Equality and Inclusion priorities and actions will expose the Council to risk of claims for breach of statutory duty. Failing to implement actions identified in the equality analysis conducted to support decision-making or compliance with the public sector equality duties will also expose the Council to risk.
- 7.3 The Equality and Inclusion Annual Report is published in an electronic format and does not incur a publication cost to the Council. The number of hard copies produced will be the minimum required to reduce cost.
- 7.4 Publication of the Equality and inclusion Annual Report will incur production costs. The Annual report must be accessible and therefore made available in different formats, in summary and electronically - on the Council's website and intranet. Provision for this is available from existing budgets available to the Resources Department.

1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations

The cost of producing the Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 is found from existing budgets.

2 The effect of the decision

The approval of the Equality and Inclusion Annual Report will have no effect on the current financial situation. Action has been delivered in accordance with the risk management process. Equality analysis (impact assessments) that relate to Council activity including that delivered by themed partnerships has been incorporated into the risk management register for the Local Strategic Partnership.

3 Risks

The approval of the Equality and Inclusion Annual Report will have no effect on the current financial situation.

4 Options

Delivery of activity found in the action plan is subject to financial resources. Decisions to change or stop a function or activity will be subject to equality analysis of its impact. A cut in funding could risk the delivery of the strategy and its objectives.

5 Future savings/efficiencies

There are no savings or efficiencies associated with the approval of this report.

(Approved by: Lisa Taylor, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer on behalf of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer)

8. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 8.1 The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer comments that this Equality and Inclusion Annual Report will contribute to the fulfilment of the Council's statutory duties to advance equalities, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations within the functions it provides in the borough and to its workforce. The requirement to demonstrate compliance and publish information is contained in the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties Regulations) 2011. There are no additional legal considerations beyond those detailed in the body of the report.

(Approved by: Gabriel Macgregor, Head of Corporate Law on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer)

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 9.1 An equality objective and related measures in this strategy align with the Council's Human Resources Delivery Action Plan. Equality is integral to everything the council does as an organisation and in partnership with others including becoming an employer of choice.

(Approved by: Heather Daley, Director of Human Resources)

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1 Consultation was carried out when drafting the Interim Equality and Inclusion Policy. Please see Cabinet Reports, 16 March 2015, Item 14 (section7) for further details.

<https://secure.croydon.gov.uk/akscroydon/users/public/admin/kabatt.pl?cmte=CAB&meet=34&href=/akscroydon/images/att5186.doc>

- 10.2 The detailed equality analysis that was completed for the development of the Equality Strategy 2012-16 and feedback from the consultation that was carried out for the Interim Equality and Inclusion Policy 2014- 16 (please see link in section 6) supports the current equality and inclusion policy priorities that were published in March 2015. A link to the equality analysis is below:

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/EqIAEqStrategy.pdf>

- 10.3 Equality analysis of geographic inequality and that related to people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not is embedded in the borough profile that can be accessed through <http://www.croydonobservatory.org/>
- 10.4 Further information about thematic inequalities will be found in borough-wide documents such as the annual health report, crime analysis or workforce profile. In addition the council's programme of equality analysis will provide evidence of need relating to specific policies and published with the relevant reports, where appropriate to do so.
- 10.5 A detailed equality analysis to set the new statutory objectives for 1 April 2016 will be provided through the work of the Croydon Opportunity and Fairness Commission.

The work of the Opportunity and Fairness Commission is essentially an extensive analysis of equality and inclusion issues in the borough.

- 10.6 Any agreed recommendations from the Opportunity and Fairness Commission report will support and inform future budget decisions, the development of statutory equality objectives required by 1 April 2016, as well as a new corporate Equality and Inclusion Strategy and borough-wide Community Strategy.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None specifically identified.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 12.1 Equality objectives, measures and actions related to community safety are identified in the Interim Equality and Inclusion Policy and are aligned with the Crime Reduction Strategy.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 13.1 To support the Council to demonstrate its transparency and fairness in its operations as well as compliance with its public sector equality general duty and specific duties as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

14. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 14.1 None.

CONTACT OFFICER: Sharon Godman, Head of Strategy and Communities,
020 8604 7034

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDIX attached

Appendix to item 12
Cabinet 18 January 2016

CROYDON COUNCIL

Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015

Draft v.13

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Foreword - Cabinet Member

As the portfolio holder for the communities, safety and justice agenda, I am pleased to introduce the Council's Equality and Inclusion Annual report for 2015-16.

Equality and inclusion is integral to everything we do as a Council, whether it is the services we provide, the money we spend or the people we employ. A fundamental tenet of our pledge to be ambitious for Croydon is to achieve the highest standards of excellence in equality and inclusion practice, working closely with our partners in the public, business and voluntary sectors.

This administration wants Croydon to be a **stronger, fairer borough where no community is held back**. We want the council to reflect the diversity of the borough and focus on embedding equality and inclusion in all that we do and provide community leadership to encourage and support our partners in Croydon to share this ambition.

This annual report sets out some significant steps the Council has taken over the past year to embed equality and inclusion throughout the organisation. It sets out examples through a series of case studies that describe the different ways the council is seeking to ensure that our services are fair, inclusive and accessible to our residents. A lot of good work is being delivered and some examples include:

- Gaining accreditation as a London Living Wage employer
- Establishing an independent Opportunity and Fairness Commission
- Holding a high profile campaign and activities to address domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Establishing a flexible working policy
- Launching the Go ON Croydon project to address digital exclusion
- Developing the Jobs Brokerage Service
- Introducing a new approach to service delivery through the "People's Gateway",
- Launching "Steps to Success" programme to support young people into education, training and employment
- Using "Value Croydon" initiative to integrate equality and inclusion into the council's procurement framework

The good practice stories provide evidence that we have made significant progress in our journey towards achieving excellence for our equality and inclusion practices. This progress has also been recognised through the Council being shortlisted for the *Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion* (enei) "Community Impact" Award in 2015. However, we are not complacent and recognise that there are still many inequality and fairness challenges in the borough that we need to focus on by working in collaboration with our partners.

Over the next year, we will build on these foundations by setting out new equality outcomes and measures that will be influenced by the work of the Opportunity and Fairness Commission, the borough profile and index of multiple deprivation so that we achieve the excellence that we aspire to.

I look forward to sharing the improvements that we make in 2016 with you in our next Equality and Inclusion Report.

Councillor Mark Watson
Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice
Introduction

The Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015, provides an update on the progress that we have made in delivering the statutory equality and inclusion priorities and improving outcomes of services that we provide to our customers.

The information included in this report is drawn from a range of sources from across the Council, including:

- Review of progress on delivering the priorities that are set out in the interim Equality and Inclusion Policy
- Review of updates on the Corporate Plan
- Update on projects delivered through departmental service plans
- Work undertaken by the themed partnerships
- Work undertaken with the Council's contractors

To produce this report we have identified activities that demonstrate good practice on equality and inclusion and worked with activity leads to produce detailed case studies on how these activities have delivered positive outcomes for local residents, particularly those that are most vulnerable and experience exclusion.

The Equality and Inclusion Annual Report 2015 is structured around the following six strategic priorities:

- Make Croydon a place of opportunity and fairness by tackling inequality, disadvantage and exclusion.
- Foster good community relations and cohesion by getting to know our diverse communities and understand their needs.
- Encourage local people to be independent and resilient by providing responsive and accessible services offering excellent customer care.
- Improve empowerment and participation by strengthening partnership work with community, faith and voluntary sectors.
- Provide strong leadership, partnership and organisational commitment by enabling staff and communities to find solutions to the things that matter most to them.
- Become an employer of choice by recruiting, developing and retaining an efficient, talented and motivated workforce that broadly reflects the communities that we serve at all levels.

Each section of the report sets out the current equality and inclusion policy priorities (listed above) and a summary of the key activities and projects that the Council has focused on over the last year to deliver them.

It also contains good practice stories that provide an overview of how the Council has worked in partnership with our statutory, voluntary and community partners and engaged with our customers to deliver equality initiatives that support work on improving service outcomes for diverse communities in the borough. There are links throughout this document

to relevant publications and initiatives as well as at the appendices where you can find information.

Next Steps

The Council aims to ensure that equality performance and analysis is explicitly integrated into existing sources of published information. In 2015 Council published its Corporate Plan setting out a new set of outcomes and performance measures. One of the key outcomes is to “drive fairness for all local people, communities and places”. To support this, new equality objectives and measures will be designed to measure the disparities in outcomes and the progress towards tackling inequality especially in relation to access and take-up of services, the “gap” in terms of poverty and deprivation, benefits claimant rates, educational attainment, access to employment, housing and homelessness and life expectancy.

In March 2016 the Council will publish its new equality objectives and measures for 2016 – 20 and arrangements will be made to collate information on these measures and report performance for 2016-17. This performance report will enable the Council and our residents to track progress and success in a way that promotes openness, transparency and accountability.

Priority 1	Make Croydon a place of opportunity and fairness by tackling inequality, disadvantage and exclusion.
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The key actions that the Council has taken in 2015 to deliver this outcome are:

- **Established an independent Opportunity and Fairness commission to examine inequality and fairness challenges in the borough and listen to the views of local people about what solutions are needed to make a meaningful difference to their lives.**

Good Practice 1

Croydon Opportunity and Fairness Commission

Set up an independent [Opportunity and Fairness Commission](#) to examine inequality, fairness and inclusion challenges that the borough faces and suggest recommendations on key actions that can create fairer opportunities for residents and improve well-being.

The Commission is chaired by Jonathan Clark, the Bishop of Croydon and has thirteen volunteer commissioners. The Commission has built strong relationships with external partners across the borough. These include local statutory organisations, voluntary organisations, the business community, prospective and current developers, residents associations, community groups that represent residents that share specific equality characteristics such as disability, race, faith, age, sexual orientation etc. Individuals and organisations from all of these areas have engaged with and informed the work of the Commission.

The Commission published an interim report in October 2015. The report suggests some ideas related to the following six broad thematic areas where a partnership approach can be used to address inequality and opportunity challenges in the borough:

- Vibrant, Responsible and Connected Communities
- A town centre that lifts the whole borough
- Leaving no child behind
- Creating a connected borough where no one is isolated
- Finding homes for all
- Supporting residents towards better times

The Croydon Opportunities and Fairness Commission have reached out to over 3000 local people – more than any other commission across the country. Engagement and conversations have taken place in person, through surveys, informal conversations, walkabouts; via video; online – surveys; social media and the use of the DIY engagement toolkit. The Commission has also held public events to stimulate discussion and provide a collaborative space for discussion on solutions to social problems. Speakers included John Hills, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science

and Lord Maurice Glasman, a peer in the House of Lords.

The Commission has used an asset-based approach to understand the economic and social challenges that residents in the borough face and define practical solutions. It has successfully brought together individuals and organisations across the borough and has provided a platform for local people's voices to be heard. In particular, the Commission has proactively engaged with those residents that are most vulnerable and generally disengaged. These include over 100 young people, majority of whom have Special Educational Needs, who took part in workshops to share their views on the specific inequality issues and suggest solutions. The Commission also carried out in-depth interviews with food banks users, users of temporary accommodation, homeless people, people suffering from social isolation and loneliness, and young people in need of support to understand the challenges they face and define solutions that may work for them. The focus has been to define activities that support the improvement of the skills and capabilities of local people to enable them to access opportunities to improve life chances and overall well-being.

The Commission is now working with key partners in the borough to discuss the key suggestions included in the interim report to address inequality and create opportunities for those residents that face disadvantage. These will be used produce the final report that will set out a number of policy recommendations that the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership can take forward to plan targeted interventions to address economic and social disadvantage in the borough.

Good Practice 2

Young Opportunity and Fairness Commission

The Young Opportunity and Fairness Commission (YOFC) was set up as part of the Croydon Opportunity and Fairness Commission to young people are effectively engaged and involved in the commission's work.

The role of the YOFC was to ensure that young people were given the opportunity to have their voices heard and express their views. The YOFC project was planned and managed in three stages:

Set-up

The aim of this stage was to initiate and agree activity with young people through:

- Public advert – social media, word-of-mouth, online – to call for young people to join a meeting to hear more about the Opportunity and Fairness Commission, and the YOFC.
- Introductory meeting to introduce interested young people to the project, and ask them to express interest to take part.
- Initial meeting of interested young people to set out YOFC priorities and brainstorm delivery ideas.
- A group of young people agreed to be part of the project, and meet fortnightly, to steer and deliver YOFC activity.

Delivery

The aim of this stage was to collect evidence from young people and experts on the priority inequality and fairness issues that were identified in stage 1. The tools used include:

- 'What's unfair' social media photo competition – this aimed to get young people to share their views on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Workshops with youth groups, including groups providing for children with Special Educational Needs, to gain insight into the issues young people face – this included a drawing competition. These were set up via Play Place, Croydon Council and schools in Croydon.
- Online survey of young people in Croydon asking for their views on the priority issues and what the solutions are.
- Expert questioning sessions with stakeholders from Croydon College and Mind in Croydon.

Reporting

The aim of this stage was to analyse the evidence collected, identify the key problems young people face and making recommendations for solutions to be shared with the Opportunity and Fairness Commission.

Young Commissioners analysed the evidence collected. From the evidence, the YOFC agreed recommendations for what needed to change and presented these to the main commission for consideration and inclusion into the OFC final report.

Through the YOFC:

- Young Commissioners involved 15 young people aged 11-18 in campaign design, survey design and delivery, workshop delivery, interviewing, analysis and public presentation.
- 200 young people were given opportunity to share their views on issues and solutions for young people in Croydon via the online survey
- Approx. 100 young people, majority of which have Special Educational Needs (SEN), have taken part in workshops to share their views on issues and solutions, taken part in drawing activities and collaborative discussion sessions.
- 300 young people were given the opportunity to take part and contribute in public policy making, of these 80+ young people with SEN given opportunity to take part in collaborative discussion and creative exercise.

Young Commissioners have provided very positive feedback from group meetings (averaging 8-9 out of 10) for meeting ratings and have valued the opportunity to learn about and understand issues from other young people's perspectives.

- **Worked in partnership to lift people out of poverty by increasing employment opportunities across the borough and ensuring that local people have a pathway into employment, education and training.**

Good Practice 3

Pathways to Employment - Jobs Brokerage Programme

The London Borough of Croydon faces a number of challenges in relation to employment. These include raising the skills levels within the borough's communities, creating sustainable employment opportunities and increasing the overall borough employment rate

The 'Pathways to employment' project is a partnership approach designed to remove barriers to employment through a range of activities and projects aimed at both employers and local residents, particularly those who find it hard to secure a job. This approach enables the Council and its partners to work together to increase the number of local people securing jobs created as a result of the regeneration and economic development activities that are being delivered and are in the pipeline.

'Pathways to employment' addresses a range of barriers to employment experienced by both employers and local residents. The barriers include Jobseekers lacking soft skills required for employability, recruitment of young people due to poor career advice offered and the lack of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups accessing employment.

In order to remove the barriers to employment mentioned above, the Council and its partners have developed a "**Job Brokerage Service**". The aim of the Job Brokerage is to co-ordinate activities to deliver :

- A single point of contact for employers and developers looking to recruit to jobs created by the regeneration, growth and investment in the borough
- A single point of contact for people who are looking for employment
- An easy to use job screening service to match job-seekers with suitable vacancies

This new way of working will enable more Croydon residents, particularly those with multiple and complex barriers to work move closer to the labour market and into sustained work.

In 2015, the Pathways to Employment approach has delivered the following:

- **Creating employment in local business**

The Council launched Croydon Business Month 2015 at the We Mean Business Expo. It also teamed up with the key business partners to deliver an events programme comprising of surgeries, workshops, seminars and conferences that aimed to help individuals start or grow their business. More than 40 events took place at different venues across the borough during October and November 2015.

- **Creating Apprenticeships with local employers**

The Council partnered with Business Education London South (BELS) to deliver an externally funded project. The target of the project is to place a minimum of 80 apprentices with employers that have never hired an apprentice before, or an employer that has not hired an apprentice within the last 12 months.

