



Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming January 2019

LATEST NEWS

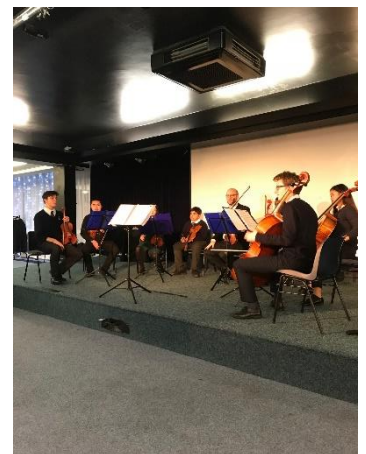
Happy New Year – I'm looking forward to continuing the work this year to ensure that all children in the borough are safe, healthy, happy and able to aspire to be the best they can be. I'm really pleased that Rob Henderson and Nick Pendry are now in post as permanent Executive Director of Children Families and Education and Director for Early Help and Social Care. I am really looking forward to working with them.

Sadly David Butler, Director of Education will be leaving us to take up a new role as Chief Executive of a Multi-Academy Trust. David has been with Croydon for many years and built excellent relationships with schools, and head teachers, partners and colleagues and he will be sorely missed. I will be working with Rob on David's replacement. I'd like to take this opportunity to personally thank David for all that he has done for the residents of Croydon. David is a wealth of knowledge and he will be greatly missed. I wish him an abundance of success in all future endeavours.

Staff Awards

I was delighted to attend the Children, Families and Education Departmental Awards in November. This was an opportunity to celebrate all those in the department who had been nominated for a Croydon award with the finalists going forward to the ceremony at the Hilton. We had 4 members of staff and 1 team who were finalists at the Hilton and I am delighted that the Children & Families Partnership won the category for Residents Award on the night for their supporting role in the delivery of our Play Streets Initiative.

The Departmental event was held at the Conference Centre and we were lucky enough to be entertained by a string orchestra made up of pupils from schools in the borough who played a variety of music from the Beatles to Beethoven.



I would like to offer my congratulations to all those nominated, as well as the finalists.

DELIVERING OUR AMBITIONS

Children's Improvement Journey

I am committed to making sure our early help and social care staff have caseloads that ensure they have the time to do high quality work with our children and their families. In the past eight months children's social workers' caseloads in Croydon have come right down to an average that is below our target in all service areas

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including the assessment and care planning services, at the front line of keeping children safeguarded.



How did we do it? We listened to staff who told us that caseloads were too high. So, in June three managed teams of social workers were brought in to add capacity on the ground, take over the duty desk during the summer months and so give our Croydon staff space to really get on top of their cases.

Within weeks the difference was clear and caseloads began to fall. By November it was clear the action had paid off. The average caseload per social worker dropped to a level that gives Croydon one of the lowest caseload averages in London.

Veronica Leigh, assessment service manager, describes the difference as immense.

“The service is in a much better place now,” she says. “Caseloads are manageable and morale is really, really high in the teams. I can feel a buzz about the service that wasn’t there at all six months ago.

“Our social workers now talk about Croydon as a place where you’re supported by skilful managers to do the best job you can to make a positive impact on children and young people, and word of mouth is drawing in staff to come and be part of our team.”

There is still much more to do to make sure all our children and families get the high quality services they deserve, but this has been a really important, visible, step in the right direction.

Croydon new Special Free School

Following Croydon’s successful bid for capital funding from the Department for Education to develop a new free special school, the Education and Skills Funding Agency commissioned Croydon Council to lead on the delivery of the new special free school - Addington Valley Academy. The school will offer 150 places to children aged 2-19 years, with autism and learning difficulties, with the aim of providing a local pathway from the early years to adulthood.



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The plan is for construction of the new school to commence in early summer 2019, ready for the school to be open in September 2020.”



Croydon Partnership Early Help Strategy 2018 – 2020

Our ambition is that all children and young people in Croydon will be safe, healthy and happy, and will aspire to be the best they can be. The future is theirs.



Launch of our new Partnership Early Help strategy Best Start Family Solutions service

The end of 2018 saw the launch of the new Best Start Family Solutions service which is our new partnership Early Help Strategy. Over the past year hard work has been undertaken across both the statutory and voluntary sectors in collaboratively developing the strategy and this all came into fruition in November with the launch of the new strategy.

