



Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Councillor Alisa Flemming

December 2018

LATEST NEWS



I'm delighted that Robert Henderson will be joining us on 27 November 2018 as the permanent Executive Director for Children, Families & Education.

It is also great news that we have appointed a permanent Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care, Nick Pendry, who joins us on 2 January 2019.



Both of these appointments are key to the department and I'm really looking forward to working alongside both Rob, Nick and the wider social care family to continue our journey to improve services to Croydon's children and young people.

Early Help & Children's Social Care Staff Conference October 2018



Twice a year the Executive Director for Children's Services and Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care co facilitate a service wide staff conference. Four conferences took place in October and provided staff with the opportunity to hear about the Children's Service improvement journey so far, including feedback following the recent Ofsted monitoring visit; to hear about how the leadership team have responded to staff feedback in a session called 'you said ... we did'. The conference also celebrated the achievements of Early Help and

Social Care staff through hearing about the Excellence in Practice nominations. We also heard about some good social work practice examples that Ofsted inspectors identified following their recent monitoring visit. Staff, managers and senior leaders were also engaged in an activity to explore how we can better provide the workplace conditions to promote high quality supervision, support and training. The sessions were very productive and provided some helpful feedback for the leadership team to consider going forward. Madam Mayor Cllr Bernadette Khan and I had the opportunity to close one of the conferences and Cllr Cummings was also able to attend.



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Here are some quotes from staff who attended.

- Good agenda put together, best conference I have been too
- The sessions was very useful to understand where we are currently and what needs to be done to improve
- Conference positive and delivered well with opportunity for participation and providing good understanding of pathway ahead for our children and families
- Exercise which enabled all staff to explore their experience and wishes to improve services for child/families/ teams
- The feedback was useful in understanding how far we have come and the work that still needs to be done



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YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT YOUTH CONGRESS 2



Croydon's young people came together on 16 October 2018 for our second annual Youth Congress.

Following its launch in 2017, the Youth Congress aims to raise the voice of young people in the borough, by listening to and actioning their views. Taking place at Trinity Baptist Church, in the north of the borough, **over 160 young people** from local schools, colleges, alternative education providers, community and uniformed groups brought a variety of views and ideas to further the priorities set out during the first Youth Congress at Heathfield House in the summer of 2017.



Children, Young People and Learning

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December 2018

This year's event was hosted by Anthony King and the local poet Shaniqua Benjamin. Young people **aged 11-18** reviewed each of the ten priorities set in 2017 and discussed what they meant today for young people.

The top three priorities from last year were reviewed and young people in groups came up with a set of actions for local authority, community organisations, schools, families and young people themselves to take responsibility for – with the expected outputs to be published in the weeks to follow.

The congress continued into the afternoon where a young people's panel, led by the Young Mayor and deputy, explored the critical issues of stop and search, knife crime and youth opportunities with local councillors, council directors, uniformed and community leaders.

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CROYDON CELEBRATES SUCCESS, TALENT AND ACHIEVEMENT AT GLITZY HILTON CEREMONY

Over **90** young people in Croydon received awards for their achievements and contributions at the borough's first ever STAR Awards. The STAR Awards recognise young people looked after by the local authority for their success, talent and achievement. With a higher than anticipated number of nominations across **13 award categories** the Hilton Hotel was the scene for young people to be recognised for their academic, sporting, musical and personal achievements.



Special guest Lemn Sissay MBE opened the event and performed his unique brand of spoken word poetry, and with key notes from the Mayor, Cllr Bernadette Khan, the Leader of the Council Cllr Tony Newman and myself. The event, then saw nominees **aged 8-24** be celebrated by their carer's, social workers, educators, families and the wider community at a glamorous black and gold themed event that will live long in the memory for the young people it recognised.

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Cabinet Member Bulletin

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December 2018

CROYDON PREPARES TO BE TAKEN OVER AGAIN!

