



# Families, Health and Social Care

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Janet Campbell

#### July 2020

---

Welcome to my July Bulletin,

This is my first bulletin as Cabinet Member for Families, Health and Social Care, so I would like to open by telling you a bit about myself...

I have been a resident of Croydon since the 1970s, my core beliefs are centred on empowering a community to be self-sufficient, achieving good mental health and social justice for all.

I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with my colleague Cllr Jane Avis and all my colleagues within Health, Wellbeing and Adults.

We have all been working in challenging times, we are still dealing with Covid-19, adapting to the changes with lockdown rules, looking out for our families and friends and managing our budgets against increasing demand.

I want to thank all our staff, partners and voluntary sector colleagues for their hard work responding to the current COVID-19 outbreak. The work that everyone is doing is making a difference to so many people. In this bulletin I am sharing examples of just some of the great work that has been happening.

We were also all shocked by the horrific killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery which generated many emotions and conversations around the world, and of course, here in Croydon.

We condemn all forms of discrimination - there is no place or tolerance for racism at Croydon.

## **LIFE team increased working hours mean capacity in Croydon University Hospital**

Adult social care in Croydon University Hospital (CUH) moved out of the hospital at the end of March 2019 to support the LIFE discharge service based at Lennard Road. In line with the new guidance issued at that time (19/3/2020) adult social care was required to focus on assessments at home for people discharged from acute hospitals.

A handful of social care staff stayed to work alongside key areas at CUH to assist flow; Integrated Discharge Team, A&E, Palliative Care and Stroke Ward.

All other staff joined up with the LIFE integrated service which included therapists, nurses from Rapid Response, doctors and consultants. Within a week we moved LIFE operating hours to support the hospital flow and from the end of March the service has been working 7 days per week from 8am to 8pm. Current working hours are being reviewed in line with work demands.

The service has accepted referrals for all hospital discharges for people returning home to their own home in Croydon including discharges from hospitals outside the borough e.g. St Georges, Kings College and the Princess Royal University (PRU).

Care is put in place on the day of discharge and the person is assessed at home within 24 hours.

Staff have organised equipment, care and support, emergency food supplies, medication supplies, access to emergency bedding, clothes and incontinence pads as well as Telecare, access to therapy or medical support as needed.

Referrals for LIFE have a target of 63 per month. Current figures for referrals are;

- March 2020 – 158 referrals (last year at the same time was 98)
- April 2020 - 247 referrals
- May 2020 – 284 referrals

The staff in the service have worked extremely hard throughout and despite being affected by staff illness and shielding, they have managed to keep the service running and meet demands which has in turn kept the acute hospitals working at optimum level, and with capacity across the wards for the first time in decades.

## Cherry Garden Centre donates plants for VE75 day

Croydon Commitment put together some packages for some of the veterans in the borough to mark 75 years since VE day.



Amongst the other gifts was a plant donated by the Cherry Garden Centre, which has had to pause its activities.

Normally it's supported by volunteers with disabilities and runs sessions to teach horticulture, providing a space for people who find looking after plants to be a rewarding and enriching activity

The garden centre is open for business Monday – Friday 9:30am -12pm, and there are now dedicated parking spots for customers.

## Looking after our Shielded residents

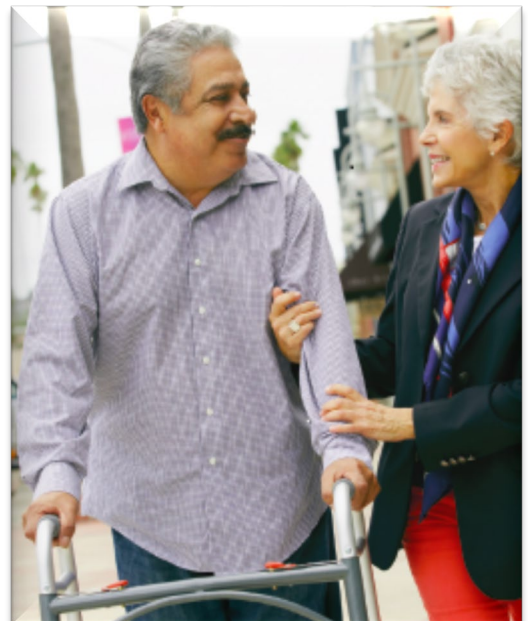
At the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic people who have underlying health conditions were written to by the Government advising them to stay at home for 12 weeks – these people are our 'shielded' residents.

Croydon has supported them in many ways.

The project to contact all shielded residents, by text, phone, email, and letter or, if needed, home visits was developed. A core team of redeployed council staff were trained and able make contact to check how people were and if they needed any additional support, which included medication collection, food and social contact.

If the resident needs food urgently, maybe because of cultural or dietary needs, or that their Government box hadn't arrived or they had small children, referrals are made to the LBC hub for a delivery the same day. Food was sourced very quickly by working with Boxpark, local restaurants, Marks and Spencer, Iceland Co-op and many more organisations for the LBC Hub.