- **Social Enterprise place**

Croydon was awarded Social Enterprise Place status by Social Enterprise UK and launched the initiative in May 2015 with a Social Enterprise summit. This was attended by more than 100 representatives from national, regional and local organisations working in the social economy sector. It is the only London borough with such status.

- **Apprenticeship graduation ceremony**

The Croydon ceremony celebrated and honoured apprenticeship graduates that had recently completed an intermediate or apprenticeship placement. Three strands of complimentary activities were delivered ahead of the ceremony:

- The Best Apprenticeship – an online competition for apprentices
- Awareness raising briefings – six targeted briefing sessions were delivered to raise the profile of apprenticeships with young people in secondary education
- The Croydon Apprenticeship Mark Scheme – a logo/brand unique to Croydon. This is a badge of honour that recognises local businesses that employ apprentices.

- **Section 106 skills and employment benefits**

The Council is working in partnership with developers submitting planning applications for large regeneration schemes to ensure Croydon residents and businesses get the best deal in terms of local socio-economic benefits.

Good practice 4

Working towards improving employability through free E- learning training

The Council is supporting residents to develop skills that help them and gain employment by providing free e-Learning courses to residents and young people. Residents are being encouraged to register for the e-learning courses to improve their knowledge and skills and improve employment prospects. The courses are available to anyone who lives or works in Croydon. The training is being targeted at parents in particular through schools and children's centres.

The e-learning is promoted by all organisations within the children and families partnership and particularly through schools and the voluntary sector as well as at

community events. The courses that are provided include safeguarding, information sharing and data protection, effective communication, e-safety, bullying and equalities and diversity. Following registration, individuals are able to access all the courses from any computer with web access at any time.

E-Learning enables the Council to provide cost effective training to a large number of users. Learners can learn at their own pace and a time convenient to them. This is of particular benefit to those who do not have the time or the finances to cover the cost of face-to-face training, particularly the unemployed and those working in the voluntary sector.

There are currently 4000 active users of E-Learning:

- Over 1500 people have completed 'Safeguarding level 1' training
- 781 have completed 'Safeguarding Disabled Children' contributing to the safety of children in Croydon
- 340 people have completed the 'Inclusion and Diversity' course
- 163 have passed 'Prejudice and Discrimination'

The feedback from course attendees is positive:

'I really enjoyed my courses - it gave me the push to enrol on a child psychology level 4 (and diploma) course. This will help my job prospects when my funding finishes for my current role. Many thanks. :-)'

'Employers have been impressed with these certificates and in an interview situation they have proven a great asset.'

- **Promoted financial and digital inclusion by supporting local people, families and Communities to be resilient and independent.**

We worked in partnership with Go ON UK and launched the Go ON Croydon project to help improve digital skills across the borough.

Good practice 4

Go ON Croydon Project- Improving the levels of basic digital skills across the borough

Over 12.6 million across the UK do not have basic digital skills to reap the benefits of the web such as saving money, searching and applying for a job, looking for information online, finding family members or the simple enjoyment of keeping in touch. Croydon is one such an area that has significant numbers of residents (over 85,000 people) with low levels of basic digital skills and over 20% of adults who do not have basic digital skills.

To address this gap, the Council has worked in partnership with the UK digital skills charity **Go ON UK** to launch the **Go ON Croydon** project on 9 November 2015. The Go ON

Croydon project is the first of its kind in London and will deliver digital skills support throughout Croydon, including targeting those most in need such as the homeless, families in poverty, the elderly, NEETs (Not in Education or Training) and small and micro businesses.

Research by the BBC has shown that those aged over 65 and those households in lower social and economic groups are significantly more likely to lack these skills. The London data store and 2011 census has shown Croydon's demographics to be:

- Over 46,000 lower social and economic groups, the second highest in London
- Over 47,000 over 65s, the third highest in London

Through the Go ON Croydon initiative, the Council will help residents, businesses, and voluntary and community groups to get online and stay online and will work with local partners to help improve digital skills across all communities in Croydon.

Go ON Croydon will pilot a series of innovative and creative projects that will encourage local residents and organisations across the borough to get online and improve their confidence and digital skills

The project brings together national and local organisations including Age UK, Argos, Lloyds banking group and community groups, charities and volunteers, including Croydon Tech City, CVA (Croydon Voluntary Action) and St Philip's Church, Norbury, who will support projects in the community.

These organisations will work with their client groups to introduce them to the benefits of digital inclusion and will provide signposting and support for their clients to gain basic digital skills from digital champions recruited within the partner organisations.

In addition, Go ON UK national partners will be supporting the Go ON Croydon project. The Go ON UK national partners include Age UK, Argos, the Big Lottery, EE, E.ON, Lloyds Bank, the Post Office, Sage and Talk Talk.

The project will be working with a number of disadvantaged groups such people living in an area with high levels of deprivation, Older people, Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), small businesses, families in poverty, homeless people, people with mental health issues and people with sensory impairments to improve their digital skills and access to opportunities to improve independence, life chances and well-being.

The first Digital Zone in the borough is currently providing support to those who wish to improve their digital skills and benefit from the opportunities of being online. Further Go ON Croydon Digital Zones are planned for a variety of places across the borough and will be hosted by partners. They will provide help and support to people taking their first steps online and build their confidence in using a smartphone, tablet or laptop. Volunteer digital champions will use their digital know how to provide support.

"The Go ON Croydon initiative is great news for Croydon's council tenants and leaseholders who are missing out on the benefits of being on-line either because they currently don't have the skills to use the internet or don't have access to affordable equipment or broadband."

- **Worked in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies to address inequality, disadvantage and social exclusion to close gaps and improve outcomes across the borough.**

Good Practice 5

People's Gateway - a new approach to service delivery

The government changes to the provision of welfare benefits have affected over 16,000 Croydon residents. In order to provide effective support to customers, the Council set up a Peoples Gateway - a new approach to service delivery which has been developed to enable the Council to better support the people who need our help most. It focuses on helping customers achieve financial stability by balancing their income, budget and housing costs. New People's Gateway working practices have been developed to help customers to get a clear and complete picture of their circumstances, and what they can realistically do to improve their position.

In the past, different services and partners had worked independently providing support, often at the same time, and to the same residents focussing only on their own area of responsibility. By changing the way services were delivered, customers, the Council and our partners have all benefitted from the new approach.

The People's Gateway services are delivered through the Enablement and Welfare service which consists of the following teams:

- Discretionary support team
- Intervention team; a specialist revenues and benefits team concentrating on homeless customers placed in emergency accommodation, customers in supported housing and customers who have multiple debts or broken arrangements
- Bed and Breakfast income collection team
- Welfare rights team
- Welfare reform team
- Travel services who assist disabled customers access appropriate travel schemes
- Colleagues from Job Centre Plus as well as partnership working with Citizens' Advice Bureau, Croydon Law Centre, and MIND amongst others.

The Housing Needs and Options service is also a part of the directorate and provides the perfect platform to effectively engage with our most vulnerable homeless households and join up the homeless journey from start to finish.

As a service we now work together to provide a wraparound service for customers needing our assistance. We have put the customer at the heart of what we do, and focused on how to help them achieve a sustainable long term solution rather than focusing on a range of procedures and assessments. Our whole family holistic approach has enabled us to deliver maximum benefit from limited resources.

Our partnership working with social care and third sector partners particularly has allowed us to identify significant additional need and in many cases has either enabled us to support some of the most vulnerable customers into work or removed a risk of homelessness or financial exclusion. Their additional knowledge, combined with our unique engagement style, has also helped us to understand our residents better, and what solution is sustainable for them, for instance, where it is known that a resident isn't quite ready for the employment market it has enabled us to offer the right pre-employment training support.

Changing the way that we deliver our housing need service has enabled the Council to segment and support households at risk of homelessness, preventing homelessness where possible and empowering residents to find alternative accommodation themselves. We are engaging with customers in emergency accommodation offering assistance with money management, debt, maximisation of income and finding appropriate housing.

Our intervention team support customers with high or multiple debts to the Council and are at risk of financial exclusion. This team also supports customers affected by the roll out of Universal Credit. Using the enabling approach whole households are not only supported to a point where they are financially stable but more importantly the holistic approach ensures that once past the point of crisis or need the household is given the tools to be resilient enough to face the future independently, with other issues being picked up and dealt with by one Case manager.

All outcomes are measured on a service specific database and tracked weekly. Good practice is developed and shared between the service areas. The People's Gateway programme has delivered positive outcomes for customers:

- 5,692 customers have received assistance since April 2015
- 72 have been assisted into work with 256 currently being supported
- 16 people moved out of Bed and Breakfast accommodation with 9 customers actively engaged in looking for alternative accommodation
- £800k has been collected from current Bed and Breakfast tenants.
- Of £922,789 broken Council Tax arrangements, £94,796 of cash has been collected and £480,393 rearranged to an affordable amount
- £338k has been identified and posted in housing benefit for Bed and breakfast customers
- 31 households have been prevented from requiring the assistance of the statutory homeless service
- 166 households have moved to suitable and sustainable homes

Our customers have provided positive feedback on the service they have received:

"It has been absolutely amazing. It has been so lovely having someone you can easily call or email just to say 'I'm not sure, can you help?'"

"For me I can look forward to things like being out of debt and not having the fear constantly of wondering if there is enough money to pay the rent. It is being in control of your own finances and destiny.

"It just knows that you can put the phone down and not have to think about it because you

know you're not going to be evicted tomorrow. It is peace of mind."

The People's Gateway programme is now being expanded and will be exploring opportunities for partnership working with our Adult's and Children's services in areas such as Supported accommodation, Adult social care, Looked after children, Vulnerable adults suffering from financial abuse, Homeless residents with no recourse to public funds and a single homelessness hub.

Good practice 6

Central and Eastern European Engagement (CEE) Programme

Croydon Council has provided low level funding for a pilot project that engages with the Central and Eastern European (CEE) Community. The project aims to offer this community the support they need to escape destitution and disadvantage.

Some of the individuals in the client group are challenging to engage with and are part of a community that lives and survives outside the norms of society. They also have varying levels of complex needs. For some it is a life-style choice driven by a need. Others find themselves destitute and unable to help themselves out of their situation often becoming stuck because they lack the knowledge or skill set to help themselves.

Outreach work takes place weekly and the clients are offered direct and indirect support that focuses primarily on accommodation, employment and reconnections. The project also deals with or manages some of the main barriers to achieving its primary aims such as tackling alcohol dependency.

An Information Advice and Guidance clinic has also been set up that offers support for all clients. Support includes job searches, applications for access to benefits, attendance to appointments, referrals to other agencies and property searches. The project has used Job Seekers Allowance as a tool to encourage clients to seek work within the real economy rather than remaining stuck in the illegal job economy. Through Job Centre Plus clients are attending ESOL classes and looking for legitimate work.

A peer support group that is based on the principle of SMART Recovery has also been set up. This teaches and gives people the tools to help manage their alcohol misuse. The group aims to become an accredited SMART Recovery group.

During the course of the project two breakfast advice sessions have also been held on a Saturday morning to provide information and advice to CEE nationals regarding accessing employment, reconnection and exercising European Union Treaty Rights.

As a result of this project, the Home Office, Immigration Service, voluntary sector and charitable organisations are now working much closer together. As a direct result of this improved partnership work, support is provided to individuals who wish to voluntarily depart from the UK. This is in an attempt to prevent some individuals pursuing the voluntary reconnection path to visit home and return to a life on the streets of Croydon. The activities that have been delivered by the programme include:

- Set up a weekly training session to help clients to prepare for (Construction Skills

Certification Scheme (CSCS) card tests. Gaining a CSCS card is a key element in lifting people out of the black economy and helping them gain employment in the real economy. It is also a space where people can fulfil their Job Seekers Allowance commitments.

- Supported clients to obtain national insurance numbers so that they can work legally. For example, the project helped a client to become legitimate in his work by registering him as self-employed, obtaining a Unique Tax Reference and then showing him how to issue invoices to his employer. The project is working with others to do the same.
- Made numerous referrals to the Rainbow Centre Homeless Health Team and to the NHS Walk in Centre. It has seen a number of its clients admitted to wards at Croydon University Hospital.
- The service has directly supported 18 people off the streets and out of squats into some form of accommodation and advocated for 4 clients saving them from eviction. The project has 3 on-going cases of tenancy sustainment, and has worked with 3 other clients to support their tenancy.
- During the winter months the project worked closely with Croydon Reach on referrals into Croydon Churches Floating Shelters (CCFS). CCFS had placed 5 of the services clients into their shelters. The Project also had 5 clients placed in Wimbledon floating shelters.
- The project has now completed well in excess of over 50 applications for Job Seekers Allowance, 4 applications for Employment and Support allowance, 1 for Disability Living Allowance and 2 applications for a Personal Independence Payment.
- Continues to work closely with the No Recourse to Public Funds team at Croydon Council. Together they have worked with 6 clients; 3 have been accommodated by the NRPF team, 1 has been re-connected to Ealing Council, 1 was reconnected to Romania and 1 is an on-going case. The service has also supported one client out of domestic servitude.
- Supported 14 clients back into work, has arranged National Insurance Numbers for 6 clients so that they can work legally. The project has paid for three replacement cards, 2 CSCS cards and 1 Demolition card for its clients, enabling them to access work.
- The project has supported a large number of clients with CV writing and travel to interviews.

The programme has received positive publicity at the national level. It was interviewed by BBC Radio 4 for a File on Four broadcast entitled "Street Slaves" and has also appeared on Channel Four News. It has recently been approached to take part in a BBC programme on Labour Exploitation due for broadcast in 2016.

The feedback on support provided to services users through the programme is positive.

"When I arrived in England I was homeless. After some months walking alone and without work and papers I found David Ford. He helped me to get my National Insurance Number

my bank account and showed me the right way. Now after six months I am working in McDonalds, I have my own accommodation and I hope that one day I will be able to volunteer to help others.....” Vitor Otvás

“Working in partnership and collaboratively is always a good thing as it offers holistic support to our guests. Having someone who is intentionally working with and supporting a specific group of people is good as it make signposting more helpful Having the experience and expertise of David is great, but also working someone who embraces our core values is also helpful and effective for offering relevant, specific and sustainable aims and objectives”

The Well

- **Worked with local businesses and community groups to close gaps in educational attainment and enabled people of all ages to reach their full potential through access to quality learning.**

Good practice 7

Steps to Success - Supporting young people into education, training and employment

Croydon Council is focusing on reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and preventing young people from becoming NEET as it is key to developing and maintaining a socially and economically vibrant youth population in Croydon.

Just over 3% of young Croydon residents aged 16-18 are NEET which equates to approximately 420 young people. NEET young people are more likely to feel disengaged from wider society, suffer mental health issues and be longer term economically inactive than their peers, which leads to both individual and community challenges.

The Council is working on a number of intervention and prevention initiatives to ensure that the many factors that lead young people to become NEET are identified and addressed to support them into sustainable education, employment and training so that all young people can fulfill their potential.

The ‘Steps to Success’ event was held on 7 September 2015. The main aims of the event was to match young people not participating in education, employment or training with current ‘live’ opportunities in education, training and apprenticeships or provide careers advice.

It was a partnership event organised by the Council’s 14-19 Team, with support from a broad range of local colleges, employers, apprenticeship/training providers and the voluntary sector.

Those young people known to be not participating in education, employment or training (NEET) were specifically targeted and invited to the event to meet a range of colleges, training providers, employers and support services. Invitations were also sent to young people known to be without an offer of a place in education for the start of the academic

year.

Council partners who work with particular 'vulnerable' to NEET groups such as looked after children, care leavers, youth offenders, young people with special educational needs and, learners with learning difficulties or disabilities also promoted the event and brought clients along. This was supplemented by social media marketing (Twitter and Facebook) as well as through local partnerships, newsletters and at events such as the Thornton Heath Festival.

Specialist agencies attending included Jobcentre Plus, CVA, National Careers Service and Croydon Drop In. Employers who attended and assisted with mock interviews and CV feedback included Fairfield Halls, AXIS, St Georges University Hospital and Chequers Cleaning Services. Colleges and training providers attending included Crystal Palace FC Foundation, Chelsea FC Foundation, Croydon College, John Ruskin College, Chapel Manor College, Fashion Retail Academy, Croydon Military Preparation College, BELS, Construction Youth Trust, Princes Trust, All Inclusive Training, Hawk Training, JACE Training, Sutton District Training, and the London Learning Consortium.