The Takeover Challenge returned on 23 November 2018 after its initial running saw 70 young people descend on the borough and take its top jobs for one day. This year over **160 young people** who applied are expected to take the reins of the council, its councillors and directors, the police and local organisations in what has been billed as being one of the biggest challenge events of its kind, coordinated by a local authority in the UK.



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Care Leavers Local Offer

Croydon has recently published its 'Local Offer' for care leavers. The offer was created by working with young people who have care experience and a range of council departments in developing an extensive offer covering the following areas:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Education and Training
- Employment
- Accommodation
- Participation in Society

The Offer, which was presented to the Cabinet on 24 September, outlines the Council's commitment and ambition for its care leavers, ensuring that looked after children and care leavers receive priority in our services. The Offer will be regularly



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Cabinet Member Bulletin

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reviewed to ensure that all services and opportunities for care leavers are publicised, and known and understood by them.

The Offer is available in printed copy for all care leavers, and on the Croydon website at <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/local-offer-for-care-leavers>, where translated versions can also be found.

As part of our continued efforts to support our young people, Croydon is one of the few Local Authorities in the country to provide a Smartphone App for Care Leavers providing them with easily accessible information on the Croydon Care Leaver's offer; who to go to for support, opportunities for apprenticeships in London and South East of England, housing and accommodation options and much more.

The App, called Croydon Care leaver Connect, is available to download from the App store and Play Store. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank our care leaver Ashleigh Searle, who wrote the Forward for our care leavers offer. Ashleigh has been a great support to the service and was also a fantastic compare at the recent Star Awards mentioned earlier alongside Queenie Chizea. I am looking forward to continuing to work with our young people and officers to continue to increase opportunities for care leavers.

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DELIVERING OUR AMBITIONS

The children's improvement plan 2018-19

As we move into the second year of the children's improvement programme we have reviewed the improvement plan to sharpen the focus and drive actions that are concentrated on the right priorities. Our children and families deserve the best services, and our leaner, sharper improvement plan will help us make sure we are all working together on the right areas to achieve our ambitions.

The plan on a page sets out for all our staff and our partners the four improvement workstreams, underpinned by the commitment to create a culture of shared ownership and social work values.

Our most recent visit from Ofsted reported that we are making progress, although there is still much more to do. Our 2018-19 improvement plan will guide us all to continue to make the progress our children and families deserve.



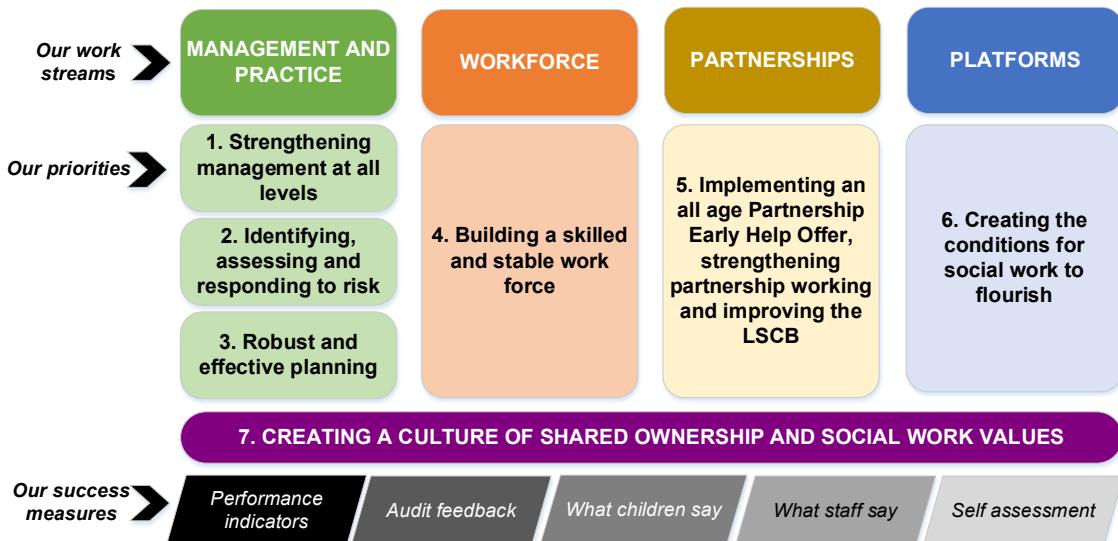
Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Councillor Alisa Flemming