Other residents are referred to Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) and Age UK Croydon who have been coordinating and providing essential food parcels and food banks. We have



also been able to refer our residents to the The Mutual Aid group which is co-ordinated by the CVA.

This consists of 60+ organisations registered to give support, for example assistance with shopping, food deliveries or a hot meal.

Along with the need for essentials, a pressing need is social contact, as some people have been alone for a long time. Working with Age UK Croydon and the CVA the Companion Line was developed, connecting people together. Our call handlers have been able to refer residents to this, as well as the NHS volunteer responders.



Colleagues across the council have worked even closer together than previously. Adult Social Care, Childrens Social Care, Gateway and Housing have collaborated to protect vulnerable families and people who are Shielding.

We are sharing information about the support that is available to our residents via our website, by text message and a leaflet.

Croydon Digital Service worked incredibly quickly to pull together the database of all our Shielded residents so accurate records can be kept of all resident contacts.

The figures at 10/6/20 are:

- 7,714 shielded residents contacted
- 7,028 - requiring no support
- 686 – referred for additional support
- 166 – residents visited due to unknown whereabouts and on government shielded list
- 1,611 - emergency food packages delivered

In addition the Health and Care coordination group was formed which consists of people from the Council, SLAM, GP's alliance, Croydon University Hospital, Carers Centre, One Croydon, Age UK Croydon, Croydon Voluntary Action, Public Health and the CCG.

This group are able to look strategically at the needs of Croydon's vulnerable population and make quick decisions to ensure needs were met. Data sharing across all partners has sometimes been a tricky problem, but by working together, sharing best practise and expertise an agreement was developed which meant our residents experience a more joined up approach from Croydon as a whole.

If you need support:

- The NHS Volunteer Responders programme can help with food, prescriptions and essential items - Call 0808 196 3646.
- If you need urgent help or assistance, please call Croydon Council 020 8604 7787.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**

- Visit [www.croydon.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/coronavirus) for Croydon updates
- Visit [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) for Government updates

## Dedicated support for people living with dementia during lockdown

Singing, painting and reading together are part of the inclusive range of activities taking place over the phone with Croydon residents who are living with dementia at home since the Covid-19 lockdown.

As Croydon Council's day centres are currently closed due to the pandemic, council officers from Marsh Willow and Langley Oaks centres carry out welfare checks on people with the condition at home who would regularly attend their events. Their time together on the phone offers stimulating activities for their mental and physical health and wellbeing.



For people with dementia who are not living in a care home, short respite breaks and personal assistance at home are provided by the council and local agencies to those who are most vulnerable and more in need of help.

People can also contact the council directly if they need support for someone with dementia on 020 8726 6500.

Karren Savory, a day services officer at Croydon's Langley Oaks Day Centre said: *"The clients who would normally attend the day centre tell me how much they are missing us. It is important for people living with dementia to keep up a regularly routine as much as possible. When I call them, some are familiar with my voice and we often sing or reminisce together or just spend the time talking. We also speak to their family or friends who are their carers to signpost them to support services and help them with the different types of activities like simple exercises, painting and crafts they can do with the person with dementia as they are now looking after them at home all day."*

Prior to the lockdown, Croydon Council had been working with the Croydon Dementia Action Alliance, a partnership of more than 20 local organisations making the borough a dementia friendly town and raising awareness of the condition.

Their inclusive projects have included Dementia Friends awareness sessions – also with children and young people, and organising special film screenings at Croydon's David Lean Cinema to make the cinema more accessible for people with the condition. They have also set up dementia cafes in the borough and have hosted a number of tea dances.

Their work is highly commended by Alzheimer's Society, the UK's leading dementia charity and it will continue when we can safely resume our shared community activities.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**

