



# Safer Croydon and Communities

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Hamida Ali

#### October 2020

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## Safer Croydon

### Family Justice Centre (FJC)

#### The FJC and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

**FJC**  
Care and support in Croydon for those experiencing domestic abuse

**You can make an appointment by contacting us on: 020 8688 0100**

We are open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9am-5pm and Tuesday, Thursday 8am-7pm.

**CROYDON**  
www.croydon.gov.uk

The FJC plans to remain open in the face of another government instructed lockdown for f2f and telephone appointments. They currently remain open later on a Tuesday and Thursday night till 7pm and on bank holidays.

There has been a 7.4% increase in FJC enquiries during the rolling 12 months compared to the previous 12 months with a marked increase seen during May, June and July of this year.

MARAC continues to meet weekly. There has been a 16.5% increase in MARAC referrals in the rolling 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.

#### Domestic abuse incidents and offences

There has been a 15.7% increase in DA offences and a 14.9% increase in DA incidents in rolling 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.

#### IRIS GP Identification and referral to improve safety – being delivered in Croydon

London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) had previously announced a £1 million investment in training doctors and healthcare professionals to boost their abilities in identifying the signs of domestic violence and offering earlier help to victims.

Specialist training for doctors and GPs is currently available in 10 boroughs. The new funding will expand the programme across 17 boroughs, including Croydon, providing two dedicated domestic violence advocates per borough, with the potential to support more than two million Londoners to access support and guidance. The programme has been developed by IRISi, a social enterprise which works to improve the response to gender-based violence in the health sector, along with partner organisations.

Women using GP surgeries in London where practitioners have already been trained are six times more likely to be referred to specialist support and to have had a conversation about domestic violence with their GP. Patients at these practices also report feeling safer and more about to cope, with many reporting that they visited their GP less frequently as a result.



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The project in Croydon will be managed by IRISi in partnership with providers the FJC and Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid (BCWA) for the next 12 months.

For more information about the project please contact [Ciara.goodwin@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Ciara.goodwin@croydon.gov.uk)



### Stronger Partnerships forged between FJC and the ASB team

The FJC and Croydon's ASB team have started to work in partnership to tackle the issues of domestic abuse within the borough. A new pathway has been created which allows the ASB team to directly email the FJC into an ASB specific inbox. This will allow the team to update the FJC on any concerns with domestic abuse on their ASB caseload. This new pathway will continue to ensure that the FJC reach as many victims as possible to support and that no victim goes unheard.

In addition to this the FJC will be delivering Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence training to the entire ASB team including upskilling the team to risk assess any victims they come across ensuring that those who meet the threshold for MARAC are referred and information is shared in a timely manner to mitigate any further risk.

Furthermore on notification of a potential brothel in Croydon the ASB team in partnership with the police and a qualified ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advocate) from the FJC will attend the property to manage any risk and support the women involved.

Alison Kennedy, Operations Manager from the FJC spoke about the new partnership 'This is a fantastic new approach to tackling the issues of domestic abuse, ensuring a wider reach and a more joined up community approach. Domestic abuse is a societal problem and ASB play a huge part in supporting victims in the borough to seek help'.

### The FJC supports commissioned hostels providers in Croydon

There's been an increase in domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) incidents in the single homeless hostels in Croydon which was highlighted during COVID19. In response to this, the FJC have placed their community IDVA's amongst the hostels to directly support any victims who are living there. This community approach to tackling violence will ensure that anyone reporting any incidents of DASV will have the full support of a qualified IDVA (Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate) who is highly skilled to recognise and respond to risk.

Additionally Alison Kennedy is now a member of the commissioning forum which ensures that providers have an opportunity to speak about any wider concerns of DASV in their hostels. Alison will also be working with area managers to update the incident reporting form to ensure it remains victim focussed and promotes the safety of the victim.

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#### National Hate Crime Awareness Week 10th - 17th Oct 2020



Croydon has joined forces with national charity Stop Hate UK to introduce a new 24-hour helpline dedicated to supporting residents affected by hate crime.

Hate crimes are when people are targeted because of their disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or any other form of their personal identity. Last year 24,000 Croydon residents signed Say 'No' to Hate pledges as part of the council's zero tolerance campaign.

Launched this week, the new service will give victims and witnesses in Croydon a safe and confidential space to talk about their experiences with trained staff and volunteers able to provide a non-judgemental listening ear, as well as advice on appropriate action and accessing further help. The helpline will support those affected by both hate crimes and hate incidents.

The Stop Hate helpline is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year on 0800 138 1625. The helpline is also available by text message on 07717 989 025 and by email to [talk@stophateuk.org](mailto:talk@stophateuk.org).