Specialist support was also available for those young people with learning and/or physical disabilities or difficulties. Translation support was provided for those young people whose first language was not English.

42 young people registered and completed an evaluation on the day, many of whom signed up for more information on specific opportunities and/or completed initial applications.

The event was a success as it provided attendees with the opportunity to talk to a wide range of employers, education and training providers, obtain careers advice and find out about 'live' opportunities with imminent start dates. It also provided a targeted group of young residents with a 'one stop shop' to help them find appropriate education, employment and/or training, with the majority achieving positive outcomes.

Local employers, training providers, colleges, support agencies and voluntary sector organisations were given the opportunity to network and increase their awareness and understanding of the resources and opportunities that exist within the borough.

As a follow up to the event, the Council's 14-19 Team is tracking the progress made by these attendees, including phoning them to sign-post to further opportunities and support.

The Steps to Success event delivered a number of positive outcomes for young people:

- 67% of attendees are known to be now participating in education or training
- 4 attendees have now started apprenticeships or jobs with training. One of whom has successfully applied for an engineering apprenticeship at St Georges University Hospital as a result of a direct contact made at the event
- 22 attendees have enrolled at college or sixth form
- 2 attendees are on employability training courses
- 9 young people known to still be NEET are being provided with further information (phone calls and the 16-19 Opportunities Bulletin) to support their transition into education, employment or training
- In response to feedback and follow-up with attendees, the Council's 14-19 Team has

developed a monthly 16-19 Opportunities Bulletin. This details current local opportunities and events in education, employment, training and volunteering, as well as sign-posting to available support and advice. This was launched in November 2015 and will be shared regularly with partners as well as directly with NEET young people

The feedback from young service users was also positive

"I liked that I got the information I needed and can take my next steps to an apprenticeship /college" (Jaden age 16)

"It was helpful from everyone. I found my course" (Peter age 17)

"I liked that I was helped out and found out the things I need to know" (Aaron age 16)

- **Worked with statutory and community partners to address health inequalities within the borough through targeted interventions that helped people to be resilient and able to maximise their life chances**

Good Practice 8

Re-designing sexual health services through service user engagement

Young people, the Black African community, men who have sex with men, sex workers and people who use drugs continue to experience poorer sexual health outcomes than others. This distribution of poor sexual health outcomes is a common pattern across the UK. However, Croydon more notably has particularly worse sexual health outcomes among the Black African population.

A redesign of Croydon sexual health services has been undertaken by the Integrated Commissioning Unit (ICU) with support from Public Health. The service aims to increase the amount of targeted prevention work undertaken by a new integrated sexual health service to reduce these inequalities.

A detailed programme of public and service user engagement has informed the decisions on how and where sexual health services should be delivered and, in particular, how these redesigned services could best meet the needs of those groups at highest risk.

The engagement with residents and service users has taken place through the following:

- **Survey**

A survey was developed by the ICU in conjunction with the public health team, sexual health service providers and the Council. The link to the online survey was shared by email and paper copies were made available on request to a wide range of organisations including current service providers and voluntary sector and community groups working with communities at higher risk of poorer sexual health outcomes.

Some surveys were facilitated face-to-face by the public health team in Access Croydon, Croydon Library and the Healthy Living Hub.

The survey was also publicised via plasma screens in Bernard Weatherill House, service provider waiting rooms, flyers distributed to GP practices, pharmacies and service users via sexual health service providers, the Council's website, facebook page and twitter feed.

- **Focus groups**

Delivery of the focus groups was contracted out to London South Bank University.

Specific Black African communities in Croydon were identified for the focus groups by public health; these communities were chosen based on high sexual health need combined with cultural attitudes.

- **Semi structured interviews**

Public Health worked in partnership with Turning Point, a local service for people who use drugs. A set of questions were developed to assess needs and perceptions relating to sexual health and sexual health services.

Find some survey findings below in which Individuals highlight the benefits of services being targeted for specific groups of people and having dedicated clinics that particular groups of individuals can attend.

"Maybe having different types of clinics for different groups of people - older people may not wish to attend a clinic that is full of younger people and vice versa, or having a female only clinic and male only clinics."

"A gay-specific service would be ideal. The gay community has unique needs when it comes to sexual health, and often local council clinics can seem quite out of tune with these needs. I visit Dean Street in Soho as they offer a judgement-free yet supportive and positive experience for gay men and women. I'd be happy with even one night a week where our particular needs are addressed and understood."

Extending opening hours to evenings or early mornings was seen as beneficial to improve access to services.

"As more and more people are getting into work, it would be helpful to have plenty of options for out-of-hours appointments - I know that I struggle to make it for walk-in clinics whilst working full time!"

"Just three things: opening hours, opening hours and opening hours - could be extended perhaps....."

A number of suggestions about additional type or locations of services were made.

"Review opening hours regularly and maybe even look at going Mobile with a bus/similar to the breast screening trucks - non branded"

"Provide a home service option."

The findings from the engagement work are being used to inform the redesign of the sexual health services in Croydon.

Good Practice 9

Horizon Care and Welfare project

The Horizon project is designed for carers aged 18 years and over and cared for people including the elderly, physical disabled, people with mental health and substance abuse problems. The target group for this project is BME carers but support is offered to carers from other communities as well.

The project was developed through detailed consulted with carers to better understand their views and support needs. A committee, made up of carers was set up to plan and monitor the delivery of the activities ensure that outcomes were achieved.

The project is supporting carers through activities that focus on delivering the following outcomes:

- Overcoming isolation and loneliness
- Managing stress
- Building self-esteem and confidence
- Gaining new skills through training, volunteer work and paid work
- Improving health and well being

The services that are delivered through the project include short breaks, respite services, support group meetings, support, leisure activities, befriending, escorting to hospital appointments and emergency support if needed. These are delivered through a group of both paid and volunteer workers.

The services are delivered at the Carers Support Centre, in carers' homes and other appropriate rented premises.

Horizon invites speakers from various organisations to support groups and also organises training on relevant issues. The service monitors the impact of the support it offers through the use of feedback tools such as feedback forms, suggestion boxes and surveys. The results from a survey conducted in June 2015 show positive outcomes:

- 17.7% of the carers who have filled the questionnaire felt that they receive community support which improved their health and well-being and reduced isolation
- 13.3% of carers felt they have received training and gain skills as a result of this support
- 42% of the carers felt they have received respite and breaks which isolation and frustration
- 11% of the carers received emergency support
- 16% of the carers felt that they had somewhere to turn for help and support

A few comments from service users are:

*"I gained useful knowledge and skills". "I gained more friends and exchange of information".
"Stress free time - Enjoyed meeting with other carers".*

Good Practice 10

Business Support and Community Link project

This project is managed by the Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (CNCA), a local charity that was set up 20 years ago to support neighbourhood care groups and other groups who provide services to older people right across the borough.

The Business Support and Community Link project is funded by Croydon Council and aims to assist CNCA member groups through offering a wide range of advice and support services. The project supports them in monitoring contracts they hold and works in partnership with them to provide a training programme for their staff and volunteers to enable them to carry out their work in the community. In addition to this, the project supports them with all aspects of their day to day work, this includes disclosure and barring checks for staff and volunteers, developing and printing partners' leaflets and posters, advertising their events, support with fundraising strategies, and facilitating bid writing workshops.

The project has a member's forum that provides support to all groups and gives them the opportunity to share good practice. The project measures outcomes through attendance at events. The current number of CNCA group members is 38 and 25 members regularly attend events.

One good example of impact of CNCA's business support and community link project is their support to Neighbourhood Care, a group that was experiencing significant financial difficulties. Neighbourhood Care's service and demand had grown year on year but they received very little financial support. They largely provided their services to the community for free, using their large bank of over 60 volunteers. The organisation had one part time member of staff, was open 5 days per week, and had over 350 clients all over 70 years of age on their books.

CNCA worked closely with the neighbourhood care organisation and introduced them to key individuals within the Council who provided one to one support with funding bids. This training enabled them to write their own funding bids which were successful. CNCA also supported them in costing for introducing a small charging policy for some of their services and in researching various options such as offering hospital transport services. As a result Neighbourhood Care were able to implement a reasonable charging policy and re-coup some of the expenses they incurred during the year. This helped in preventing the loss of a vital service to the older population within their operational area that would have been catastrophic as it would have resulted in a significant increase in referrals to social services and more admissions to accident and emergency. The hospital transport service is now expanding and is providing a much needed service to the most vulnerable people in the local community.

The clients' feedback was that they were very happy to pay towards the service as without it, they would not see anyone all week, be unable to afford a taxi or to take public transport

so would not be able to get to the hospital appointment. Getting out to the lunch club every week, meeting friends and having a lovely hot meal was the highlight of their week and an important activity that was preventing them from becoming socially isolated.

- **Worked in partnership to provide a diverse supply of decent homes and a range of housing services that meet the lifetime needs of individuals and families and make for sustainable and thriving communities.**

Good Practice 11

Involving residents in the re-procurement of responsive repairs services

In order to strengthen resident's involvement in local decision making, the Council's Responsive Repairs service nominated five residents to get involved in the re-procurement of the provision of responsive repairs. The purpose was to ensure that residents were actively involved in the planning and re-procurement of the service and had the opportunity to fully contribute in the selection and decision making process to determine the shape of their future service.

The Council engaged with partnering advisers EC Harris, echelon and Pricewater House Coopers (PWC). An initial workshop was held with the wider steering group to explain all the stages in the re-procurement process, the commitment this would involve and the decisions that residents would need to be involved in. As a result of this workshop 5 residents were able to promise full commitment to the process. Once this decision had been made a series of further workshops were held with all stakeholders to discuss the other key objectives of the project.

Milestones such as the selection at first stage from 10 contractors to 5 were communicated to residents at various forums and panels to ensure full engagement and understanding of the process and journey. This included the Tenant and Leaseholder panel, Sheltered Housing Panel and Disability Awareness Panel.

In addition to the core group of five residents all tenants and leaseholders were extensively consulted on the proposals and were involved in the process. The core group of residents participated in visions and values workshops and established a top ten list of resident priorities that were presented to providers at the initial market briefing day. They consistently provided a customer insight and shared their views on how they felt the service needed to be delivered. Other core group activities included:

- Attendance at initial market briefing day and shortlisted bidder's event
- Selection of short-listed providers
- Actively participating in the formulation of the tender documents and the service specification
- Reviewing and scoring quality of submissions
- Undertaking site visits with the shortlisted bidders as part of the validation process
- Full participation in competitive dialogue interviews with providers and contribution to the feedback given as a result of these.
- Evaluation of the final submissions

The core group of residents received substantial training and support through every stage of the process. For example, by letting the group read the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire s submissions alongside officers so that they could ask any questions or raise issues as they came across them.

The competitive dialogue sessions were themed, with 'service' and 'commercial' sessions and held on alternate weeks. Involvement and attendance at these discussions allowed the group to have a completely clear understanding of the expectations of the service and more readily interpret the submissions at this stage.

Having the residents involved throughout all stages of the re-procurement process gave the Council valuable insight into the way residents would like services provided to them. As residents are ultimately the customer receiving this service, they were able to give honest d feedback directly to potential providers on how the service should be tailored.

The potential providers benefitted from the discussions with residents as their final submissions very clearly incorporated resident's views in the service offerings and were much more focused on the needs that customers had identified.

Find below some feedback from residents:

"I really enjoy getting involved in monitoring the contractor and discussions and workshops on improving the service we receive as tenants".

"It has been good to actually meet the bidding teams in person and to hear a lot of new ideas and plans that they hope to implement for the benefit of us as tenants and to the Council as a client".

Good practice 12

Working towards improving employability through free E- learning training

The Council is supporting residents to develop skills that help them and gain employment by providing free e-Learning courses to residents and young people. Residents are being encouraged to register for the e-learning courses to improve their knowledge and skills and improve employment prospects. The courses are available to anyone who lives or works in Croydon. The training is being targeted at parents in particular through schools and children's centres.

The e-learning is promoted by all organisations within the children and families partnership and particularly through schools and the voluntary sector as well as at community events. The courses that are provided include safeguarding, information sharing and data protection, effective communication, e-safety, bullying and equalities and diversity. Following registration, individuals are able to access all the courses from any computer with web access at any time.

E-Learning enables the Council to provide cost effective training to a large number of

users. Learners can learn at their own pace and a time convenient to them. This is of particular benefit to those who do not have the time or the finances to cover the cost of face-to-face training, particularly the unemployed and those working in the voluntary sector.

There are currently 4000 active users of E-Learning:

- Over 1500 people have completed 'Safeguarding level 1' training
- 781 have completed 'Safeguarding Disabled Children' contributing to the safety of children in Croydon
- 340 people have completed the 'Inclusion and Diversity' course
- 163 have passed 'Prejudice and Discrimination'

The feedback from course attendees is positive:

'I really enjoyed my courses - it gave me the push to enrol on a child psychology level 4 (and diploma) course. This will help my job prospects when my funding finishes for my current role. Many thanks. :-)'

'Employers have been impressed with these certificates and in an interview situation they have proven a great asset.'

Priority 2	Foster good relations and cohesion by getting to know our diverse communities and understanding their needs
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The key actions that the Council has taken in 2015 to deliver this outcome are:

- **Promoted civic pride and a sense of belonging across Croydon by providing opportunities for people to come together and share meaningful interaction.**

Good Practice 13

Play Streets - Getting to know your neighbours through play

Play is an important part of children's development and contributes to an active lifestyle. Holding a play street brings neighbours, children and adults, out into their street talking to each other thus developing a more cohesive and safer street community

Play Streets are community led but are supported by the Council. Residents who want to organise a Play Street are given advice and guidance on how to go about it as well as information about accessing funding for play equipment.

The council has supported residents who want to close their road for a few hours once a month for children to play. There are currently two active play streets in the borough and more are planned. The residents and communities that have benefitted from the Play Streets initiative reflect the community in the road where the play street is held.

Love Lane has lots of young families so the play street is an opportunity for younger children to get out and play and socialise with their neighbours and for their parents to come out and chat and make contact.

Limes Road has a more diverse mix of residents; as well as small children playing, teenage boys have joined in playing football with younger children; it also attracted a group of older residents who stopped for a chat and used the opportunity to get to know their neighbours.

Neighbours and visitors passing through the street that did not have time to participate were all very positive about the initiative and the benefits of letting children play out.

Find below feedback from residents that participated in the initiative:

'I'm a Love Lane resident, I've helped to organist street play today – it was really easy and worthwhile process to get involved with. The children absolutely love having the freedom to run in the road, they are free to run and explore and do whatever they want for two hours. It was a really simply process to apply. A member of the council was just really helpful, local residents were really supportive and the more the merrier! We've got lots of people not just from Love Lane but the surrounding area has come out today to join us!'

Good Practice 14

Black History Month programme

Croydon Celebrates Black History Month is part of the national celebration that takes place in October each year.

Croydon's theme in 2015 was "Women in leadership". In celebrating Black History Month the Borough focused on:

- Remembering the people, places and events from the African Diaspora
- Celebrating BME women that have made an historical impact
- Profiling BME women who are making history today
- Profiling traditions and communities through stories, festivals, crafts, dance and costumes
- Enhancing cultural understanding and appreciation
- Documenting or preserving this heritage to pass on to future generations, with a reference to local history.

This was reflected in the full programme of events and activities that took place across the borough. The council held a launch event in partnership with the Croydon BME forum and Croydon Council's BAME staff network. A Black History month steering group chaired by the chief Executive of Croydon BME Forum and representatives from Women's Empowering Ministry, Croydon Commitment and the council's Council BAME staff network led on the design and delivery of the launch event.

The event was opened by the leader of the Council, Councillor Tony Newman who affirmed the council's commitment to promoting and celebrating the diversity of the borough. The key note speaker for this year's event was Bianca Miller, the BBC Apprentice Finalist in 2014. There were speeches from the Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice as well as closing speech from Councillor Hamida Ali, Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury.

