



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

Croydon Foster Carers Awarded MBE

I am so pleased that Brenda and Gordon Potter have been awarded the MBE* in the Queen's Birthday Honours.



Brenda and Gordon have fostered for Croydon Council since 1989 and already had four children of their own when they responded to an advert to foster new babies who were awaiting adoption. They have now cared for approximately 200 children over 43 years of fostering and have adopted 3 children.

They have made a real difference to so many young lives, giving their time and their care to children who for whatever reason, cannot stay with their own family.

They have supported them through trauma, providing them with a safe space and a loving home. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

I was delighted when Brenda and Gordon also received a long service award from Croydon Council at the annual foster care awards earlier this year.

*Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) is awarded for 'an outstanding achievement or service to the community' which 'will have had a long-term, significant impact and stand out as an example to others.'

Excellence abounds at the Children's Social Care and Early Help Awards!

I was so pleased to be invited to attend the first 'Excellence in Practice' awards ceremony. The event took place on 4 June and myself, the Chief Executive, Jo Negrini and the Mayor Croydon, Councillor Humayun Kabir had the privilege of presenting the awards to social workers and support staff to recognize the outstanding work that takes place with children, young people and families in Croydon. The awards were also an opportunity to celebrate and promote diversity and equal opportunities in social care.





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Guest speaker Isabelle Trowler, chief social worker for England (children and families), provided an insightful keynote speech on the theme of 'remembering why - social work'

The energy in the room was amazing and I am looking forward to next year's event.

For more information contact Nicki Shaw – Head of Children's Workforce Development nicki.shaw@croydon.gov.uk

The executive director of Children, Families and Education launches a new volunteer-led mentoring programme to help young people in care with their education

The Virtual School is launching this programme as part of the council's duty to support through their education, the over 900 children for whom we are corporate parents. We are starting by working with 25 young people aged 14 to 16 in mainstream schools in Croydon and nearby boroughs. Approximately half of this group are unaccompanied or separated refugee young people.

20 young people took part in initial research in May and have helped shape how the programme is designed. Many of these are keen to be our first mentees. Our initial callout for the 15 men and 10 women who we need as volunteers has had a great response from within the council, and is now also attracting interest through Croydon Voluntary Action. We are looking forward to our first volunteer training day on Friday 5th July and will place our first learning mentors ready to start with their mentees in September.



For more information, please contact Kathryn in the Virtual School team: Kathryn.Kashyap@Croydon.gov.uk or call 07742405218 or 020 8726 6000 ext 60267.



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Staffing

I am delighted to welcome another permanent Head of Service to our Children's Social Care Leadership Team. Nana Bonsu – Head of Systemic Practice.



Nana Bonsu has been a qualified social worker for 17 years and has worked in 4 London local authorities. She is qualified as a family and systemic psychotherapist and a Systemic Supervisor. Nana is able to use her dual qualification to lead and innovate practice. I am looking forward to working with her.

Nana.bonsu@croydon.gov.uk

0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy

Croydon Council and Clinical Commissioning Group have approved a three-year strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The 0-25 SEND Strategy was based on the views of young people and parents who identified five areas for development. The Council and CCG are committed to working with parents, schools and practitioners to:

- Improve the early identification of children's special needs - with a focus on health visiting and integrated checks
- Provide early intervention and targeted support for children when a special need is identified in school and in the community. Croydon intends to pilot the introduction of inclusion funding for children with SEN in mainstream schools. The Council is undertaking a review of Children with Disability Services, including short breaks.
- Improve the joined up assessment and provision for children across education, health and care with better pathways for autism diagnosis and mental health support.
- Provide a better local pathway to adulthood for young people who have SEND and are over 16 years – we are working in partnership with Croydon College to develop a post 16 SEN Centre of Excellence to provide a local pathway from special school to adulthood.
- Improve the skills and knowledge of the workforce so that children with SEND better have their needs met and parents/carers and professionals are confident

An event took place in May to launch the five work-streams which will deliver these changes. There will be a formal launch of the 0-25 SEND Strategy in September 2019. Please look out for notices of this event.



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For more information contact Alison Farmer, Head of SEND
Alison.farmer@croydon.gov.uk

Autism Education Trust Training Hub

Croydon has been recognised as the Autism Education Trust early years regional training hub. This means that Croydon will be leading on good practice training for early years settings.

Croydon's Early Years Inclusion and Intervention Team will be providing training to raise basic autism awareness and practical knowledge, supporting practitioners in developing hands-on tools and techniques for working directly with children who are 2-5 years old and are on the autism spectrum. Updates about training are promoted through Early Years SENCO Forums. Parents will be invited to join some training sessions alongside practitioners.