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**Report Hate Crime  
in Croydon  
to Stop Hate UK 24/7**



**Call us on: 0800 138 1625**  
or visit: [www.stophateuk.org/london-borough-of-croydon/](http://www.stophateuk.org/london-borough-of-croydon/)  
**Don't suffer in silence, we are here.**

Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users can report using the Interpreter Now app by following the link on [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org). Victims and witnesses can also chat on the web or fill in an online form by visiting [www.stophateuk.org/talk](http://www.stophateuk.org/talk).

Residents can also contact the Stop Hate UK helpline anonymously if they prefer. However, if someone does opt to give their personal details to Stop Hate UK, staff will request consent before passing on information to the police and council. Reporting cases to the police will be encouraged to help ensure that those affected by hate, in any form, are signposted to access the correct support. Where necessary, staff will assess potential dangers and vulnerability of the callers and be able to make safeguarding referrals.

There is no place for hate crime in Croydon and tackling all forms of hate crime is a priority in our Community Safety Strategy. We know that too many people tolerate hate crime as a reality of life and don't always report their experiences. We really welcome the availability of the Stop Hate UK Helpline for Croydon residents and encourage anyone experiencing any form of abuse because of who they are to come forward and seek support.

## Unlicensed Music Events (UME)

In response to the numbers of unlicensed music events (UMEs) we experienced in the borough the council established a dedicated telephone line for reports of UMEs (from 4pm on Fridays to 6am on Sundays) which was active for 5 weeks from the end of July to the first week in September.

The UME Line was set up to create a single point of contact for residents who wanted to report UMEs. This information was then directly provided to the police where they would coordinate a police presence to determine what was taking place and take the necessary action.

Jointly working with Police we were able to respond more quickly to reports of events and as a result the police were able to close events more quickly than they had been able to previously and on many occasions events were cancelled altogether.

Enforcement – Community Protection Notice Warnings (CPNWs) were prepared to be issued to DJs, organisers and businesses linked to UME. A CPNW was issued to the one business who was supplying power to the music system in a park.



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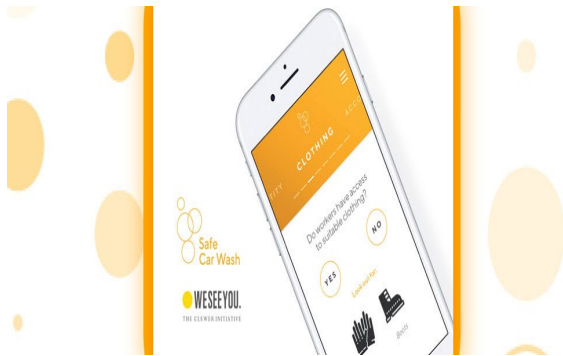
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## Training for NSO's - Small Steps

Small Steps provided training to the areas Neighbourhood Safety Officers. The session supported the team to understand the signs of far-right activity and the ability to spot any signs in the local community to build greater resilience to far-right extremism.

## Modern Day Slavery – Car Wash

### Partnership within the Croydon Borough



As the Council has made a pledge to eradicate modern slavery within the borough, an operation was led in August 2020 by the GLAA to check and interview individuals at three specific addresses.

The purpose of the operation was more concerned with the welfare of the individuals and not enforcement.

The addresses of interest were based in South Croydon, Thornton Heath and New Addington and the EHO conducted their health and safety checks at each of the sites.

All addresses were checked for tenure and further visits will be made at later dates to follow up on living conditions and licencing issues plus referral to other agencies, if necessary.

The operation had a great response from teams across the partnerships including Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the ASB Team, the Environmental Health Team, local policing, Neighbourhood Safety Officers, FJC and the MET Police Modern Day Slavery

## Resilience: COVID 19 – Emergency Response

### Emergency response to COVID-19

The Corporate Resilience Team have been supporting the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst still maintaining the ability to respond to other local emergencies (for example fires or flooding) that take place within the borough in a COVID-19 safe way.

Early on they were involved in setting up the emergency response structure, and ran the Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) to support the operational response to the pandemic (e.g. supporting shielding residents, sourcing PPE, etc.).

They coordinated and shared information and situation reports (SitReps) regularly to all Council responders to ensure they have up-to-date information, as well as reporting to the pan-London



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structures to support the London-wide response. This was all with the added challenge of operating completely virtually!

## Licensing and Trading Standards

### New Pavement Licence

The Council have recently successfully introduced the new temporary 'pavement licence' facility under the Business and Planning Act 2020 to enable businesses like café's, restaurants and pubs to place tables and chairs outside their premises for their customers to use. Prior to this new 'Act' becoming law, the Council had been assisting businesses to obtain temporary street trading licenses to enable them to put tables and chairs outside. These measures have helped stimulate business and assist with social distancing, as customer numbers permitted inside premises are still restricted.

