



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

LATEST NEWS

Croydon's Legacy Youth Zone

I was delighted to participate in the opening of the Croydon's Legacy Youth Zone on Saturday 7 September 2019. This is a fantastic resources offering young people between 8 and 19 (or 25 for those with additional needs) the chance to enjoy more than 20 different activities.

On Saturday the young people were encouraged to try out the indoor climbing wall, fully equipped gym, music room with recording studio, training kitchen and much more.

I am so pleased that more than 2000 young people have already registered to become members of the Youth Zone following a string of successful launch events.

By investing in this stunning new Youth Zone, and working with On-Side and all the young people who have worked so hard to make this happen, we are helping them to reach their full potential, by giving them access to new opportunities, new experiences and a truly amazing place to have fun and make friends.

A dream has been turned into reality giving young people in Croydon somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to.

Contact Officer: clive.seall@croydon.gov.uk





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Practice Learning Week – Direct Work

In early September Early Help and Children's Social Care held the very first Practice Learning Week for direct work which was a huge success. It was lovely to see so many practitioners showcasing the creative tools they use to engage with children, young people and families.



Practice Learning week was put together as a way to spread best practice between practitioners to ensure that Social Workers and Family Workers learn in more practical ways from their colleagues. In the last Ofsted Monitoring visit, direct work was mentioned as something that is sometimes carried out well in Croydon but could be improved. Therefore, the week was a chance for experienced practitioners who are passionate about using direct work in their practice to spread knowledge, techniques and resources across Early Help and Children's Social Care.

In order to cover all areas of the service, each day of the week focused on a different theme. This included using direct work to build relationships, to work with parents, to engage with children with disabilities and to work with adolescents. It was a great reminder to staff that direct work tools come in many forms, from writing letters to using conversation cubes and many left feeling excited and ready to try out some of their new ideas learnt from the week.

There will be many more direct learning weeks like this in the future.

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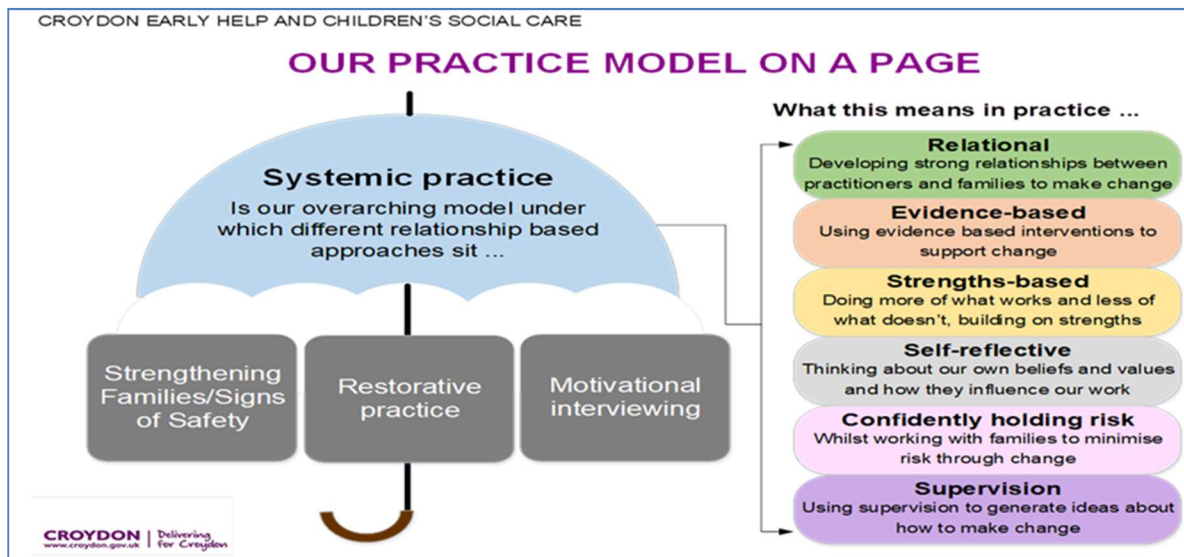




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Early Help and Children’s Social Care Staff Conference

Another hugely successful half day staff conference took place at the beginning of September. This was an opportunity for Nana Bonsu our systemic practice lead to launch our evidence based practice framework. This was well attended, with over 200 seated delegates and more standing. Social workers and practitioners were informed about the practice framework, the training roll out and the expected impact on practice. This is an incredibly exciting opportunity to embed a whole systems approach to practice, ensuring children, young people and families experience a workforce that is skilled and confident in their practice methodologies.



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Youth Bus offers Safety Advice

Croydon’s Choose your future campaign came to Croydon North End in September. The Youth Bus offered young people a flexible space of their own to get help, advice and access support on a range of topics from personal safety to health and wellbeing.



