# **Equality Analysis: Fees & Charges**

#### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The Council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the Council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term 'proposed change' broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- · Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria.

### 2. **Proposed change**

| Directorate                                     | All                      |
|---|--------------------------|
| Title of proposed change                        | Fees and Charges 2024-25 |
| Name of Officers carrying out Equality Analysis | Allister Bannin          |

## 2.1 Purpose of proposed change

Croydon Council supports delivery of a wide range of services. The ability to charge where appropriate, is a key funding source to support the cost of providing the service. There are specific powers to charge and the Councils charging policy is set out under paragraph four of the main report.

- Parking and property rental fees and charges are excluded from this report.
- Licensing and regulatory related fees are non-executive functions and are reserved for consideration by non-executive committees of the Council.
- There are also Officer delegations in place from the relevant regulatory committees in relation to certain highway charges (skip and scaffolding licences, etc). These are not included in the report.

## **Context for Change**

## **Changing Demographics**

Data from the 2021 census shows that Croydon's population has grown by 7.5% since the 2011 census to 390,800. This is slightly lower than the increase for London (7.7%). Other comparative data from 2021 Census

- Croydon ranked 16th for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England.
- Croydon has the highest population in London.
- The number of households has increased to close to 160,000 compared to 145,000 recorded in Census 2011.
- Croydon is the 10th least densely populated of London's 33 local authority areas

## In Croydon,

- 52% of the population are females.
- 19.3% of the population are under 15 and 13.6% over 65

Based on the age bandings for delivering services in Croydon:

- 23.1% of residents in Croydon are aged 0-17 years
- 63.3% are aged between 18 and 64 years
- 13.6% are aged 65 years or over

## **Fees and Charges**

Residents and customers currently pay specific fees and charges for a wide range of activities and services such as planning application, leisure activities, care related charges, etc. Some of these fees and charges are set nationally and the Council is legally required to adopt these levels, whilst other fees and charges are set at levels using the Council's discretion.

With the cost of providing goods and services going up due to inflation and other factors, the Council needs to increase its charges by an equivalent amount to ensure that it continues to recover its costs.

The Council has a need to balance its budget which an increase in fees supports. The Council is also mindful of the impact that an increase may have on the residents that it delivers its services to.

Our current equality analysis is focused on the public sector equality duty:

- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups.
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment.
- Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected groups.

The increase in fees and charges should also be considered in the current wider economic context, with inflation at historically high levels. The cumulative effect from other increases that is likely to impact on residents, including where often lower-income households face higher impacts by having to use methods for bills such as a payment meter, instead of direct debit, which has an accompanying higher cost. This impact will be across residents and may include some with protected characteristics.

The proposed change in fees and charges is, in the majority, in line with the inflation rate of 8.7% at April 2023.

There are mitigations in place which the Council currently provide to support those in need and these are detailed in section 5 of this Equality Impact Assessment.

## 3. Impact of the proposed change

**Important Note:** It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic. Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments <a href="http://www.croydonobservatory.org/">http://www.croydonobservatory.org/</a> Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