Please contact Pam Sokhi (pam.sokhi@croydon.gov.uk or senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk) for more information

New Free Special School is on its way!

I am delighted that Croydon has secured funding from the Department for Education for a special school for children and young people with autism and severe learning difficulties. Addington Valley Academy, free special school, is planned to open in September 2020.

Consultation events regarding the school provision to be made by Orchard Hill College Academy Trust were held at Timebridge Community Centre during the week beginning 10th June 2019. Despite torrential rain, events were attended by a range of representatives from the local community. There was much interest in where the school would be situated and the facilities that would be available for the young people and the local community.

Building work is anticipated to start on site from January 2020. Orchard Hill College Academy Trust shared their plans for the young people's learning and the development of the school. Please watch out for further news and updates of this and our other special schools.

For more information contact Alison Farmer, Head of SEND
Alison.farmer@croydon.gov.uk



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Croydon School recognised by Mayor of London Office for Careers Best Practice

I'm so pleased that Norbury Manor Business and Enterprise College has been recognised for its good practice in relation to careers advice and guidance by the Mayor of London Office. The school invited Legacy Youth Zone to lead a Year 9 Deep Learning Day, a regular initiative run across the school focusing on different subject matter often with a strong employability or enterprise content.



The students were tasked with either designing a mural, developing merchandise or creating an in-house menu. Norbury Manor has a long-established strong focus on careers advice and developing entrepreneurial skills, having previously won national and international enterprise awards. This further recognition by the Mayor of London's Office for their work with Legacy means that Norbury Manor's good practice is being shared with schools across London. More about the school's careers offer can be found at [Norbury Manor Business & Enterprise College - Careers](#)

For more information contact Julie Ralphs, Head of Education Commissioning Julie.ralphs@croydon.gov.uk

Youth Engagement



The Youth Engagement Team supported the **Mayors Youth Evening** at Croydon Town Hall in May which was delivered in conjunction with the Choose Your Future campaign and external organisation Another Night of Sisterhood (ANOS). This partnership strives to make positive impact on parents and their children, communities within Croydon borough and the wider

audience.

The audience and attendees represented a diverse cultural and economic background all of whom came together to celebrate the Mayor's Dinner with young people. The audience was entertained by live performances and music with delicious food available.



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I was proud to host **Croydon Has Talent 2019**, which was held at Oasis House in Thornton Heath in May. Croydon BME Forum were commissioned to deliver the event, which attracted over 400 people. The Youth Engagement Team had a stall with flyers and information about our services and Choose Your Future. The stall has helped staff members to interact with young people and families and network with other providers/practitioners who were also offering their support for young people.

The talent show participants were children and young people aged between 8-25 years old and was broken into two age groups. This event was hosted by Anthony 'Pass the Mic' King and Inspired Vanessa with the panel of judges including Roger Samuels (the Voice 2019) and Rai Williams (X Factor 2018). Judges made their decisions on the finalists after a series of auditions and the winner won a prize of £500.

Crystal Palace Football Club hosted **Cut It Out!** organised by Croydon BME Forum at Selhurst Park on Saturday 25th May. The event saw a series of football matches on the Premier League pitch and was supported by the Youth Engagement Team and a large number of community and partner organisations.



The aim of Cut It Out! was to tackling knife crime in Croydon, through partnership and increased awareness. The stall area of the event was very well attended with information to help increase young people's participation in activities, engage with the community and offers of specialist support.

The Kicks Community League team, who are supported by the Youth Engagement Team and Palace For Life Foundation did not concede a single goal through the tournament and went on to win in a decisive match. Exhausted but elated they met The Mayor and won medals and tickets to the Endz Festival!

For more information contact Clive Seall, Head of Early Help and Youth Engagement clive.seall@croydon.gov.uk



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CALAT

CALAT Celebration of Achievement 2019



This event took place on the evening of June 18th in the Braithwaite Hall. The 2019 CALAT celebration of Achievement was a great success. Attended by more than 80 people, awards were given in 8 categories spread between Learners and CALAT staff. The event was a celebration of everything that is fantastic about CALAT; and the commitment, dedication and passion that is shared by everyone involved in both learning at CALAT and delivering the service.

Next year's event is already booked so expect an invite soon!

AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON



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CALAT Summer Open Day

CALAT threw open the doors for its annual Summer Open day on Wednesday 20th June. There was a particular interest in Computing and IT courses which was really encouraging and lots of contact details were taken across the other curriculum areas which will be followed up and turn into future enrolments.

Festival of Learning

Starting w/c 24th June the CALAT Festival of Learning offered everyone the chance to get a taste of what CALAT can offer with a rich and diverse programme of courses planned for the week. Courses filled up fast and this celebration of Lifelong learning was a hit.