### Fraud Network Sentenced after Croydon – Led Investigation

Six people involved in duping vulnerable homeowners out of £400,700 for bogus roof repairs have been sentenced in a Croydon Council prosecution working with National Trading Standards.

Between March 2016 and June 2017 fraudsters visited 19 victims aged 60 to 92, from Croydon and Greenwich to Hertfordshire and Southampton, and pressured them into expensive roof repairs that were either completely unnecessary, done badly or not done at all.

A common tactic involved telling the victim they had noticed roof damage while doing work for a neighbour. After the money was paid by cash, cheque or electronic transfer, the fraudsters then used a network of contacts to launder the money via different bank accounts.

One victim in his seventies, from Lee in south-east London, paid £12,250 on 7 March 2016 for roof and windows work that an expert witness later found was worth £28.



In July 2016, a couple in their seventies from South Norwood in Croydon were persuaded to agree to roof and guttering work for £14,200 – the actual value was later found to be £1,324. A neighbour of theirs in his eighties ultimately paid £39,560 for a roof job worth £650. Other victims



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included a Stevenage man in his nineties who paid £20,250, and a Southampton victim who paid £26,350 for work that a chartered surveyor later found had no value.

The investigation began when a Croydon Council trading standards officer discovered the South Norwood doorstep frauds. He then found a Greenwich woman paid £22,000 to a company he was investigating. This led to police arrests and trading standards officers examining mobiles and bank records.

At Croydon Crown Court on Thursday 10 September, six people were either jailed, given suspended sentences, ordered to pay financial penalties or given community orders after convictions at earlier hearings.

These were sickening crimes that preyed on older and vulnerable people and left them thousands of pounds out of pocket. Thanks to a superb investigation led by our trading standards team alongside national colleagues, these criminals have been stopped from defrauding even more people.

## Communities

### Black History Month



Black History Month is an important time in Croydon's calendar to learn about and celebrate the inspirational Black people, places and heritage that influence and have influenced us here in Croydon and further afield. This year's theme: 'Learning from our past to create an equal future' – particularly given what we've all witnessed this year – highlights how much further we have to go to ensure that our collective understanding of our history truly reflects all of us – all year round and not just in October.

Tributes to Black heroes through the ages and a celebration of African heritage and music are part of October's Black History Month. The month-long programme started with an event run by Croydon BME Forum on Thursday 01<sup>st</sup> October, with music, comedy and a tribute to local key workers.



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Celebrating the Black Lives Matter movement and local key workers who have supported their community during Covid-19 is also part of the events, which are being held online this year due to the pandemic.

The programme includes children's workshops on great Black leaders such as Ignatius Sancho, a British writer, composer and abolitionist born around 1729 who was the first known person of African descent to vote in a British general election. There is also a celebration of South Norwood's own 19th and 20th century composer Samuel Coleridge Taylor, Chineke Youth Orchestra that competed on Britain's Got Talent in 2020, a tour of historic African artefacts at the British Museum and a workshop on exploring your Caribbean family tree.

There are also films of Windrush memories, a month-long photo exhibition of Black British heroes past and present at the Wellness Centre on the second floor of The Whitgift Centre, plus Afro Beat dance classes, health sessions, music quizzes, film analysis and healthy cookery courses. For more information on this year's events in Croydon, visit the [Croydon BME Forum website](#).

Deep gratitude and congratulations to everyone involved, including the Croydon BME Forum, in curating another important programme.

## Rent Subsidy for VCS Organisations



When we consulted the Voluntary and Community Sector last year, to help us develop a new VCS Strategy, the availability of affordable premises was identified as a major challenge. There was a desire for greater transparency about how and why some organisations are awarded financial support, such as Rent Subsidy, when many others do not. The view was that support is allocated on a historical basis, rather than through a fair process that offers all organisations an equal opportunity to apply. In response to this, the Council pledged to develop clear criteria.

Subsequently, a new applications process was developed and we invited all eligible VCS organisations to apply. We have just completed the assessment of applications and this has resulted in 21 organisations being awarded a total of £243k per annum for the next 3 years. Many of these are first time recipients of Rent Subsidy and this money will help them deliver valuable services to the people of Croydon.

## Equality and Diversity

### Equality Strategy

The Council is currently in the process of developing an Equality Strategy for the Borough. The process will also consist of reviewing and refreshing its current Equality objectives. Consultation for the strategy ended at midnight 20th September.

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Consultation has consisted of online focus groups 31 workshops, one-to-one telephone interviews and an online survey 168 responses – with a total number of 242 participants.

The strategy is scheduled to go to cabinet in November. Please find below timeline for taking the strategy to cabinet

Activity	Key Dates
Scrutiny & Overview Committee	13th Oct
Cabinet	16th Nov
Full Council	30th Nov