Performances on the day included the Empowering Community choir who inspired attendees with two very uplifting songs. There was also screening of the powerful Dr. Maya Angelou - Poem (And Still I Rise).

Around 130 people including staff and residents attended the launch event and stayed on to network with others at the end of the event.

The steering group also prepared a 'Croydon Celebrates Black History Month' programme booklet. Key contributors to the booklet included residents, voluntary and community sector organisations, faith groups, local business, libraries, local writers, artists and performers.

The launch event and programme booklet was disseminated widely via the Council's

website (and intranet) and the Your Croydon newsletter. Some of the highlights for this year were:

- Black History Lecture “ Black Women in the Origin and Evolution of Music”
- Lorna Liverpool author talk workshop
- Celebrating Black Business & Culture in Croydon
- Black History, Personal Empowerment & African Cultural studies
- “Where do you think we are” Black statues walking tour
- Michael D’Souza aka Rastamouse
- From Shame to Strength. Music saved me by Magdalene Adenaïke

Find below some feedback from some of the events:

“BHM launch was a well-attended event. Croydon did well to celebrate the achievements of black female leaders”. Croydon BME Forum CDW

“Wow - what a launch event for BHM with an inspirational story from Croydon’s own Bianca Miller”. Councillor Hamida Ali

“It sure was a brilliant evening all round. Well done Croydon”

- **Improved engagement and empowerment opportunities for local people in particular, new communities and those that currently do not have a voice.**

Good practice 15

Resident Opportunities Day - Supporting ‘hard to reach’ groups into employment

Croydon Council has over 14,000 tenants that it provides support and help to in finding paid work, training, volunteering and apprenticeship opportunities. Some of the tenants belong to groups that face additional barriers in joining the workforce such as those with mental or physical health issues, older residents and ex-offenders as they may have been out of the work place for many years.

A Residents’ Opportunities Day was organised in August 2015 in the Community Space at Bernard Weatherill House. The aim of the event was to provide advice, support and information on employment and training for some of the boroughs hardest to reach tenant and residents and provide practical help in overcoming some of the additional challenges they face when looking for work.

It was a partnership event organised jointly by the Council, Launch for Jobs, housing association and voluntary sector partners.

Specialist agencies included MIND, Mencap, CVA, CALAT, 3d Change and Jobcentre Plus. A number of the council’s contract partners also attended, these included Axis, Interserve

and Mullaley. Other local employers included JobsatHome, Family Lives, M-ploy Business Services, Westminster Home Care, Elenorcare, Chequers and the Army Careers Centre. Training providers included Learn direct, Strive Training, London Learning Consortium, JACE Training, Serious About Youth and Crystal Palace Football Foundation. The providers attending included those willing to work with the hardest to reach groups through job placements and voluntary opportunities. Employers from various sectors attended including: care, construction and cleaning services were in attendance.

Mind in Croydon and Employment Support produced a Vocational Passport for attendees to use on the day. This was designed to help people get the most out of the event and help them plan their journey towards the world of work. A colour coded map set out the location of all the services and employers attending. The Passport also included a section to set out individual objectives, useful contacts, next steps and 5 ways to wellbeing.

Council tenants and residents registered with housing providers such as Amicus Horizon, Wandle, Viridian and Croydon Churches were invited to attend the event and take up the offer for help in seeking work and training. Over 60 residents attended the event including Council tenants, housing association tenants and private sector residents.

The event provided attendees with the opportunity to get support and advice on job searches, improving CVs, applying for jobs, interview preparation and career help. Live opportunities for employment and information about a wide range of training courses including basic I.T., ESOL and customer services were made available.

The event raised the profile of the advice and support that is available across the borough for residents who want to access work and training, including those with additional barriers such as a disability or age.

The event also provided the opportunity for local employers, training providers, housing associations and voluntary sector organisations to network and increase their awareness and understanding of the resources and opportunities that exist within the borough.

The Residents Opportunities day delivered a number of positive outcomes to residents:

- 2 possible work placements were offered with both Interserve and Elenorcare
- Axis and Chequers both interviewed candidates from the day
- 3 attendees registered for apprenticeships with JACE Training
- 10 attendees registered with training providers to start courses in September in customer service and I.T.
- 3 residents registered for information advice guidance with CALAT
- 6 attendees started employment
- 4 attendees commenced work placements
- 2 attendees began voluntary work

The feedback from service providers was also positive:

“Thank you to the team for organising the day. It was really valuable and what a brilliant positive buzz...” JACE Training

“It was a pleasure to attend the Croydon Residents Opportunities Event yesterday. Just

getting the Army noticed and being able to engage with the general public on a one to one basis is a key part of our aim...” Army Careers Centre

- **Led partnership work with agencies and communities to change attitudes and behaviours towards domestic abuse, sexual violence and female genital mutilation.**

Good practice 16

Family Justice Centre – Supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence

The Council recognises that domestic abuse and sexual violence is rooted in gender inequality and that a partnership approach is needed to address these issues inclusively to meet the needs of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and their children.

Through the Family Justice Centre (FJC), victims receive wrap around support and services to avoid the frustrating process of victims/survivors having to go from agency to agency, retelling their story, in order to get the help they need. This also enables them to access support from services they would otherwise be reluctant to approach or find challenging to engage with.

The Family Justice Centre delivers a number of support services through the use of professionals such as:

- Independent Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Advocates
- Probation officer
- Drugs and Alcohol worker
- Housing officer
- Legal Advisors
- Specialist Domestic Abuse Social Worker
- Health professionals
- Police

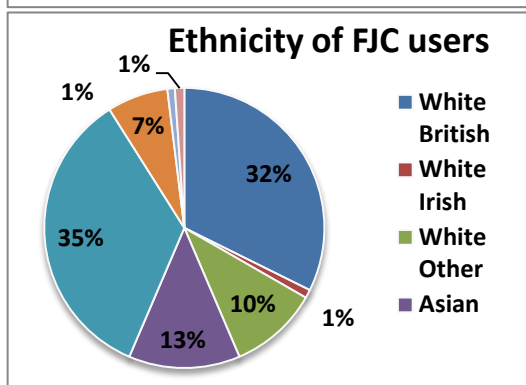
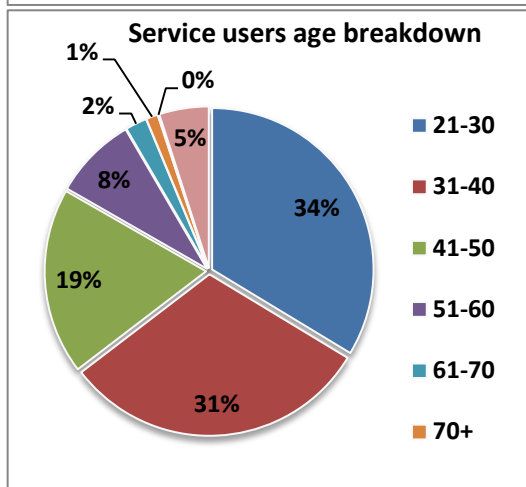
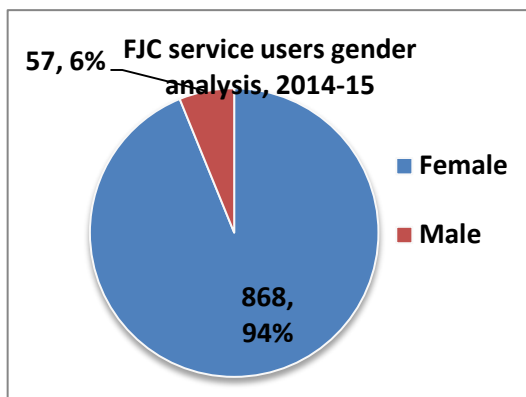
This multi-disciplinary approach ensures victims and survivors receive rapid and holistic advice and support. This also enables agencies to share information and develop a joined up approach to provide appropriate and tailored services to victims of abuse and violence.

Although the Family Justice Centre is not a women only service, it has seen an increase in the number of women accessing support. The drugs and alcohol worker at FJC offers services to vulnerable women for whom accessing support from a mixed environment would expose them to additional risk. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of women with substance misuse issues accessing support for domestic abuse.

With an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) located in the emergency department and maternity ward at Croydon University Hospital, risk assessments are completed immediately when pregnant women or those in A&E disclose domestic abuse. This is vital as it has been found that domestic abuse starts or escalates during pregnancy and many victims tend to lose the impetus to report once they leave the hospital. On

average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before she seeks help and by being able to reach them at the point of crisis when calls are made, the chances of accessing advice and support to minimise or eliminate the risk of harm are higher. By working closely with the police, an IDVA is now able to provide immediate support on domestic abuse call-outs.

Coordinated actions between statutory agencies and primary care providers ensure that victims of domestic abuse that are socially isolated can be reached. Support has also been offered at GP surgeries and schools where a perpetrator is most likely to allow their victim to go. Through the helpline and forums that support professionals, the Family Justice Centre has been called on to support victims of domestic abuse when they have disclosed abuse in these environments.



The feedback from users of the service highlights the valued role it plays in improving the life chances of victims :

With sincere thanks and appreciation for all your support and advice which enabled me to have the strength and courage to not give up and have faith in the justice system. I know that without FJC's help and support, I would have found it difficult as I didn't think anyone would believe me, but you guys really did help, just knowing you were there. Thank you so much.

31 year old female

The hospital based IDVA has become a valued member of our team in safeguarding. She is a regular presence on our wards and all the staff are aware of her role and how to contact her. It has made the midwives more knowledgeable with regard to Domestic abuse and what to look out for in women attending the hospital.

Named Midwife for Safeguarding

Good Practice 17

Turning Point – supporting residents with substance misuse issues who are victims of domestic violence

Providing timely support services to victims of domestic violence and sexual violence is a key priority for the Council. In 2014-15, Croydon saw the highest volume of domestic violence offences than any other London borough, with a total of 3,613 offences (Metropolitan Police data). When analysing the rates of domestic violence by resident population, Croydon has the fifth highest rate of domestic abuse out of the 32 London boroughs. Between 2013/14 and 2014/15 domestic abuse offences in Croydon increased by 28.2% and whilst all London boroughs saw an increase over this time period, Croydon's increase was above the London average (21.3%). There have been three victims of domestic abuse murdered in the borough since 2012.

The above these figures, highlight the need to focus on tackling domestic abuse as a key priority and the work done at the Family Justice Centre is pivotal to achieving the Council's ambition to make Croydon a beacon local authority for tackling domestic abuse.

A recent re-commissioning review of the drug and alcohol service identified women experiencing domestic violence as a vulnerable group at higher risk of alcohol harm in the borough. Other priority groups identified included pregnant women, perpetrators and victims of domestic violence and sex workers.

Turning Point is working in collaboration with the Family Justice Centre to deliver targeted services that address the specific needs of the above mentioned group of clients. The lead worker for this partnership project supports victims of domestic abuse who also have substance misuse issues. Their primary purpose is to address substance misuse issues, whilst also ensuring their safety and that of their children. Vulnerable women including those at risk of domestic violence, those using substances and sex working are able to

benefit from this support. This project also ensures women are not under-represented within treatment services, and are not subject to stigma.

Clients are supported from their point of crisis, when their level of risk around the substance misuse is assessed as well as examining suitable options to ensure their safety. These could include referrals to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), support with sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts as well as offering on-going practical and emotional support.

The Family Justice Centre provides a viable alternative site for meetings with vulnerable women and their families. Many of these women and their children prefer this site due to fear of any further violence and abuse and due to the fact that perpetrators are often in treatment with Turning Point and thereby are regularly attending the main hub.

Turning Point also delivers a weekly Women's group support session that acts as a support mechanism for service users. They are now piloting a peer led approach to the meeting and have a nominated service user chair on alternate weeks. This has been an enormously empowering experience for service users and has helped raise their confidence and self-esteem.

Plugette's – a women's only peer support group for those with substance misuses issues, have reported a significant increase in referrals from the Family Justice Centre. The client feedback through this network on the partnership between Turning Point and the Family Justice Centre that now provides access to joint support under one roof has been extremely positive.

Find below some feedback from users of the service

"The women support each other, interact well with each other, listen and empathise with each other. I find the group very healthy and important for the women."

Comment from 70 year old female

"I spoke with client this morning and she wanted to express her thanks for all that we have done for her, 'from the bottom of her heart'. She said that in all the people in different services that she has spoken to over this difficult period of time in her life, she has always felt that every single person that she has spoken to at FJC has had time for her and have always been really kind and considerate, as she said that she knows she takes up a lot of time as she likes to talk"

Comment from 31 year old female

- **Worked in partnership with agencies and communities to change attitudes and behaviours, dispel myths and address hate crime in particular disability, race, faith / religion and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender).**

Good practice 18

LGBT History Month

Croydon Council worked in partnership with the LGBT community, the Metropolitan Police, the NHS, local schools, colleges, the wider community and local LGBT groups such as

Croydon Area Gay Society (CAGS), Silver Rainbow and Trans Pals to plan and deliver an extensive programme of events throughout February to mark and celebrate LGBT History month.

The opening reception was organised by the Croydon LGBT Steering Group and was attended by over 80 people. Speakers included a representative from the LGBT Croydon website who spoke about the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE). There were also performances from Rainbows across Borders (who support LGBT asylum seekers who are fleeing persecution of oppressive homophobic / trans-phobic regimes), Croydon College, Jules Phoenix and Remi F and poet Anny Knight. The performances consisted of singing, dance and drama and highlighted issues affecting the community. After the event there was an opportunity for participants to network and share experiences.

Other highlights included:

- A display in the Central Library that consisted of exhibitions by the Bridge Sexual and Gender Identity Youth Group and an exhibition by LGBT community groups in Croydon,
- 'Tales of Love, Lost and Found' an evening of storytelling by The Not So Lovelies, a lesbian drama group focusing on stories around the LGBT community
- Jarman in Pieces - a performance collage based on gay rights activist Derek Jarman
- Award winning show Nineties woman by comedian Rosie Wilby
- Screenings of Pride and Hockney and at the David Lean cinema and an LGBT conference hosted by the Brit school.

- **Encouraged greater community participation in the promotion of community led social and cultural activity.**

Good Practice 19

Celebrating Age and Silver Sunday week

The Council organised a week long programme of events between 1– 8 October 2015 to celebrate age and mark Silver Sunday. The aim was to celebrate the contribution older people have made to our society, raise awareness of the challenges we face in an aging society and organise community led events to reach out to older people, their families and friends.

The Council worked with a number of partners such as Public Health Croydon, Age UK National, Age UK Croydon, libraries, Croydon BME Forum, Asian Resource Centre, Cycle for All, Parchmore and Shirley Community Centre and the Museum of Croydon to plan and deliver 120 key events and activities during the week. These included:

- Social events for older people such as tea and luncheon parties, games afternoons, reading groups, talks and seminars.
- Information technology such as IT taster sessions, computer classes, Techy tea parties

and ancestry family history online sessions.

- Physical activities to promote healthy living such as yoga, pilates, aqua aerobics, 50+ zumba, cycling sessions and swimming.
- Intergenerational activities for older and younger people such as book buddies, wiggle and jiggle, crafts, rhyme and story time.
- Information and advice around health, hobbies and activities.

Some of the highlights included:

- **Tea with Music at Fairfield Halls with performances from Oasis Academy Coulsdon** - This event was aimed at the more vulnerable and isolated older residents in the Borough. Around 120 residents from care homes and sheltered attended the event
- **Age UK and Croydon Council Techy Tea Party** - This tablet and computer taster session was aimed at encouraging Croydon residents to gain confidence in going online to use services
- **Age UK and Croydon Council – Celebrating Older People’s Day Event**
- **Croydon BME Forum – “I have things to do and places to be”** - Discussion on overcoming isolation and loneliness
- **Croydon Commitment and Barclays Digital Eagles Techy Tea Party**

Some feedback from events that went on throughout the week:

“Tea with Music event on a regular basis”

More opportunities for the elderly to have more “get together and have fun events” in the Shirley Community

“Good fun but would be great to have a similar event in the winter when you feel a bit more lonely”

“A lot of care and attention involved in organising this and it’s really appreciated.”