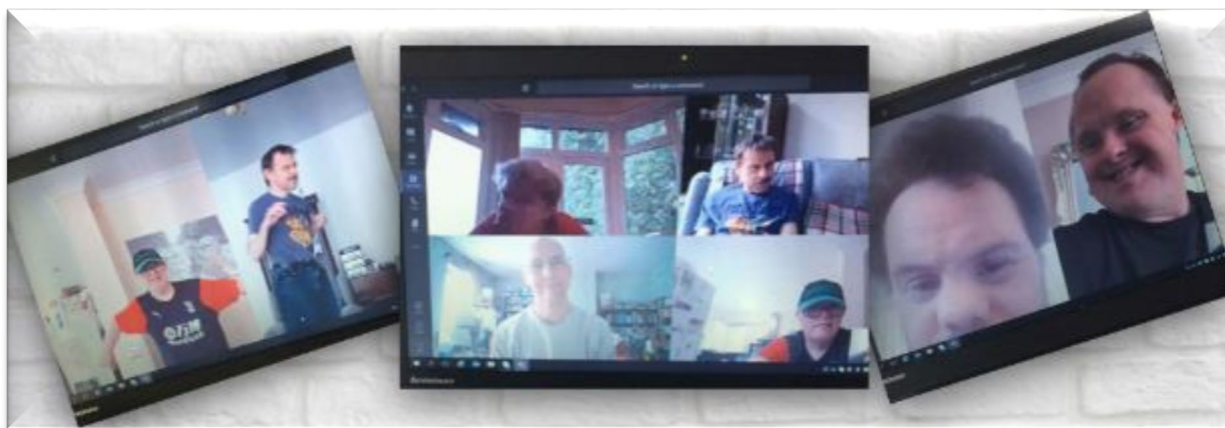


## Virtual hubs help adults with disabilities combat isolation

Newly-formed virtual hubs are helping adults with learning disabilities and autism combat isolation during lockdown by supporting them to connect with their friends online.

Staff working for the council's Active Lives Service, which provides tailored activities and support for people with disabilities, have been facilitating online video sessions for people who would usually meet at their hub centres around the borough including the Cherry Hub in St James' Road. When open, these hubs offer a range of facilities and activities, including dance classes, cookery and a sensory rooms.

The Friends Connect social groups, which run for an hour a day Monday to Friday, were set up after several service users told Active Lives staff they were missing the friends they had made at the borough's hubs. To help them reconnect, the staff have used Microsoft Teams to create virtual hubs where they facilitate group video chats, connect smaller friendship groups and individual friends online to prevent feelings of isolation



and a decline in emotional wellbeing and mental health.

As well as the Friends Connect sessions, Active Lives staff have been using the platform to involve hub users in online keep fit classes, quizzes and virtual discussion groups about the current situation caused by Covid-19, giving advice and useful tips on what people can do to maintain their wellbeing.

Richard St John-Roberts, the carer of two clients using the virtual hub, said: "Errol and David are enjoying being able to see and talk to their friends on Microsoft Teams. Being able to participate in an exercise workout with Heidi [an Active Lives team member] is an added bonus and we all feel better afterwards. Both definitely give it the thumbs up."

In addition to the group sessions, Active Lives staff are using the virtual hubs to continue their dance and drama sessions with the BRIT school and outreach work staying in touch with individual club regulars, with the Whitehorse and Beulah hubs each holding sessions with over 20 people a week.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**

## Residents to benefit from free stop smoking programme

Residents in Croydon can get help from the council's free health and wellbeing programme to quit smoking and reduce their risks of severe symptoms if they get Covid-19.

In response to the pandemic, anyone over 16 years old is being offered one-to-one support from Croydon Live Well advisers during a focused 12-week stop smoking programme.

The advisers are available on the phone number 0800 019 8570 and email, [livewell@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@croydon.gov.uk). There is also online advice and free tools to quit smoking on the council's health website [www.justbecroydon.org/be-smoke-free/](http://www.justbecroydon.org/be-smoke-free/)

Croydon Council is also endorsing the [Quit for Covid](#) campaign where [Public Health England](#), the Chief Medical Officer and The Association of Directors of Public Health are calling for people to stop smoking to protect themselves and others.

Although there are now fewer cases of coronavirus in the borough, smokers still have a higher risk of becoming seriously ill if they contract the virus, as smoking damages the lungs, weakens the immune system and causes a range of severe respiratory problems.

Quitting smoking quickly improves your circulation, breathing and reduces the risks of other long term health problems such as heart attacks and stroke.

In the longer term, quitting is also linked to reduced depression, anxiety, and stress and improved positive mood and quality of life compared with continuing to smoke.



## The NHS is still here for you

If you have a health concern and need to speak to a GP/need advice from a GP, the NHS is still here for you and can provide care if you need it.

Please don't wait until it gets worse, GPs are offering advice in new ways by phone or video to provide you with healthcare advice and reduce the need for travel. They have put in a number of new safety measures across practices in Croydon.

Our NHS teams are particularly concerned about people who may have experienced any new lumps or other cancer symptoms during lockdown and are unsure on what steps to take next. Please know that the NHS is here for you.

Your GP can easily assess, advise and refer through video and phone appointments, you just need to contact your GP in the usual way to get the advice you need

When it comes to cancer, no one should be left feeling alone. A five-minute appointment could be the first step to getting the clarity you need, so don't brush cancer symptoms aside.

Early diagnosis is the best way to ensure a successful and full recovery and your GP is always here for you.

Remember, if you have COVID-19 related symptoms, follow the current advice and do not visit your practice. Call NHS 111 if you have urgent care needs and call 999 in an emergency.



-----

I hope you find this bulletin interesting, if you would like to contact me about anything, please do so on:

**Correspondence:**

c/o Town Hall

Katharine Street

Croydon

CR0 1NX

**Business phone:** 07783152344

**Email:** [janet.campbell@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:janet.campbell@croydon.gov.uk)

Online information

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**