With hundreds of young people across Croydon heading back to school at the beginning of September this initiative helps to give them the best start to the new term.



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Star Awards 2019

After the successful inaugural event last year – nominations have been taking place for the STAR awards 2019 as Croydon prepares to celebrate the many talents and achievements of its young people and care leavers. This year's awards are open to all young people aged 8-18 who are in the care of Croydon Council and to care-leavers up to the age of 25.

The ceremony takes place at the Fairfield Halls on 8 November 2019 and I am really looking forward to a fantastic evening celebrating their achievements with them.

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Brightspots

An innovative programme is going to be delivered to all Children Looked After aged 4-17. We have agreed to work with Coram Voice to distribute a survey to improve the care experience and well-being of children looked after, called 'Your Life, Your Care'. The survey asks children and young people aged between 4 and 17 years old age-appropriate questions about their placements, the people they know, their well-being, their carers and social worker, their rights and the chances/opportunities they get.

The surveys will be completed between 30/09/19 and 31/01/20 and I believe this is an exciting opportunity for us to understand and improve our practice in relation to the well-being of our looked after children.

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Summer Activities for Children and Young People

The Youth Engagement Team summer offer was 72 sessions over the summer for young people 8-18 covering locality detached & outreach across the borough and bookable projects and activities from 1-3 days duration. We had really strong communication and publicity this year through the Young Croydon website and social media. I was delighted with the take up from colleagues in Children's Social Care and Early Help supporting young people they are working with to book onto activities.

The Young Mayors careers event on 21 August at BoxPark had 79 attendees; young people who wanted to consider their education, training and career options felt supported and inspired by providers and a range of bespoke speakers (who were picked by the Young Mayor and Deputy).



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The Youth Engagement Team also offered 9 additional targeted sessions over the summer for looked after young people, children and young people living in temporary accommodation along London Road and those vulnerable to having a poor transition from primary to secondary school.

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SummerMix

SummerMix summer school ran a wide range of accredited educational and vocational courses over the summer to support more than 100 refugee young people and unaccompanied asylum seeking children to support their integration into UK life. This is the 2nd year SummerMix has taken place in Croydon and about 70 young people attended each day. I am so pleased that it returned this summer to support these young people and teach them a range of skills to enable them to thrive in their new surroundings while also having fun and meeting other young people in similar circumstances.

The Takeover Challenge

The Takeover Challenge is happening again in November after the success of previous years. This is an opportunity for us to aim to increase the placement opportunities for young people in the council, through businesses and with community organisations. Young people get a chance to 'take over' director roles/jobs and work with heads of services and other senior leaders to consult and plan for work that may have an impact on young people.

Contact Officer Emily.collinsbeare@croydon.gov.uk

Successful grant application for Croydon teaching staff

Croydon schools, Octavo Partnership and Croydon Council's Education Department have been successful in their collaborative bid for Erasmus+ funding via the British Council for School Exchange Partnerships during the 2019/20 academic year. This follows a successful Croydon Erasmus+ programme in the 2018/19 academic year.

€31million was made available to UK school partnerships for international opportunities to work with schools in other Erasmus+ countries on projects of shared interest, including: curriculum development, developing innovative practice and professional skills development.

Programmes running over the next academic year will include:

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- Teaching and Learning in Special Education (Iceland)
- Outdoor Learning (Sweden)
- Creative approaches in early years education (Italy)

As well as a number of other programmes with partners in Spain, Italy, Sweden and Finland.

Contact Officer: Julie.ralphs@croydon.gov.uk

Croydon Young Musicians

50 years after their first concert at Fairfield Halls, Croydon Young Musicians presented their Showcase 2019 on 27 September in a celebration of Croydon's musical heritage. All 400 young musicians, from their innovative beginner Star Classes through to their advanced bands and orchestras, performed together for the opening and closing pieces.

Contact Officer: Graeme.smith@croydon.gov.uk

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€31million was made available to UK school partnerships for international opportunities to work with schools in other Erasmus+ countries on projects of shared interest, including: curriculum development, developing innovative practice and professional skills development. Croydon's bid, led by the Octavo Partnership (a services for schools company jointly owned by Croydon Head Teachers Association, Croydon Council and Octavo employees), successfully applied for €550k enabling over 200 staff from 39 Croydon schools to directly participate in the programme. Learning will be shared with other staff and schools to maximise the impact and benefits of the programme across the borough's schools.