Developed Croydon's Performance Framework to develop consistency in :

- **Collecting and analysing a range of information to identify specific individual or community needs and target resources to tackle persistent inequalities**
- **Monitor the take-up of services and complaints by “protected characteristics” and identify any potential inequality or disadvantage that should be addressed.**

Good Practice 20

Croydon Performance Framework 2015-18

Croydon's Corporate Plan 2015 -18 sets out the strategic outcomes and direction for the organisation and is supported by a robust performance framework based on the priorities of our local residents.

The purpose of this framework is to provide a borough wide view of the performance in areas which are delivered by the Council and other public sector statutory partners. The borough wide view provides an open and transparent foundation for our residents to hold the Council and other partners accountable for the delivery of key outcomes.

One of the key outcomes is to “drive fairness for all local people, communities and places”. To support this, the proposed performance framework has been designed to measure the disparities in outcomes and opportunities across the borough.

We will use the recommendations of the Opportunity and Fairness Commission (due in January 2016) and the statutory equality and inclusion objectives for 2016 onwards to determine a suite of fairness and inclusion performance measures. These performance measures are likely to include measurements of the “gap” in terms of poverty and deprivation, benefits claimant rates, educational attainment, access to employment, housing and homelessness and life expectancy.

Once agreed, arrangements will be made to collate information on these measures and report performance for 2016-17. This performance report will enable the Council and our residents to track progress and success in a way that promotes openness, transparency and accountability.

Priority 3	Encourage local people to be independent and resilient by providing responsive and accessible services offering excellent customer care
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The key actions that the Council has taken in 2015 to deliver this outcome are:

- **Led work on promoting dignity and respect for older people and those with a disability and ensure that standards are set for our partners and contractors to adhere to.**

Good Practice 21

Croydon Adult Social Services User Panel (CASSUP)

The Council is committed to providing community leadership to enable staff and residents to take action to find solutions to the things that matter most to them. Croydon Adult Social Services User Panel (CASSUP) are a constituted group of Adult Social Services service users and carers who consult with the wider community about what key issues in adult social services are of concern to them.

CASSUP members represent a range of different communities, both through their diverse cultural backgrounds and through the adult social services they access. These include services for older people, learning difficulties, sensory impairments, physical disabilities and mental health issues. Many are involved in local community networks or special interest forums and use feedback from these wider communities to inform the panel meetings with service managers and providers.

The quality and management of domiciliary care services was raised as an issue by CASSUP on a number of occasions. CASSUP invited service managers to their meeting to raise these concerns and find out more about how the service is monitored and managed. CASSUP were asked for more detailed information about the precise nature of these concerns and the number of people it affected.

On finding this information is not collected in any form, CASSUP commissioned their own survey. CASSUP worked with the Council's Resident involvement and scrutiny team to design a survey based on what service users find most important to them regarding the care they receive in their home. This survey was sent by post to all 1664 people receiving domiciliary care through the Council's brokerage service. A postage paid reply envelope was included, and a telephone or visiting service was offered for service users who needed assistance with completing a written form. By the end of January 2015, 481 surveys had been returned, representing a 29% return, which is very high for a postal survey, indicating the high level of interest in this issue.

Following the survey, CASSUP wrote a report on their findings. The report included 35 recommendations that service users believed would improve service standards. This was

presented to senior managers in the Council. An action plan based on the panel's recommendations has also been developed. The action planning is bringing together service users, service providers and contract managers.

This will benefit elderly, disabled and vulnerable people who rely on agency carers for their everyday needs and wellbeing, and their family members who are often left with stress, distress and responsibility of following up and concerns or complaints if things do not go according to agreed plans.

The high quality of the work has raised the profile of the valuable contribution service users can make to the development and delivery of their services. More service users have signed up to the CASSUP network to receive information about opportunities to be involved and have their say on the adult social services they receive.

Find below feedback some feedback from CASSUP member:

"The response rate and the sheer volume of information we got back was astonishing; it justified the whole exercise and I was excited that we could use the data to make recommendations that could really make a difference to people's lives."

CASSUP member

"To engage with service users by listening to their concerns and genuine want to see services improved for the whole community has to be acknowledged. Too often services users feel that they have to take what is given. Everyone is entitled to receive services of a high standard, undertaken by carers who have had appropriate training and who have empathy. All too often purchasers do not fully appreciate that service users can in fact help to improve the service by their feedback."

CASSUP member

- **Explored opportunities for integrated community-based health and social care services that are preventative and support people to live independently.**

Good Practice 22

Raising awareness of HIV and providing support - HIV Testing Week

In Croydon, sexual health is a public health topic associated with high levels of stigma in some community groups that also experience worse sexual health outcomes. In particular, the Black African population in the borough have higher rates of termination of pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV as well as higher rate of late HIV diagnosis. In order to support and address the specific health needs of the customer groups that are at a higher risk of poor sexual health outcomes, the Council has provided funding for a "Sexual Health Promotion Lead" who works with the community to deliver appropriate support and advice.

One such partnership intervention is HIV testing week, which was delivered from 21 November – 2 December 2015. HIV testing week draws on the national campaign materials developed by the Terrence Higgins Trust (THT), but also used local insight gathered by the Sexual Health Promotion Lead throughout the year to make sure the intervention had appropriate and adequate local targeting. HIV testing week aimed to engage communities with high HIV prevalence in HIV testing; particularly identifying individuals who have not tested for HIV before from these groups to increase the accessibility of testing.

The 2015 campaign in Croydon was developed and delivered through the following activities:

- HIV testing week campaign materials were developed and some examples were shared with community organisations and community leads from the main target group (Black African and men who have sex with men) in Croydon to gather their feedback on the content and methods of engagement for HIV testing week.
- The HIV campaign week materials were adapted based on the feedback from community groups. A local information bus and an external mobile clinic provider were used to ensure testing was available at two sites for HIV testing week. The campaign materials were displayed in target areas such as near the tram line as a large proportion of the target community live along tram line.
- Volunteers were recruited from Croydon College, Croydon Council, and local voluntary agencies including Africans Getting Involved and Rainbows Across Borders, who were briefed on what myths are common in the target group and what materials they could hand out to encourage people to consider testing.
- A service specification was developed for a point of care testing provider and Spectra, Turning Point and Croydon Health Services were selected to engage in testing. Two of these agencies are local providers of drug and alcohol and sexual health services and engaging these organisations in community based testing was designed to encourage target communities to become familiar with staff and build trust with the community.
- HIV Testing Week campaign and the mobile testing clinic were widely promoted throughout Croydon. This included a press release to media, articles and adverts in the Croydon Guardian, messages on social media, information in the Council's weekly e-newsletter and posters on plasma screens in Access Croydon.
- During testing week, staff from the selected service providers offered testing at mobile clinics and volunteers from these providers spoke to members of the public about HIV and encouraged target communities in particular to take a HIV test.

346 people used the HIV testing service and further advice and support was offered as appropriate. Initial feedback suggests that the majority of people who used the service were from the Black African community – the main target group for the campaign. The partnership approach used in this campaign approach has delivered positive outcomes through successfully encouraging HIV testing amongst communities where HIV and HIV testing carries a high degree of stigma

Good Practice 23

Addressing Social isolation

Addressing loneliness and social isolation and improving the physical health of people with mental health problems are important areas for public health interventions.

Public Health Croydon Commissioned two services in the voluntary sector that were aimed at the inclusion of individuals either experiencing mental ill-health or those at risk of or experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness.

- **Active Minds**

This service is delivered by Mind in Croydon. The service aims to support local residents that may be experiencing mental ill-health into sport and physical activities and other recreational activities of interest.

The key aims of the service is to help:

- Reduce social isolation
- Improve social networks of individuals
- Improve confidence and self-esteem
- Improve self-reliance

- **Home Befriending**

This service is delivered by IMAGINE Mental Health in Croydon. The service aims to forge friendships with individuals experiencing social isolation, loneliness and/or mental ill-health. It is anticipated that participation in either of these services will have an overall impact of improving individuals' health and well-being.

The key aims of the service is to:

- Reduce social isolation
- Improve mental and physical health through participating in sport and active lifestyle activities
- Improve self-reliance and independence of individuals.

Both services benefit individuals who may be classed as experiencing a long-term mental – health condition.

Each year the service will enable over 150 individuals suffering from mental ill-health to:

- Set and achieve personal goals to maximize their independence and wellbeing
- Attend either one to one or group activities (including lifestyle intervention programmes) as appropriate and in locations most suited to their needs and abilities

- Increase their social networks, develop and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships that can reduce feelings of loneliness, improve their self-esteem, confidence and self-reliance

Over 70% of service users in the last year have sustained improvement in their wellbeing scores over 3-9 months. Although small numbers, this may be considered a significant outcome for the individual involved.

The case studies below of some service users highlight the positive impact of these projects:

- *AA suffers with depression but has been a regular attendee at football sessions. This built his confidence to play in tournaments. He was accepted onto a coaching course with a local football foundation and secured employment. AA fed back on how the project played a very important role in recovery and found the support helped more than traditional interventions. This positive change is reflected in a 10 point increase in AA's wellbeing score since induction.*
- *BB has a long history of depression and has a diagnosis of bipolar disorder. On induction he was extremely isolated, inactive, and rarely left the house. He has now joined the football group which he attends on a weekly basis; he plays in matches and supports new members to take part. He has also applied for voluntary roles. This positive change is reflected in BB's 19 point increase in wellbeing score since induction.*

:(Note: clients' initials have been change to hide identity)

Good Practice 24

Promoting Independent Travel

Croydon's population of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and young people has increased by 23% over the last five years and is estimated to increase by 5% every year. The number of adult social care service users has also been increasing year on year and is likely to continue. This has led to a continual increase in the demand for travel services.

In order to address, this particular service need, the Council has developed an Independent Travel project. The aim of the project is to look at safe, secure and suitable transport of vulnerable clients and ensure client needs and circumstances are looked at sensitively in every case

The Council will be working in partnership with a range of external providers and stakeholders to promote and deliver independent travel services.

The Council has worked with 29 different providers, to develop and deliver a transport framework for children, young people and vulnerable adults. The framework was implemented from August 2015 for adults and in September 2015, at the start of the new school year for children and young people.

This framework gives the Council flexibility to provide transport tailored to the service user's need. This includes the use of sole traders and SMEs and the procurement process was

used to make sure that all providers paid the London Living Wage.

The in house SEN passenger transport service started in September 2015 and is delivering home to school transport for 101 students at the Priory School. Following its success, it has been expanded to work on midday nursery routes across the borough. Regular engagement is taking place with service users and parents to gain feedback on the new service.

The Council also procured a new travel training service for SEN children, young people and vulnerable adults in April 2015. Independent Travel Training aims to support service users to travel without the need for assistance. This has significant social benefits to the participant and their families.

The scheme is run by the Local Authority Trading Company (Croydon Care Solutions). The scheme has begun training 115 children and young people since August 2015 and 7 adults since April 2015.

Personal Transport Budgets (PTB) are also being used as a flexible way for SEN children, young people and vulnerable adults to access transport options. It allows the service user or carer to take control of the transport payment and deliver it in a way that best suits their service need. Currently 23 children and young people have taken a transport budget and now have more autonomy over their lives.

The service will also look into collaboration opportunities with different communities and partners across the borough. All staff will be paid either at London Living Wage or higher dependent on the role.

As part of the re-procurement of the passenger transport framework, the Council chose to include external evaluators to evaluate and moderate the tender responses. These panel members were selected from the Mobility Forum and Parents Forum, ensuring customer insight and feedback was part of the procurement process.

The programme has resulted in a number of benefits for the Council, its partners and communities, some of which are listed below:

- 33 Children and Young People have transitioned into independence due to the success of the training, giving them lifelong skills and greater opportunities
- 977 children and 57 adults are currently using the transport framework
- personal training budgets have given autonomy to 23 families since August 2015, allowing parents, carers, children and young people to decide how they travel to and from school

Since August 2015:

- 115 Children and Young People have been trained through the Independent Travel Training programme
- 33 Children and Young People have transitioned to independence because of the travel training programme (and been taken off transport)
- 23 Children and Young People are receiving a PTB (and have been taking off traditional transport)

The Council is also looking at other travel options including Motability and walking escorts. The project is also exploring ways to integrate travel services for children and adults to

deliver a cohesive travel offer for customers.

- **Led work on strengthening the Council's safeguarding processes for adults and children and worked in partnership to make every effort to change attitudes and behaviours and prevent incidents taking place in our community**

Good Practice 25

Local Mental Health Transformation Plan – providing emotional wellbeing support for children and young people in the Borough

Croydon's Children and Families Partnership strongly recognises that children's emotional development is critical to their overall development and significantly affects their life chances. Prevention and early intervention can help to prevent problems occurring or escalating.

The Local Mental Health Transformation Plan is the boroughs multi-agency strategy to transform the system of emotional wellbeing support for children and young people in the borough. The plan brings together children, young people, parents, carers, the voluntary sector and statutory services to think about the range of services that are needed to support children and young people.

Detailed engagement has taken place with residents and service users to develop the plan. Commissioners organised a range of consultation events, from open drop-ins, issue specific one to one's, group discussions, semi structured interviews and questionnaires. Events were held all over the Borough, including evenings and weekends to ensure that they talked to as many young people as possible.

All comments were then grouped by a key issue such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) depression, self-harm, then by age, gender and ethnicity which ensured that all comments were distilled into the plan. This approach allowed commissioners to think about access to specific services within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and how we could make it easier for young people to access support such as by providing information in community languages. Further engagement is planned for the Autumn term 2015, when commissioners are attending all school network meetings in the borough

Croydon's approach to improving the mental health of children and young people is underpinned by four strategic principles; Co-production, Prevention, Evidence and Integration. The aim of this programme will be to co-design the schools offer, developing whole school approaches to promoting mental health and wellbeing, including building on the Department for Education's current work on character and resilience, PSHE and counselling services in schools.

- **Integrated equality and inclusion considerations into the council’s procurement framework and ensured that all contractors have an understanding of Croydon’s diverse communities and how specific service needs should be addressed.**
- **Used the “Value Croydon” initiative to strengthen the use of social value to provide local jobs and apprenticeships for people.**

Good practice 26



Value Croydon
Inspiring social partnership

Value Croydon - Promoting social value and equality and inclusion in the borough

The Council is committed to developing social partnerships with businesses, the community and other public sector agencies in order to promote social value in the Borough. In working towards this aim it has implemented the “Value Croydon” programme.

The Value Croydon programme is about a different way of doing business for the Council and the borough as a whole. It consists of:

- Supporting the creation of jobs for local people
- Providing more training and skill development opportunities
- Investing more in local business growth
- Opening up more commissioning opportunities to local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary and community sector enterprises (VCSEs)
- Working in partnership with our business partners to deliver added social benefits that enhance the quality of life of Croydon’s communities

The Council has worked in partnership with its top 20 key suppliers, contractors and voluntary and community sector enterprises such as the Federation of Small Businesses and Croydon Chamber of Commerce to plan and deliver this programme. Specialist business support agencies such as Croydon Business Venture, GLE Croydon, Social Enterprise Assist and Charities Aid Foundation have also supported the initiative.

A “Value Croydon” launch event was organised by the Council in January 2015. 29 key suppliers attended the event and showcased their social value offer. Over 140 local organisations and 44 members of local infrastructure and other public sector partners attended the event. There were a total of over 200 organisations networking and creating business leads and work or sub- contract opportunities. In the ethos of supporting local business the Surrey Streatery of 6 local traders provided lunch and refreshments for launch event.

A Meet the Buyer event was held later in the year under the “Value Croydon” initiative. The event focused on construction and environmental works, with 14 Key Suppliers and Partners showcasing their opportunities and initiatives. 46 organisations including local SMEs and VCSEs attended the event.

Other supported and hosted events include:

- We Mean Business Expo
- Croydon Construction Opportunities
- Seminar to Explore Pathways to Employment for People with Disabilities
- Voluntary and Community Sector fair event
- Social Enterprise Summit Day
- Launch of Commissioners conference event

The feedback from some of the on events is positive:

“Meet the Buyer is a fantastic idea and can help small enterprises and start-ups build up their confidence in approaching more mainstream companies”.