The new Partnership Early Help delivery model is shaped around three early help locality hubs, working initially within the three localities established through the Best Start early help provision, in the north, central and south areas of the Borough. These three hubs provide a locality base for a range of practitioners supporting close collaboration and alignment of services. These include the realigned Council intensive early help family key work teams and the Best Start service, who will work with partners including schools, health services, police, voluntary, faith and community sector agencies in delivering an integrated approach to our early help offer in the locality. This aligns with the Council’s new operating model and enables us to provide a joined up and effective early help offer for children aged 0 to 18 and their families.

If you would like to find out more about the Best Start Family Solutions service, please contact Clive.seall@croydon.gov.uk



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Takeover challenge Day

Another very successful Takeover Challenge took place with 146 young people participating, 99% more than in 2017.

Key Statistics:

- 63% were female
- 37% were male
- 99% attend Croydon schools (including alternative providers)
- 93% live in Croydon with 7% living on the periphery of neighbouring boroughs
- 13 Young People participated from the Beckmead Family of Schools (alternative provider)
- 1% of young people were identified as NEET and have since been referred
- 89 come from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds (BAME)
- 25 unique placements were offered to young people (4 higher than 2017)
- 99% would recommend taking part to their friends

Some quotes from the young people:

"I enjoyed my placement environment and engaging with senior managers"

"It will allow young people to have their say in how they feel Croydon should be developed and hopefully impact what will be improved"

"It will encourage young people and children to have their say on the council decisions. Also it will help the council to make the Borough better as citizens have told the council what they should do"

"It gave me a voice"

"It will change a lot of things, because we young people have new fresh ideas"

"The best thing about the takeover challenge were the tours the ability to share our views and being able to find out how the council function".

"I really felt like I am part of Croydon".

Croydon Music and Arts (CMA), Giving Young People a Voice

CMA have been exploring the impact the arts can have through giving young people a voice, by involving them in the creative process and giving them a choice in how to perform or present their work.

CMA have applied this practical approach to music making in the classroom, and in their annual music education hub return for the DfE they have been able to report a

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45% increase in the number of children learning instruments in Croydon schools. An external evaluation of this work in four primary and three secondary schools found that:

- Playing a musical instrument was shown to be accessible to all
- Young people feel a great sense of satisfaction from this
- Musical ability and class cohesion are developed concurrently.

The report recommends CMA continue the roll out and has provided some recommendations for how they develop this approach across Key Stages 2 and 3.

Some of our Arts Council cultural education partnership funding has been used to pilot a similar approach with spoken word projects in primary schools linked to literacy.

To support young artists making progress CMA are currently working with RSL exam board to create a new class qualification for the performing arts across Key Stages 2 and 3 as part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework. As well as rewarding young artists it will prepare them for GCSE or vocational qualifications at Key Stage 4.

The impact of giving young people a voice is not just about celebrating their artistic achievements and the contribution they can make to cultural life in Croydon. Being able to express themselves is particularly valuable for those facing disadvantage, helping them to address challenges, improve their well-being and achieve in other areas.

CALAT ALDD Awards

Another brilliant Adults with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (ALDD) awards ceremony took place in November, celebrating all the fantastic hard work and achievements of everyone involved in the ALDD programme, the celebration was well attended and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Kabir, was on hand to give out awards along with Cllr Shafi Khan, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning.





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CALAT Spring term enrolment campaign

CALAT will be encouraging Croydon residents to enrol on Spring Term courses at their New Year open day which will be held at Croydon Clocktower in January. Staffed by members of all the curriculum areas these events are a great way to promote CALAT's diverse offering as well as a fantastic opportunity to meet other potential learners.



In addition to boost January enrolments CALAT has launched a 6 week campaign running throughout December and into January 2019. A full page advert was placed in the Croydon Advertiser coinciding with a Decaux board, web and social media campaign.

Consortium Bid

CALAT has submitted a bid to the London Learning Consortium to support their tender for the procurement element of the Adult Education Budget. The bid is for £400k over 4 years and will focus on two cohorts of learners, one transitioning Family Learning Adult learners onto mainstream accredited programmes and vocational pathways and the other will focus on adults with health conditions and learning difficulties to assist them in gaining employment. The outcome will be announced in January / February 2019.

CALAT English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) + GLA funded collaborative project

Aimed at ESOL students whose childcare responsibilities created barriers to learning, the collaborative project has supported parents to create a memory box for their child whilst developing their language skills and to also provide pathways to other agencies, libraries and local support networks available in Croydon and other areas.

Parents supported range from as far and wide as Albania to the Philippines with an adult age range of 18 to 30 and babies from 8 days to 1 year.

The second delivery phase of the project begins in February 2019 where we expect similar uptake and continued overall success.

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