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For more information contact:

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SEN 0-25

- Croydon has been recognised as the regional hub for the Early Years Autism Education Trust. The Council's Early Years Inclusion and Intervention team has been trained in this evidence-based approach and will be providing a programme of autism awareness raising and other skill based training for our early years settings during the coming year. The Autism Education Trust provides practical resources for those working with children in the early years and is delivered by local trainers with experience in the field of autism education and understanding of the local context. We are confident this will help practitioners and families meet the needs of children with autism from an early age. For more information please contact: SENenquiries@croydon.gov.uk – with Autism Education Trust – early years in the subject line.
- The Council is working in partnership with mainstream school head teachers to establish an approach to the inclusion of children with special educational needs, so that schools have resources to meet children's needs early. From January the Council and locality based groups of schools will pilot an approach which includes the appointment of area special educational needs co-ordinators and inclusion funding to support mainstream schools in working collaboratively to meet children's needs. We expect this approach to lead to the sharing of good practice and increased confidence for practitioners and parents in the provision for children with SEN in our mainstream schools.
- **SEND Strategy 2019-2022:** The launch of the SEND Strategy 2019-2022 is scheduled for October 2nd 12.00-14.00 at the Legacy Youth Zone. Young people from Bensham Manor and The Priory Special Schools will perform and the young people that worked with us on the SEND Strategy have been invited to attend.
- **SEN Post-16 Provision:** Croydon College Coulsdon has opened the 19-25 specialist SEND Pathways Provision with 24 students attending from this September. This has been fully funded through the council and offers our young adults with SEND a local college option.



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- **Croydon's Post 19 'Community Pathway to Adulthood Programme at Waddon Youth Centre, 2018 / 2019**



The Post 19 Project/Community Pathway to Adulthood Programme at Waddon offers a person centred service, designed to support the transition of young people with special educational needs and disabilities from special education into a community-based programme of activity with local adult services.

In 2017 / 2018, staff at Croydon's Community Pathway Programme worked with five young people with a complex range of learning, physical and sensory needs. These five young people have continued to attend the Programme for a second year, and seven new young people joined in 2018/19.

This year the Programme is running for four days a week (Monday to Thursday), with two groups of young people attending for two days a week.

- The programme has supported the transition from special school to a new environment and the changed expectations of greater independence and engagement with activities that will lay the foundation for the young person's adult life in the community.



- All the young people have developed their independent living skills, participating in regular activities such as cooking, sorting laundry, making beds and ironing. All our young people are expected to help wash up after they have eaten, and to make simple drinks for themselves and others (with support) on a daily basis.

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A parents has said...

"I love love love Waddon and the staff, my daughter absolutely loves it and if she's happy then of course I'm happy. M has come on in leaps and bounds, very confident and learning new skills every day. The staff are excellent, they show a huge respect and care for all the students and go above and beyond their responsibilities.

I would highly recommend this placement for anybody. Huge admiration to all the staff who are doing and absolute excellent job." TW

Outcomes for our Year 11 and 13 young people

Members of the Education Directorate visited schools this year for exam results days. It was great to see so many young people gaining the fruits of their long labours. The Directorate also supported schools and pupils in finding the right pathway to follow following those results, this included a few drop-in sessions in the Town Centre.

The team took the opportunity to speak to both pupils and their parents and to hear some individual stories of success.

GCSE outcomes this year for combined English and maths grade 9 – 5 have improved by 2%. Overall the majority of schools were in line with or better than their 2018 results.

Post-16 top grade passes (A*-A grades) increased by 3% National figures have yet to be released. Croydon achieved our best high grades % against an unconfirmed reporting of a national 12- year low. Grades A*-B also increased by 3% and A*-C grades have remained stable.

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Admissions to primary schools and transfers to junior and secondary schools in September 2020

The admissions site for parents to apply for a Reception place, a junior school place or a secondary school place to start in September 2020 opened on 1 September 2019.

The school admissions team have started the work of promoting the closing dates of application – 31 October 2019 (secondary schools), 15 January 2020 (Primary schools and transfer to junior schools) - and are determined to cut down on the number of late applications submitted every year.

The school admissions team are very committed to the Council's new approach to delivering services to residents by working closely with schools and communities in order to meet the needs of customers as early as possible 'at the right time and in the right place'. By using local knowledge and intelligence, we will be targeting our support in the areas that need it the most and bringing our services closer to the community through 'locality working'. A few drop-in sessions have been planned throughout the month of October in New Addington (8 and 15/10), Thornton Heath library (9 October), the Parchmore centre (14 October) and the central library (16 and 18 October) where parents will benefit from the support of experienced admission officers with completing their school application.

We are also very keen to collect feedback from our residents regarding their experience of applying for a primary or secondary school place so we can make further improvements to our service delivery. The school admissions survey went live on Friday 13 September and can be accessed through the following URL link: <https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/survey/891>