“The contracts we secured since meant that we helped long term unemployed people get employment. The strategy to approach construction companies came out of the Value Croydon event and this has meant that a further six people have been employed”

“I did find the event very useful and I made a connection with Croydon Commitment. As a company, we need to make headway with our social value commitments and work towards assisting and giving something to the communities we work in. ”

- **In 2015, we developed an Accessible Information Statement and delivered our commitment to providing accessible information by working on identifying the specific access needs of our residents and using these to provide information in alternate formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio tape etc. and offer a translation and interpretation service if requested.**
- **The Accessible Information Statement enables the Council to ensure that the communications the Council produces meets the needs and preferences of individuals and can be accessed by our diverse communities.**

Good Practice 27

Croydon Council’s Accessible Information Statement

Croydon Council believes that effective information and communication are vital for the provision of high-quality services and good customer care. Through our equality and inclusion policy, we have made a commitment to ensure that our customers can access our

services with ease, irrespective of their disability, literacy skills and nationality.

The Council recognises that many of the residents who access our services may have difficulty understanding the information we provide. This might be because they are visually impaired, hearing impaired, have a learning difficulty, have dyslexia or because English is not their first language. It may also be because they need support in terms of reading (due to literacy needs) or they have a health condition which limits their ability to communicate.

The Council will ensure that information produced for residents is presented in an accessible way, in a range of formats and in specific community languages that are used and understood by our diverse community.

The Council will aim to provide information that is accessible using new digital technology, in printed and electronic formats, and through face-to-face and telephone communication using the EAST (easy, accessible, simple and timely) principle. The tools that we will use to provide accessible information include:

Easy Read Documents	<p>The Council will produce documents in plain English.</p> <p>All important documents such as the community strategy, the Council's corporate plan and other partnership policies will be produced in an easy, accessible, simple and timely (EAST).</p>
Information in alternative formats	<p>The Council will provide information in alternative formats including new digital technology. This will include a summary of documents in large print version, Braille, audiotape and CD.</p> <p>The Council will also use induction loops and text-phones for communication with residents.</p>
Interpretation	<p>The Council will offer British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters, BSL videos /DVDs, web technology for residents with specific needs including use of Language Line as appropriate.</p>
Translation	<p>The Council will provide key service information in another language or format when requested by a resident including making use of new digital technology.</p> <p>This may include a written summary of the main text but not a full translation or transcription.</p>
Website accessibility	<p>The Council will make sure that our website is accessible and easy to use for everyone.</p> <p>This will include the use of browse aloud, the option to translate pages and adjust the font size and colour.</p>

- **Revised the Council’s Equality Analysis framework and carried out an equality analysis of all new or revised policies, procedures and practices and used this insight to deliver accessible and differentiated services.**
- **Ensured that councillors and officers take account of equality and inclusion considerations in any key decision that is made by the Council.**

Good Practice 28

Equality Analysis Framework

The Council's governance arrangements for equality includes the obligation to formally carry out an **“equality analysis”** of all key decisions that the Council makes, consider the likely impact of these on the services that we deliver or procure for our customers and staff and define actions to mitigate any potential adverse impact.

The Council’s equality analysis framework was reviewed in 2015 and an updated Equality Analysis Guide for staff was developed and rolled out.

A number of support activities were also delivered in order to help staff improve their skills and knowledge in using the Equality Analysis framework as a key tool to embed equality and inclusion considerations into the planning and delivery of key strategies, transformation projects and procurement and commissioning of services to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of needs of the boroughs diverse communities. The key support activities included:

- One to one support to officers leading working on equality analysis
- Monthly 1-2-1 advice sessions on good practice in producing an equality analysis
- Team briefing sessions on the use of the Equality Anal framework

In order to ensure that skills and knowledge on good practice on equality analysis is developed and cascaded across the organisation we have to set up a group of equality analysis “champions”. The “champions” are officers who are keen to support work on embedding good practice in promoting equality, fairness and inclusion in the services that the Council and specifically their department provides.

The equality analysis champions have been provided training on the use of the equality analysis. They have taken on the role of a “critical friend” and act as the first point of contact within their department to offer advice and feedback on equality analysis policy, strategy, service review, procurement or commissioning activity.

The Council's governance framework for equality places a responsibility on managers to share information on key risks that an equality analysis may identify and the mitigating actions that are being put in place to address them in the formal "report" that is presented to Cabinet and other governance boards before seeking sign off of key decisions.

The equality section in Cabinet and Board reports provides decision makers with key facts and evidence that will enable to make fair and evidence based decisions and ensure that "protected groups" are not at risk of facing potential disadvantage and discrimination.

In order to demonstrate that proper consideration has been given to the equality duty decision makers have a responsibility to ensure that the report and accompanying equality analysis provides sufficient information and evidence that they have given due regard to the PSED and to review all the facts about potential equality impacts such as potential risk of disadvantage to a specific equality / community group before making decisions and ensure that mitigating action has been taken.

Priority 4	Improve empowerment and participation by strengthening partnership work with community, faith and voluntary sectors
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The key actions that the Council has taken in 2015 to deliver this outcome are:

- **Strengthened the Local Strategic Partnership ensuring that the community, faith, and voluntary sector can influence and make a difference to the outcomes for local people.**

Good Practice 29

Stronger Communities Partnership Board

The Stronger Communities Partnership Board was established to enable partners from the community, faith and the voluntary sector to effectively contribute to planning and delivering initiatives that can improve outcomes for local people.

The Stronger Communities Partnership Board oversees and co-ordinates the development of borough's communities agenda. It aims to ensure the people of Croydon have a sense of ambition, pride and belonging by promoting fairness, social cohesion and integration, as well supporting the borough's cultural offer, tackling inequality and providing an environment for a thriving voluntary, community and faith sector. It also seeks to promote a community response to the challenges facing the borough.

The chair of the Board is the Council's Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice and membership is drawn from across the public, private, faith and community sectors. One of the first tasks that the Board completed was to identify the key issues for Croydon's communities that needed to be addressed. The Board has agreed following six draft priorities for its work programme:–

- Make Croydon a place of opportunity and fairness by tackling inequality, disadvantage and exclusion
- Foster community relations and integration by providing opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together in meaningful interaction
- Promote a thriving and joined-up community, faith and voluntary sector that works in partnership with the public and private sector to improve outcomes for local people
- Promote active communities so that local people can do things that matter most to them and their neighbourhoods
- Encourage community empowerment and engagement across all our communities so

that can participate and influence local priorities

- Encourage a greater community response to tough issues so that together we can change attitudes and behaviours

The Board was established just over a year ago and in that time much has contributed to and delivered a number of activities including:

- The Council and its partners have organised and hosted a whole range of events designed to foster community relations and integration such as the Interfaith Diwali celebration, Black History Month Launch, the first Croydon Craft Beer Festival, interfaith Eid celebration and London Rd Carnival
- Worked with the Council and CVA and the Big Local to kick start the Big Local – Broad Green initiative and the community-based governance is now in place
- Empowering communities and ward members in establishing and using ‘ward budgets’ comprising £6k for each ward in the borough.
- In response to the recent tragic terrorist attacks in Paris, Ankara and Beirut, as well as other locations, the Board has recognised the need for an increasing focus on community cohesion. A ‘Community Cohesion and Preventing Extremism Sub-Group’ of the Board has been established to take forward actions in relation to this part of the agenda.

- **Encouraged community cohesion and partnership by facilitating a greater community response to tough issues as a way of changing attitudes and behaviours in the workplace and wider community.**

Good Practice 30

Croydon Congress – Addressing Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Croydon Congress is the twice-yearly gathering of the Local Strategic Partnership. It is designed to bring together the key stakeholders and service users in the borough. The Congress meeting in June 2015 focused on domestic abuse and sexual violence. Domestic abuse and sexual violence is mostly committed by men against women. It is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. The perpetrators are predominately men and the victims mainly women.

The aim of the Congress meeting was to raise awareness of impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence, change attitudes and behaviours towards domestic abuse and sexual violence in Croydon and better equip the community to take an active role in reducing domestic violence in the borough, supporting victims and bringing perpetrators to account.

The event was attended by over 170 leaders and stakeholders from the business, public, voluntary, faith and community sectors. Delegates included representatives of Crystal Palace Football Club and the White Ribbon Campaign, which works to involve men in opposing violence against women.

The theme of the meeting was 'changing attitudes and behaviours towards domestic abuse and sexual violence'. The keynote speaker was Seema Malhotra MP, Shadow Minister for Preventing Violence against Women and Girls. The meeting was also addressed by Councillor Tony Newman as Chair of Croydon's Local Strategic Partnership and Leader of Croydon Council, Vera Baird QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (via a recorded message), and by Fiona Bowman, who gave a personal account of her experience as a survivor of domestic abuse and sexual violence. It was chaired by Councillor Hamida Ali, Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury.

During the course of the Congress event, delegates were encouraged to make a specific pledge, either a personal pledge or one on behalf of their organisation, to change attitudes and behaviours towards domestic abuse and sexual violence in Croydon. In total 89 pledges were made including:

- Agreeing to implement a domestic abuse and sexual violence policy for staff or introduce staff training
- Council to introduce measures to keep the issue on the agenda and allocate resources
- Statutory partners to introduce measures such as displaying posters and helpline information
- Work to challenge attitudes
- Work to raise awareness
- Looking out for signs and symptoms
- Community responses - sharing the message with local groups and putting on awareness-raising exhibitions
- Faith responses - discussing the issue and putting on events
- Young people and school based pledges - schools leading discussions with staff and pupils on the issue.

Specific pledges ranged from a mosque committing to organise sessions on domestic abuse and sexual violence and a housing association offering to develop training courses for younger residents, to innovative activity involving working with local artists and victims of domestic abuse. An example of a larger pledge was Croydon Health Services committing to develop a domestic abuse and sexual violence policy to cover their 4,000 employees.

Find below feedback from a young person that attended the event:

"It was very insightful and it made it clear to me that we all play a role in looking out for each other even if we have a fear of becoming involved in the situation. It was a privilege to be able to have a say about the situation as a young person."

- **Led work on creating inclusive ways for people, including staff, to participate in council, community and civic by working in partnership local people to remove the barriers that prevent them from participating in community and civic life.**

Good Practice 31

Croydon People First

The Croydon People First is a service commissioned by the Croydon Learning Disability Commissioning Team. The service is run by people who have a learning disability. Its role is to ensure that:

- The voices of people who have a learning disability are heard and they are encouraged and enabled to take part in consultations and other activities run by the council and health services
- Awareness is raised about the access and inclusion needs of people who have a learning disability at meetings
- The views of people who have a learning disability make a positive difference to the development of services for people with learning disabilities in Croydon.

Below are details of activities projects the service has delivered:

- **Supporting accessible information**

This is provided 6 times per year for the partnership boards, 3 booklets have been produced so far.

- **Making A Difference Group**

This is a group of 15 adults who all have a learning disability and is facilitated by the Council's Learning Disability Commissioning Team. The group meet fortnightly and provide feedback to the commissioning team on a range of topics and initiatives that affect people who have a learning disability in Croydon.

Members of the group have become valued members of Croydon's recruitment and procurement processes. Individuals have worked in partnership with the team in presenting and facilitating 'Big Talk Events' whereby a large number of people who have a Learning Disability and their supporters spend a day together with the commissioning team and explore issues relevant to them. Topics for these events have included Leisure Opportunities in Croydon, Independent Travel and Employment Opportunities in Croydon.

The members of the group provide consistent feedback on their enjoyment in their role and their appreciation that Croydon are involving members of the group and consulting the

group on important decisions such as recruitment and procurement and review of services

- **Making It Happen Project**

The aim of this project is:

- To enable people with learning disabilities to be more active in their local community and support each other to learn new skills and try new things
- To build confidence in people through providing opportunities to meet up with, and get to know other people with similar interests.

The project consists of a series of learning and leisure activities which are run by Peer Supporters from Croydon People First.

- **Future-4-Us Community Hub**

The purpose of the Future-4-Us Community Hub project is to have a meeting place run by members of Croydon People First's Peer Group. This project provides a place where people can find out about support for people with learning disabilities in Croydon. The Future-4-Us Community Hub also provides information around areas such as learning, employment and meeting new people.

Good Practice 32

Promoting Flexible Working across the borough

Croydon Council had been endorsed as a **Flexible Working borough** and has made a commitment to promote flexible working practices by working with key employers in the public, business and voluntary sectors.

There is strong national evidence that suggests that flexible working practices benefit employers, employees and the local community. In December 2014 a national government survey found that despite positive attitudes towards flexible working, there had not been a significant increase in flexible working opportunities or take-up nationally.

Recent research suggests that increased opportunities for flexible working can make employment more accessible to parents and those with other caring responsibilities and contribute to reducing child poverty. Both employers and employees can gain from flexible working opportunities as both parties have the flexibility to organise their working arrangements in a way that suits them.

In early 2015, Croydon Council in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and children's centres carried local research on flexible working through a survey of lone parents in Croydon. The parents, all of whom used children's centre services, reported that barriers to finding sustainable work were high costs of childcare and a lack of part-time and flexible jobs which allow parents to combine caring responsibilities with work.

Around half of responders recognised that beyond the additional income, being in work

would increase their independence and provide a positive role model to their children. In addition a sense of purpose (by one in four) and social contact (by one in five) were identified as factors to promote flexible working.

However, some disadvantages of being in work were identified by lone parents such as less time to care and support their children, cost of childcare and availability of flexible childcare, and therefore potentially having overall less money once childcare costs were taken into account.

The majority on lone parents who took part in the survey were seeking work which would enable them to work term time only, school hours or flexible hours but were concerns about zero hours contracts were raised and the ability to earn enough.

In addition to lack of flexible jobs and affordable childcare, lack of skills, lack of confidence with applying for jobs, worrying about interviews and inability to afford appropriate clothes for interviews and work were also reported as obstacles to working.

One in ten responders identified that their physical and mental health had suffered as a result of not being in work.

This local research highlights the need for the Council to take on a leadership role in encouraging other local employers to enable more people to work flexibly as it will improve their lives by providing a better balance between work and home. It will also reduce the number of people dependent on benefits, reduce the number of children of working parents who live in poverty, enable older workers to stay in the labour market, and enable carers to balance their caring responsibilities with paid work and help employees in general to have a better work-home balance. For others, it can free up their time to volunteer for charities or local community services.

The Council is currently leading the way in strengthening flexible working in Croydon. The Council's has refreshed and re-launched its flexible working policy, as it recognises that when effectively managed, working flexibly to improve work-life balance can lead to improved service delivery and/or productivity, as well as improving retention. The Council has also introduced a 'New Ways of Working' approach that aims to encourage existing employees to work flexibly with the aid of new technology, new processes and new workspaces.

The Council will be working towards **Timewise accreditation**. This is an accreditation scheme that helps councils stimulate flexibility in the local jobs market by sharing learning from their own workforce practice, using this experience to influence suppliers and local employers.

By endorsing Croydon as a Flexible Working Borough and promoting flexible working practices with community, partners, contractors' and public and private sector employers in Croydon, the Council aims to increase the number of accessible working opportunities to the most disadvantaged residents and communities in the borough.

Priority 5	Provide strong leadership, partnership and organisational commitment by enabling staff and communities to find solutions to the things that matter most to them
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The key actions that the Council has taken in 2015 to deliver this outcome are:

- **Provided ambitious community leadership to enable staff and residents to take action to find solutions to the things that matter most to them.**

Good Practice 33

Active Communities Fund

The Council aims to help communities to become more resilient, develop their own ideas and do more for themselves. The Active Communities Fund has been developed to support the Council to work towards this aim. The fund supports activities run by community groups in three priority areas:

- Developing active and inclusive communities
- Helping people care for one another's health and wellbeing, and
- Tackling poverty and social exclusion.