December 2018

CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN ON A PAGE 18/19



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WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Study Visit to Warsaw

The Local Authority was invited by the Polish Government to be part of a Study Visit to Warsaw in October 2018. The London Borough of Croydon was part of a delegation from England Wales and Scotland. Jo Ross a Service Manager for the Children in Need Service attended to represent Croydon. The aim of the visit, which was paid for by the Polish Government, was to discuss the mechanisms for and the barriers to the return of children who are Polish Nationals to Poland , in the context of care proceedings or in the rare circumstances of child abduction.

Jo was able to visit a community centre that provides support for children at home, children placed with relatives who have been approved as foster carers and foster carers in the area local to the centre and she also met representatives from the National Ombudsman's Office for Children in Poland.

In addition to the opportunity to increase the knowledge about the Polish legal and care system there was the ability to spend time talking to the representatives from the Care Proceedings Team based in the Polish Embassy in London to strengthen already established relationships in order to ensure the best outcomes for our children in the future.

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AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON



Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member Bulletin

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December 2018

Visit to India

During our last Ofsted Monitoring Visit the work of some of our social workers was held up as examples of good practice. Below is one such example.

The Local Authority initiated care proceedings in 2017 in relation to two children now aged 7 and 6. Assessments were undertaken of both their Mother who brought the children from India but is still living in the UK and their Father but they did not support the children being returned to the care of either parent.

There was also an assessment of the children's paternal Aunt in India which was positive. However the bureaucracy to obtain the correct paperwork from the Indian Authorities to enable the children to return to their extended family was extremely challenging and also impacted on the Court's ability to conclude proceedings in the UK. As a result both children were confused about the plans for them and also were understandably anxious about what was going to happen. The allocated social worker undertook careful preparation with the children creating a life story book about their life in London and she also undertook work with them around their planned move to live with their paternal Aunt. The social worker was also keen to ensure that the children's Mother, who has learning difficulties and remains in the UK, was part of helping the children to move in positive way back to India. This was a piece of work that was highlighted to Ofsted Inspectors during the recent monitoring visit and the feedback from the Inspector was extremely positive.

The social worker along with a colleague who qualified in India from the Emergency Duty team accompanied the children on their journey back to India. The children's extended family were delighted to see the children and the social workers. The social worker saw an immediate change in the children who were relaxed in their new home surrounded by their extended family members.

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Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Councillor Alisa Flemming

December 2018

Educational visit to South Carolina



During the last two academic years we have welcomed teachers from all over America to visit schools in Croydon and find out about the education system we have in England. The visiting teachers have benefitted greatly from their visits and have taken learning back to their home schools. As part of these trips they also have the opportunity to have a home stay with a Croydon family.

In October this year Shelley Davies (Head of Education Standards) was delighted to be invited by 'Bookbag Tours' to spend some time in educational establishments in Greenville, South Carolina and to shadow a number of roles similar to hers.

During the stay Shelley visited a number of both Elementary and High Schools and was involved in school place planning meetings, target setting meetings and a work experience programme for a group of High school students. It was clear from the visit that there are many key similarities in terms of what we are focusing on in our schools compared with schools in South Carolina. These similarities include a focus on improving pupils' vocabulary skills, phonics teaching and problem solving / reasoning in mathematics.



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CALAT

Events – Promoting adult learning

Tesco Educational Partnership

CALAT have entered a Lifelong Learning Partnership agreement with the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.



The aim of the partnership is to make learning as accessible and affordable as possible for retail employees in Croydon, as well as to promote the engagement of employees in education and learning to enhance their education and development both by the achievement of gaining qualifications and upskilling.



Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Councillor Alisa Flemming

December 2018

As part of this partnership work we are delivering ESOL courses at Tesco.dot.com in Factory Lane to a wide spectrum of employees. ESOL level 1 and Level 2 courses. Employees include: cleaners, shop assistants, team supervisors and Assistant shop managers. All the employees' aims are to improve their English in order to progress and gain promotion within Tesco.

The Tesco senior Managers are fully committed to this programme of development and have approved their employees to attend classes during their working hours. This ensures attendance and completion of courses.

We are currently liaising with Tesco to develop further courses in computing to upskill their staff to use their on-line self-service portal for effective work practice, training for both shop workers and management using the system.

CALAT ALDD Awards

Taking place on Thursday 29th November at St Mildred's Church Hall (Bingham Road) the annual ALDD awards promises to be as fantastic and inspiring as previous events. Celebrating the commitment and enthusiasm of the ALDD learners and staff the Deputy Mayor will be attending and giving out the award certificates.

This year will be extra special as it the first awards without Lonie Milne and the plan is to give the Outstanding Achievement Award in her honour.

CALAT qualification Achievement rates/ Funding 17/18

CALAT had a successful outcomes for the academic year 2017/18. The service achieved 102% of its ESFA Adult Education Budget (AEB) allocation which has stabilised the funding allocation for 2019/20 when the AEB is devolved to the GLA. This was due to the increase our learner numbers, embedding of employability awards and units to prepare learners for their next steps and an increase in the number of courses that ran. Most significantly the qualification achievement rate was 85% which is a 3% increase on 2016/17.

CALAT ESOL + GLA funded collaborative project

CALAT were successful in achieving the ESOL + collaborative bid with Sutton College, Westminster Adult Education Service and Kingston Adult Education to the GLA. The project targets ESOL learners who have barriers to learning due to their childcare responsibilities. This project will support parents to create a memory box for their child whilst developing their English language skills.

Each of the providers have identified that in their respective Boroughs, parents' access clinics and centres to support the development of their children. The parents, however, often have limited English which impacts their ability to access other services as their children develop. The families are then disadvantaged and parents



Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Councillor Alisa Flemming

December 2018

could be distanced from gaining employment as a result and find it more difficult to operate in the local area.

Excellent progress has been made by the CALAT team. The delivery of the course has begun and they are into their second week. The course has attracted 16 women, all but one with small children and one of the participants is pregnant. They are predominantly from the Albanian, Chinese and Pakistani community. The course is scheduled to finish on the 14th November 2018, then based on the findings and evaluation, the next one will be run in February 2019.

CALAT is working with residents of a temporary housing accommodation in Thornton Heath (Brigstock House). The stories from the learners are very moving and the project is proving very valuable in helping people from unsettled communities. Some of the learners have been victims of trafficking, domestic violence as well as asylum seekers and are already forming a social network as well as developing positive memories with their babies. The work that is being done is fantastic and very powerful in terms of engaging the socially isolated.

The course is planned for 6 weeks for 1 ½ day each week. It is staffed by 3 people (no childcare worker or play worker). The mothers were keen to have the babies with them as it was important to them to feel that the children were safe. The mothers are developing their language through the creation of the memory box. The project is gaining momentum through word of mouth and already resulting in women who have been very hard to engage, putting themselves forward for the course.

CPD Apprenticeship launch to Croydon Council staff

CALAT have been developing a higher apprenticeship offer aimed at developing the skills of staff within Croydon Council. The new offer includes Leadership and Management apprenticeships with embedded qualifications at levels 3 and 5 accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management as well as Business administration apprenticeships at levels 3 and 4. Customer service at level 2 is also on offer as part of this programme due to start in February 2019.

There was a staff engagement event that took place at the 8th floor Deli in Bernard Wetherill House on Thursday 22nd November. Curriculum specialists representing each of the apprenticeships on offer were available to recruit staff and provide information for managers supporting staff in their developmental journey.

CPD apprenticeships are a great way to invest in staff to develop their skills and increase productivity as well as helping them to make their next steps within their careers.

Coming in September 2019: Facilities management Supervisor BIFM level 3, Facilities Manager BIFM level 4, Assistant Accountant AAT level 3