There are two types of grants in the Active Communities Fund. A micro grant of up to £1000 and a small grant from £1001 to £5000. The funds have been used to fund approximately 40 different projects in the borough. These include::

- **Bite Buddies**

The Bite Buddies project aimed to bring together young people between the ages of 8 to 25 years old with older people aged 50 years and over in Croydon to share their knowledge of food and video using digital technology. The project had 3 main priorities:

- Developing active communities by creating innovative ways of promoting a sense of belonging and cultural activities
- Giving young people the opportunity to reach their full potential and the confidence to express themselves
- Improve community cohesion between generations, encouraging older and younger groups to come together, to improve their skill levels in a collaborative and fun environment

The project brought together a group of young and older people in Croydon to help swap skills and to share knowledge by working on physical innovative projects utilising hands on

and digital elements. A total of 8 young people (aged 8-25) and 8 older people (aged 50+) participated in the project.

At the start of the project, the younger participants had limited cooking, health and safety and preparation knowledge. Post-project all participants, especially the younger participants grasped an understanding of the importance of preparation such as the planning of ingredients, the equipment required, through to executing their recipes according to required timings. Participants from both age groups picked up cooking tips and techniques, and health and safety advice from the cooking tutor as part of the cooking sessions.

In terms of digital skills, all project participants gained practical experience in video editing, using new software and tools, and webpage creation. Participants had to learn a variety of editing techniques and apply them to their own videos. Skills learnt included learning how to apply different effects, adding supplementary text to aid the visuals, adding appropriate music and most importantly how to cut down and streamline video to essential content.

When participants created their own webpages all participants learnt about webpage layout and how to write for the web. They had to work collaboratively with their partners to design and develop the webpage.

Communication and teamwork skills were challenged throughout, as all participants had to work closely with their partner, despite the age group, negotiating and discussing their tasks during each workshop. This started from the choosing of recipes; where pairs of participants had to take into account each other's likes and dislikes. When developing the recipe webpages partners had to agree on recipes and imagery, whilst also providing descriptions about themselves so that the page represented the views equally from each participant in the pair.

When the Bite Buddies project finished, all participants were encouraged to share their work with family and friends to continue promoting the awareness of the learning of new food and tech skills, across different age groups, in an alternative, collaborative and challenging way. Some younger participants even showcased their cooking videos and recipe webpages to their schools, which demonstrated an increase in confidence and initiative to learn and share new skills. This encouraged other potential participants in the community to sign up to the project

- **Crystal Palace Transition Town**

The “Plant to Plate” gardening and cooking workshops were a series of gardening and cookery workshops to encourage healthy eating and growing your own food on a budget. They gave participants the opportunity to gain confidence in growing their own food, throughout the growing season, and experience of planning, planting and harvesting in a supportive environment. The project’s target group was people from low-income backgrounds who find it difficult feed their families on a budget and people from ethnic minorities.

From the very first workshop it became clear that the new participants were enjoying themselves and getting more involved in growing food. Some participants with gardening experience were able to get more ideas to keep them going, and indicated they appreciated the fact the workshops were for free.

As well as having fun, there is lots of feedback to indicate that the participants will continue to garden and took away lots of skills and ideas that they can use both on their own growing spaces and gardens.

This continuity was helped by the fact that participants were encouraged to taking away plants and bring them back once they had grown, to show progress and to solve problems. Some participants brought in photographs instead.

We also experienced a strong family atmosphere at a lot of the workshops, with participants bringing along their children to get involved in the learning:

Find below some feedback from participants:

"I found it all very interesting- how to water properly, compacting compost in pots before sowing seeds, making nettle tea as FREE fertiliser! So much to learn about! Also good to meet other lovely people"

"Fab! Learnt lots and a very friendly group!"

Good Practice 34

Croydon Live

The Council is keen to ensure communities are given the opportunity to take the lead in improving their environment and drive the transformation of public spaces. In working towards this aim, the Council worked with Spacehive to establish Croydon LIVE, the borough's very own local Spacehive crowd funding platform.

Spacehive is an online crowd funding platform that gives individuals and companies the opportunity to pledge funds to support civil projects such as new parks or playgrounds or projects that provide benefits to the community such as setting up a food bank.

The initiative encourages residents to come up with ideas to improve where they live, gather support locally and get financial help with getting their project started and support the delivery of the following outcomes:

- Empower individuals or groups to support and take responsibility for each other
- Provide access to high learning such as free crowd funding workshops
- Enable individuals and families to be personally and financially resilient
- Enable individuals and families to improve their lives at less cost to the public purse

The Spacehive project was promoted through a variety of communication tools to residents, local colleges and community, voluntary and faith organisations. Social media has also been used extensively to help projects along and to promote the activities.

One of the key characteristics of Spacehive is that it is accessible to everyone. Anyone can put forward project ideas and anyone can fund them. It provides a tool and a new way to

organise and deliver grassroots projects that might not otherwise happen. In Croydon, the project has helped to bring diverse communities together to volunteer for common causes and to revive unloved places, advance the arts scene and fundraise for new playground equipment.

The two Spacehive projects that captured local people's imagination are

- **Croydon Saffron Central** - This inspirational pop up saffron farm was no small undertaking and was farmed by the people for the people. Following harvest, its seeds have now been spread throughout all of the 23 wards of the borough.
- **Turf Projects** - An empty workout shop in Croydon was transformed into an artist-run space including gallery and affordable workspace, providing a year-long programme of exhibitions and events.

The projects relied on many residents and the local business community who donated their time and money. This allowed these projects to become fully funded ahead of schedule.

Given the success of these projects, the council has continued to work with Spacehive to put on a series of community and staff based workshops, to help turn residents and community group's ideas in to reality.

A series of community and staff based workshops have been delivered to over 150 local people;

- 90 residents attended a series of community crowd funding workshops and taught how to crowd fund
- 30 young residents from Croydon college attended briefings on civic crowd funding
- 30 council staff attended a dedicated workshop

So far, Spacehive has raised 27K towards Croydon based civic projects. In addition, earlier this year, Matthews Yard in Croydon also crowd funded £8K to create a theatre space.

- **Led work on the implementation of the London Living Wage within the Council and across the borough.**

Good Practice 35

London Living Wage borough

The Council took the actions below to tackle wage inequalities in the borough:

- Become an accredited London Living Wage employer;
- Implemented the London Living Wage for the Council's directly employed workforce and through working in partnership with Croydon schools

- Working on implementing the London Living Wage requirement through the procurement and commissioning processes by wherever possible including a contractual requirement to that effect.

In October 2015, the Council submitted an application to the Living Wage Foundation (LWF) to become accredited as a Living Wage Employer. The application was successful and the Council was confirmed as an accredited Living Wage Employer on 28 October 2015.

The council implemented the LLW for its direct employees on 1 April 2015 and the impact for staff is outlined below:

- Direct employees - Since 1 April 2015 all direct employees of the council have been paid at least the 2015 LLW rate of £9.15 per hour.
- Employees of Croydon Community and Voluntary Aided schools are also paid the LLW.
- Started work on seeking the LLW for other contracted and /sub-contracted staff.

Becoming an accredited LLW employer is the start of a journey towards fairer more equitable wages for employees. As part of this process, the Council will be working towards::

- Implementing the milestone plan developed as part of the accreditation process with the aim of securing LLW for contracted employees engaged in delivering council services, including those working in the voluntary and community sector;
- Continue embedding the LLW into the council's contractual arrangements;
- Encouraging businesses operating in the borough to adopt the LLW.

- **Made sure that the diverse views of local people are taken into account when decisions are made by the Council.**

Good practice 36

“Get involved” - getting residents involved in shaping their decisions for their communities

The Council is keen to ensure people in Croydon are given the opportunity to share their views and influence decision making in their local area. In working towards this aim, it has developed the website www.getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk that gives residents the opportunity to get involved in what's happening in their community.

The platform was created in partnership with the People Matters Network. It aims to increase and improve the way the council engages with customers online. Get involved is a user-friendly website that can be easily accessed through a computer, tablet and smartphone. It acts as a digital consultation and engagement platform. The site allows

residents to search for consultations, surveys and events taking place in their area. Interactive features such as polls and online discussion forums were introduced in Autumn 2015.

The site has been customised in two ways:

- Integration with My Account - Residents can log in using their My Account details and create a personalised profile based on their interests and where they live. Following this, their activities can be displayed in line with their preferences on their profile pages.
- Integration with the main council website – this enables information on how customers can get involved to be displayed in the right hand side of the webpage when customers are looking for information

In keeping with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency, a registered user's profile page also displays feedback from any engagement activities they have taken part in.

Prior to launching the site, residents were invited to undertake some user testing and feedback from the testing was incorporated into the final design of the site.

In the first three months since its launch, the number of registered users of the Get Involved website is 373 and it has been accessed 4151 times by residents.

- **Created awareness of and celebrated the diversity of cultures, lifestyles and faiths within the workforce and wider community.**

Good Practice 37

Community Engagement Events programme

One of the top priorities of the Council is to promote fairness and inclusion by hosting and supporting a number of community engagement activities. For some activities, the Council is the lead partner and in other instances it supports the work of other partners in the borough. The main community engagement events that took place in 2015 are:

- **Holocaust Memorial Day**

The Council works in partnership with Faiths Together in Croydon to plan and deliver an annual event in the Council Chamber which brings the community together to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

- **Borough Commander and Cabinet Member Walkabouts**

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice has made a firm commitment to meeting communities in the community through walkabouts. During 2015, walkabouts have taken place in Broad Green, Old Town, Central Croydon, New Addington, Thornton Heath

and the Latham's Way Gypsy and Traveller site. These walkabouts have enabled residents who are unable to attend a formal community engagement meeting to meet the Cabinet and share issues that are of concern.

The walkabouts were also attended by the Borough Commander of Croydon and involve visiting an area to meet with residents, faith groups, businesses, and voluntary organisations. Any issues raised are noted and fed back for action through four routes that include service matters for the Police, service matters for the Council, strategic issues for the Safer Croydon Partnership and strategic issues for the Stronger Communities Partnership.

- **London Road Carnival**

The Council was a part of the team that delivered the successful event in 2015 and are also helping the organisers to set up the structure for delivery of London Road Carnival for 2016.

- **Stop and Search Meeting**

The Council has worked closely with the Croydon BME Forum to plan and deliver a public meeting on the issue of Stop and Search.

- **Faith celebrations**

The Council worked in partnership with Faiths Together in Croydon and members of the community to hold a number of faith events namely Vaisakhi, Eid-ul-Fitr, Diwali and Christmas. The aim of the events is to help generate a greater understanding and tolerance of the beliefs and traditions of faith groups in Croydon.

- **Pearl Izumi Tour Series Cycle Races**

The Council's Community Relations Team contributed to the delivery of this event which saw roads in central Croydon closed for the first time to make way for professional bike races for men and women.

- **Big Lunch**

Each summer, the Council launches the national Big Lunch initiative that brings neighbours together to share a meal and enjoy each other's company. In 2015, more than 80 individual lunches were organised across the borough and provided a great opportunity to bring neighbours together to tackle issues of social isolation.

- **Community use of the Braithwaite Hall**

One of the Council's priorities is to encourage greater use of its buildings by the community. In October 2015, the Council organised Croydon's first Craft Beer Festival. It was a success with numbers in attendance far higher than expected. It also attracted a more diverse audience than might be expected from a beer festival. Events such as this are important in encouraging more residents to come into central Croydon in the evening and can help diversify the night-time economy.

- **Interfaith Bike Ride and Picnic in the Park**

The Council and Faiths Together in Croydon secured funding for, planned and delivered the UK's first interfaith bike ride. The day started with a ride to the Croydon Faith Education Resource Centre to hear about the Jewish and Hindu faiths, before visiting a Sikh temple, a mosque and a church. The ride, which was led by Addiscombe Cycling Club, concluded by heading to Park Hill Recreation Ground to coincide with the annual Picnic in the Park.

- **Mainstreamed equality into the scrutiny of funding decisions and service reviews through the development of a robust framework for leadership, governance and accountability.**

Good Practice 38

Governance and Accountability Framework

The Council has a well-established governance framework to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to support good decision-making. . This includes:

- Strategic leadership and accountability for equality and communities agenda through a lead **Cabinet Member** and delegated authority to the **Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)**
- **Equality and inclusion objectives** for the Council that are set out in the Equality and Inclusion Policy 2014-16.
- **Annual Equality and Inclusion activity** is embedded and monitored through departmental service plans. These are closely aligned to the delivery of the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan.
- An **Equality Analysis Framework** is in place. It is a tool that helps us to assess the possible impact of changes to services on different groups of people, mitigate risk and help develop services that are accessible and meet the needs of our residents,
- **Equalities Monitoring Guidance** in place that recommends a proportionate approach for the collection, analysis and usage of monitoring information with a focus of gathering business intelligence to support service improvements.
- **Publication of an Annual Equality Report** to meet the statutory duty to publish information on the Council's achievements and future challenges for equality and inclusion
- **Communities Board** that has an internal focus on Council business and is responsible for defining the Council's direction of travel for delivering accessible services and scrutinizing performance.

- A Stronger **Communities Partnership Board** was established by the Local Strategic Partnership. This Board oversees and co-ordinates the development of Croydon's communities agenda and ensure that equality and inclusion are identified and addressed. The role of this Board is to ensure the people of Croydon have a sense of belonging and opportunity by fostering good relations, promoting community cohesion and integration, supporting Croydon's cultural offer, tackling inequality, and providing an environment for a thriving voluntary, community and faith sector.
- An **Equality Forum** is in place. It has representatives from all departments who act as equality leads and support the delivery of the equality work programme.
- Use of the **Local Government Equality Framework** to benchmark our processes and performance with our peers.

The Council's governance framework for equality and inclusion aims to ensure that as a public body we consider how different people will be affected by our activities. The focus is on delivering policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all and meet the individual needs of our customers.

Priority 6	Become an employer of choice by recruiting, developing and retaining an efficient, talented and motivated workforce that broadly reflects the communities that we serve at all levels
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The key actions that the Council has taken in 2015 to deliver this outcome are:

- **Developed forums to engage with staff with a particular, focus on understanding perceived barriers to progression for women, BME and disabled staff.**

Good Practice 39

Staff Diversity Network Groups

The Staff Diversity Network groups were established following a Pulse survey where 75% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that staff networks could benefit Croydon. Following the survey, an invitation was sent out to the workforce to attend a 'network group launch event'. Around 55 staff attended this event. From July to December 2014 a series of focus sessions were held to bring staff together who had indicated interest in a specific group.

During 2015 six staff network groups were launched. These are the BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), Mental Health and Well-being, Visible and Non-Visible Disability, Carers, Women and LGBT + (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Intersex or Non-binary) networks.

Each staff network is sponsored by a member of the councils' leadership team to ensure they are supported at the most level. Staff networks have been designed to support cultural change within the organisation and promote a more cohesive and inclusive working environment for all. The networks are overseen by the Culture Board. The Board's primary task is the development of an action plan that improves workforce diversity within the Council and reflects the community of Croydon.

The network groups have been involved in various activities within the Council:

BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)

- Organised a BAME staff conference
- Contributed to the Leadership Conference
- Learning event - Creating the new WE – facilitated by Fred Miller and Judith Katz
- Black History Month Internal and External Launch Event
- Black History Month – Heroines – plasma screens Bernard Weatherill House
- Black History Month – joint display with Women's Network – black heroines
- Speaker at Network Meeting (August): Nero Ughwujabo, Chair of Croydon BAME Forum
- Speaker at Network Meeting (October): Magdalene Adenaike, CEO and Founder of

Music Relief and Dynamic Women's Movement

- Diwali display and Rangoli - Indian creative arts competition

Find below some comments from the BAME conference :

"Extremely inspiring. I really now feel part of the 'We' I have a different mind-set. I want to be committed to be part of the change to make more difference. Today's conference has provoked my thoughts about how can I make a difference"

"Very encouraging, enlightening, educational. Thoroughly enjoyed the speakers and interactive sessions"

Carers

- World Day of Carers- Information session
- Contributed to the Leadership Conference

Disability

- Contributed to the Leadership Conference
- Disability Awareness Week - organised information session

LGBT+

- Contributed to the Leadership Conference
- Network event – Picnic in the Park
- Celebrated Bi-Visibility Day
- Celebration National Coming Out Day

Mental Health and Well-Being

- Contributed to the Leadership Conference
- World Mental Health Day event in café - BWH
- National Stress Awareness Day event in café – BWH

Women's Network

- Contributed to the Leadership Conference
- Black History Month – Joint black heroines display with BAME Network
- Speaker at Network Meeting (September): Magdalene Adenaike, CEO and Founder of Music Relief and Dynamic Women's Movement
- Speaker at Network Meeting (October): Councillor Alicia Flemming, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Learning and Amanda Tuke: Head of Children's Integrated Commissioning and Children and Families Partnership/LBC Flexible Working Champion

All of these activities were co-ordinated by diversity group participants, many of whom work in full-time posts and have given their own time and efforts to organise events.

Good Practice 40

Promoting Flexible Working

Croydon Council recognises that Flexible Working is integral element of the 'Valuing Diversity' agenda. In July 2015, the Council's Flexible Working Policy was revised and re-launched through the following statement:

"Croydon is committed to facilitating flexible working arrangements for its staff, wherever possible. We recognise working flexibly can help our staff achieve a balance between work and life outside work. It also means we can attract and retain skilled staff, reduce recruitment costs, raise staff morale and increase loyalty and commitment. "

As a part of the roll out of the new policy a series of 'Bite size' learning sessions were organised for line managers to share the changes to the policy and discuss how flexible working can be properly managed and supported.

As part of 'New Ways of Working' approach, employees are encourage to work flexibly with the aid of new technology, new processes and new workspaces

In September 2015 the Council signed up to becoming a 'Flexible Working' borough and promoting the benefits of flexible working to public, private and voluntary sector organisations that are key employers in the borough.

The Council is in the process of seeking Timewise accreditation 'to integrate flexible working principles within the workforce and support the changes this will bring culturally. The Timewise Council accreditation programme supports local authorities to drive transformational change in flexible working practice, and recognises their achievements.

In November 2015, discussions were initiated with the staff diversity network groups on the current status of flexible working within the council, barriers that staff encounter and what needs to be done to promote and integrate different forms of working within the Council. The findings will be used to refine current policies and procedures on requesting flexible working.

Case Study One

"Mary and Mark's flexible working pattern has been put in place since Mary's return to work after maternity leave. The 36 hours they work each week are compressed into four days, starting at 8.00am and finishing at 6.00pm.

Mary works Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays and Mark works Monday to Thursday. This flexible working pattern enables Mary and Mark to continue working full time while caring for their young child.

The arrangement is flexible so non-working days can be swapped if necessary, for example, to attend important team meetings.

“Our arrangement works really well,” Mary told us. “The council’s flexible working policy has enabled us to have a better work/life balance. We’re trusted to get the work done, and we, in return, give 100% commitment in our roles.”

Case Study Two

“David works in the audit and fraud team, who have proactively opted for a flexible working pattern. Every member of the team, including the head of service, has a flexible working arrangement.

Investigators spend two days of the week offsite and some staff have lengthy commutes. Flexible working provides a better work life balance for the team. They spend less time and energy commuting and are more able to devote time to their work.

David says that since flexible working has been put in place, productivity has increased significantly. "It's also forced people to think about time management and look across the team for capacity. Everyone updates the team diary weekly, and mutually takes responsibility for making sure there's office cover. It works really well for us."

Good Practice 41

Promoting Well-being at work

The purpose of the project was to provide a programme of well-being activities for Croydon Council staff in order to reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, boost resilience and productivity and promote good mental and physical health and wellbeing

The project covers a wide range of initiatives linked to national campaigns such as No Smoking Day, Dry January, Know your numbers week and the themes of the London Healthy Workplace Charter.

The Council has worked in partnership with a range of external partners to promote health and well-being at work. These include London Healthy Workplace Charter, Time to Change, Local complementary therapists, Local physiotherapy/chiropractic services, Weight Watchers, Solutions4Health (Stop Smoking services), To Health (NHS Health Checks), Workplace Options (Employee Assistance Programme provider), British Heart Foundation and a resilience trainer.

The Well-being at work programme is planned and delivered by the Healthy Workplace Group and a Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator. Events and activities are available to all members of staff. Evaluations are carried out for all interventions.

Services provided by the Healthy Workplace programme have allowed staff to benefit from a range of initiatives such weight loss services, Increased physical activity with staff exercise classes, table tennis and staff gym, stop smoking services, NHS Health checks, Mental Health First Aid , counselling, posture checks, mini-massages, health and wellbeing days, dedicated intranet pages with links to wellbeing and support resources and a private room with blinds to accommodate any staff in distress

Below are a few comments from staff on activities:

"I think it is important these events are provided as it helps encourage staff to take time out of the office and highlights the importance of looking after yourself"

"The more we can promote health issues, the more we can promote the Council as a happy place to work"

- **Launched a Leadership Development programme and initiated work on exploring opportunities to develop a new targeted leadership offer for women, BME and disabled staff.**

Good Practice 42

Leadership Development Programme

'Leading The Croydon Way' is a leadership development programme, designed to develop the behaviours associated with Croydon's leadership framework. The programme aims to enable our leaders to generate greater trust, establish clear vision and embody the 'Croydon Values', namely : One Team, Proud to Serve, Honest and Open, Taking Responsibility and Valuing Diversity.

Directors and Managers were asked to put forward nominations for the programme that was launched in March 2015. Staff were also able to directly register their interest in completing the programme and places were awarded by the Corporate Leadership Team.

The programme is supporting the Council to grow its talent and has ensured that employee groups such as female and BAME talent is fairly represented in the leadership development programme.

The programme has been designed and delivered by subject matter experts. The content is mapped to support the Council's leadership framework and includes the following modules:

- Unconscious bias
- Emotional resilience
- Choices and responsibility
- How to manage crucial and challenging conversations
- Authentic and inclusive leadership
- Leading and managing complex change
- Leading in a political environment
- Leading and working in a matrix environment
- Delivering quality and value through innovation
- Power and systems
- Facilitating community development

Participants who attended the Unconscious Bias Module provided positive feedback:

“Improved awareness of how my actions/language may be perceived by others, for example importance of getting someone’s name right, helps me to be more conscious of prejudice and bias.”

“I will think more about how unconscious bias might play out in some of our processes”.
“Decisions relating to recruitment and sharing knowledge around this”.

- **Provided training to all staff to increase their knowledge of equality and develop skills to plan and deliver fair and accessible services.**

Good Practice 43

Equality and Diversity Training

The Council developed and launched an equality and diversity training package that is designed to help staff to improve their knowledge, understanding and confidence around equality and diversity issues. The objective was to encourage greater awareness of equality and diversity internally and equip staff with the skills and knowledge to serve the community more effectively.

The training was delivered through an e-learning package consisting of two modules. An Equality and Diversity Essentials module and a ‘Managing Diversity’ module. Each module includes an assessment test at the end of the learning. Learners are required to gain at least an 80% score to pass the learning and obtain a certificate confirming their success in completing the module. Over the last year, 99% of the workforce has completed the e-learning.

In July 2015, a survey asked staff to comment on the Equality and Diversity e-learning. Approximately 515 people responded and the feedback was:

- 36% of responders felt their knowledge of Equality and Diversity was now ‘excellent’ (after the training) compared to 12% rating as excellent before the training.
- 50% of respondents felt the training was ‘very relevant’ to their job role.
- 70% had rated the training overall as ‘good’ with 20% rating as ‘excellent’.

Several comments in the survey confirmed that staff felt the learning had made them more aware of equality and diversity issues and 82% of respondents had discussed the training with a work colleague.

The e-learning programme has had an impact on increasing membership of the 6 staff network groups within the Council and contributed towards attendance at staff diversity events. Currently, over 400 staff are members of a network group, which is about 12% of the workforce.

Below are some comments from the e-learning survey :

“The e-learning helped with refreshing my knowledge and increasing everyday awareness and appreciation of diversity while working with colleagues. It also increased my understanding of importance and purpose of equality analysis and monitoring and mitigating impacts that provision of services, any new proposals or decisions may have on different resident / customer groups. I now make sure equality and diversity is a standard item when delivering work and is considered and raised for discussions.”

“The e-learning course definitely made me think about dealing with colleagues and customers alike and their experience of dealing with the council, I have an important role in that on a daily basis”

Good Practice 44

Unconscious Bias Training

The Council has introduced unconscious bias training to the corporate leadership team. Staff network chairs and sponsors have also taken the training. Prior to training staff completed implicit association tests including implicit association tests for disability. The results of the tests have provided the Council with a clearer picture of the extent to which unconscious bias towards people with disability exists, which has helped shape future staff development and organisational policy and process in this area.

As a consequence of reviewing the aggregated results of implicit association tests, the Council’s Culture Board, chaired by the chief executive has developed an improvement plan which includes the following actions:

- Diversity objectives to be included in the appraisal process. These are currently being trialled with senior staff.
- Unconscious bias training is to be introduced to all staff and become part of our on-boarding process for new starters.

In addition, members of the Senior Leadership Team have engaged with the Disability Network for staff in resolving on-going facilities and information technology issues related to reasonable adjustments for staff, and having a fully accessible building which is accessible for people with disabilities. This piece of work has been the priority that Disability Network group.

- **Become a disability confident organisation, by working with employers to remove barriers to work that disabled people face, increase understanding of disability and ensure disabled people have opportunities to fulfil their potential.**

Good practice 45

Exploring Pathways to employment for residents with a disability

The Council is committed to improving the life chances of residents with a disability by working in partnership to remove barriers that people with a disability face in accessing and sustaining pathways to employment. The Council recognises that there is a need for in-depth engagement with people with disabilities in the borough to gain a better understanding of the challenges that face in seeking and sustaining opportunities for employment. Local employers also need to work more closely to address the challenges that people with a disability face in seeking employment and create a forum share individual good practice stories of enabling people with a disability to display their skills and potential within the workplace.

In order to start the engagement and discussion on this important issue that the Council local partner organisations are keen to collectively address, a seminar was organised in May 2015 to discuss how best to create and promote pathways for employment amongst people with disabilities.

A partnership working group consisting of representatives from Croydon Council, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Shaw Trust and Croydon Care Solutions was formed to co-ordinate a Seminar to Examine and Address Pathways to Employment for people with Disabilities in Croydon.

The seminar aimed to examine the barriers and challenges people with disabilities face in accessing employment and the actions businesses and the borough could take to address these. It was attended by 124 delegates and 40 employers. Speakers included Steve Reed MP, Councillor Mark Watson, Cabinet Member Safety, Justice and Communities and Councillor Toni Letts Cabinet Member Economy and Jobs. Partner organisations and Sainsbury's shared their best practice, whilst the Department for Work and Pensions spoke about the Access to Work Programme and the Disability Confident campaign. A Croydon resident and an Interserve employee also shared their personal experiences.

A pledge session gave organisations the opportunity to commit to taking action to creating pathways to employment for people with a disability. The key pledges that were made on the day highlighted the need for organisations to:

- Sustain employability through in work support
- Increase knowledge and awareness to new employers
- Share useful information with colleagues, multi-disciplinary agencies and partners.

- Review recruitment process – ‘show me’ interviews, fair and equal opportunities, representative panels, positive promotion that focuses on ‘how can we help you be more successful’ rather than “what is your disability”
- Ensure that our employment policies, procedures, and working environments are as inclusive and accessible as possible.
- Work with our Croydon Partners (Croydon Care Solutions, Shaw Trust and the Council) to develop employment and training opportunities for disabled people, and to support applicants to take up these opportunities within our supply chain.
- Set annual employment and training targets for disabled people, and drive continuous improvement to ensure our workforce reflects the diversity of Croydon.
- Ask our supply chain partners to also commit to this pledge and provide them with on-going support and training to make these placements a success
- Set up a disability confident awareness group/forum
- Encourage disability health champions - including hidden impairments and mental health
- Have up-to date statistics on employees with a disability
- Offer work experience to people living with a disability

Following the seminar, a report has been produced and shared with participants and partner organisations.

A Disability Confident Action Group consisting of representatives from the Council, DWP and third sector partners has been formed in the borough. This group has developed a partnership to take the recommendations from the seminar forward.

Following the success of the seminar in Croydon, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has asked other London boroughs have been asked to hold similar events an annual basis with the Croydon event being viewed as a model of best practice.

Other actions that have been taken forward include:

- JCP is offering support to local employers to take forward their Pledge Commitments
- 2 Shaw Trust clients have started work,
- Interserve have started to offer two week work placements to residents with a disability
- Croydon Employment Solution Services have pledged to have the Disability Confident logo on their email signatures, develop easy read application forms and work in partnership with JCP on job clubs
- DWP and Job Centre Plus Croydon is offering work experience to residents with a disability

- **Benchmark performance using Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and other external accreditation and take action to deliver improvements.**

Good Practice 46

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

The Council has participated in the Stonewall Equality Index for the third year running. A number of actions for improvement that were identified through the performance report provided by Stonewall in 2014 have been delivered. As a result of these improvements, this year the Council was able to provide evidence of good practice against 68 standards of good practice that are set out in the survey compared to 48 the year.

The key improvements that have been delivered include:

- LGBT employee network group engaged in strategic activities such as consulted on improving internal policies and practices and offering advice to the organisation on business development or service delivery
- Information on LGBT staff network is included during staff induction
- Senior management team have engaged and met periodically with LGBT staff network group
- 90% or more of staff with recruitment responsibilities have completed training on business benefits and organisational strategy on equality and inclusion, discrimination during the recruitment process and Unconscious Bias
- A formal straight allies initiative is used to engage heterosexual colleagues in sexual orientation equality
- The working environment for LGBT staff has improved through the LGBT+ website, lunch and learn session, informal networking events
- Promoted sexual orientation equality in the wider community through work on hate crimes and domestic violence initiative.

Appendix 1 Equality Analysis Programme 2015 - 2016

The council is in its ninth year of producing an annual equality analysis programme that is integrated into its policy, performance and decision-making frameworks. The current annual equality analysis programme had 68 planned assessments. The equality analysis that have been completed so far in 2015 – 16 are listed below:

Strategy, Policy or Function	Department
Digital By Design	Resources
Contract management review	Resources
London Living Wage	Resources
Community Ward Budgets	Resources
Community Asset Transfer of Stanley Halls on a 35 year lease	Resources
Independent Travel Programme	Resources
Healthy Lives Healthy Weight Strategy	Resources
Annual Public Health Report	Resources
Children with Disabilities – short breaks	People
Family based early intervention–EIFSS Commissioned services	People
Learning disability day services	People
Redesign of Ashburton Road and Mental Health supported housing services	People
Care Home Market Management	People
All Age Disability Service	People
Commissioning Arrangements for School Aged Nursing and Immunisations Services 2016 - 2018	People
Commissioning arrangements for health visiting and family nurse partnership services	People
Welfare reforms & future roll out of universal credit	People
Croydon Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 14-15	People
Integrated Sexual Health Service Commissioning Arrangements	People
Flexible Working Borough	People
Croydon Best Start	People
Phase 2 Works Arena Academy	People
Housing Strategy	Place
Croydon Local Plan - Detailed Policies	Place
Selective Licensing	Place
Eyes and Ears	Place
Growth Plan	Place
Fiveways Proposals	Place
Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	Place
Youth Crime Plan	Place
Windsor House	Place
District Centre Prosperity - Purley BID	Place
Transport and highways Local Implementation Plan	Place
Canterbury Mills West Thornton Academy Annexe - Demolition and Enabling Package	Place

Taberner House Redevelopment	Place
Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (CAAMPs)	Place

Appendix 2

Additional sources for information on equality and inclusion in Croydon

- Croydon Opportunity and Fairness Commission

<http://opportunitycroydon.org/>

- Croydon Observatory

<http://www.croydonobservatory.org/>

- 2015 Borough Profile

<http://www.croydonobservatory.org/news/item?itemId=4>

- Public Health Annual Report

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Annual%20Public%20Health%20Report%20for%202015.pdf>

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

<http://www.croydonobservatory.org/jsna>

- The Equality and Inclusion Policy 2014-16

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community/equality/ei-policy>

- Equality Analysis documents published on the Council's external internet page

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community/equality/eqias>