## 3.1 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

## Table 1 – Positive/Negative impact

|                                   | For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.  PLEASE NOTE: As this report covers a wide range of Council services, the equalities impact caused by a change in charges will differ in line with the service in question, and the demographics of those individuals &/or communities who use or benefit from the service.  This EQIA addresses the general impact of a review of fees and charges, along with any planned mitigations to the impact on groups and individuals that share protected characteristics and utilises data currently available. The fees and charges subject to increase will impact on all residents that use those services, some fees and charges will have more of an impact on some characteristics than others and are detailed below. Mitigating actions are in place for all of these and detailed later in the EQIA. |                 |   |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Protected characteristic group(s) | Negative Impact   | Positive impact | Source of evidence  |  |  |  |
| Age                               | The change in fees is <b>unlikely to</b><br><b>have any impact on this protected</b><br><b>characteristic group</b> that is greater<br>than any other resident.<br>The fees in relation to<br>cremation/burial may affect older<br>residents more. However, the<br><b>impact is considered to be low</b> as<br>the fee increases for a lot of burial,<br>interment and cremation fees are<br>proposed at around 4% which is<br>below inflation levels.<br>Fees in relation to adult social care<br>could impact this protected group<br>more, but financial assessments are<br>in place for these services.   |                 | <ul> <li>Croydon's population continues to age with those over 65 increasing by 19.7% since the 2011 Census. The median age also increased by two years, from 35 to 37 years of age.</li> <li>The borough data regarding age is as follows: <ul> <li>97,900 0-19 year olds. This is the highest in London. (2021 Census)</li> <li>239,700 20-64 year olds. This is the highest in London. (2021 Census)</li> <li>53,100 65+ year olds. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in London. (2021 Census)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |  |  |  |
| Disability                        | The change in fees is <b>unlikely to</b><br>have any impact on this protected<br>characteristic group that is greater<br>than any other resident.   |                 | Census 2011 indicated that 6.7% of Croydon residents have<br>their day-to day activities "limited a lot" and 7.9% "limited a<br>little" by a long-term health problem or disability   |  |  |  |

|                                  | However, external factors mean<br>some disabled resident face higher<br>costs in areas such as energy use.<br>The mitigating factors shown later in<br>the EQIA will therefore be essential<br>to supporting this group of residents.  |   | We are expecting this data to be updated to be released by<br>the Office for National Statistics (ONS) later this month.<br>Employment rates for disabled people, across all ages, are<br>significantly lower than those of non-disabled people.<br><u>The employment of disabled people 2021 - GOV.UK</u><br>(www.gov.uk)                                   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Sex                              | The change in fees is <b>unlikely to have</b><br><b>protected characteristic group</b> that is<br>resident.<br>The fees in relation to sports may affect<br>if usage varies by sex.<br>Examples of participation of both sexes<br>sports are numerous and vice versa.<br>However, sports are open to all resident<br>are not considered to have a bearing of<br>sex. | s greater than any other<br>of one sex more than another<br>es in traditionally single sex<br>nts and the fee increases | 203,000 (51.9%) residents in Croydon are female and<br>187,600 are male (48.1%).<br>(Source 2021 Census)   |
| Gender reassignment/<br>identity | The change in fees is <b>unlikely to have</b><br><b>protected characteristic group</b> that is<br>resident.<br>The fees in relation to sports may affect<br>another if usage varies by gender iden<br>However, sports are open to all residen<br>are not considered to have a bearing of<br>gender identify.   | s greater than any other<br>et one gender more than<br>ntity.<br>nts and the fee increases                              | <ul> <li>According to the ONS Census 2021, of all the Croydon residents aged 16 years and over who responded, 91.6% stated that their gender identity was the same as their sex registered at birth.</li> <li>7.5% of those who responded did not answer the gender identity question Only 0.9% stated that they had a different gender identity.</li> </ul> |
| Marriage or Civil<br>Partnership | The changes in registrars' fees may<br>negatively impact residents based on<br>their intention of entering into<br>marriage or civil partnership.<br>However, the cost of an average<br>wedding is approximately £17,000,<br>therefore the <b>impact of a change in</b><br><b>registrars fees is considered to be</b>  |   | <ul> <li>The borough data on marital status is as follows:</li> <li>32.8% Married</li> <li>34.1% Single</li> <li>8.5% Divorced or Separated3.7% Widowed</li> <li>20.6% No response to question</li> <li>493 people were registered in a same sex civil partnership</li> </ul>  |

|                    | <b>minimal</b> in comparison to these<br>other potential costs associated with<br>getting married/having a Civil<br>Partnership. Also the maximum fee<br>increase proposed is 6.7% in this<br>area which is below the April 2023<br>CPI inflation.<br>The Council offers different burial<br>plots which could be purchased more<br>by people in this protected<br>characteristic group (e.g. double plot<br>may be more popular with those<br>residents that are married or in a civil<br>partnership). However, the fee<br>increase is consistent and therefore<br><b>there is no impact considered for</b><br><b>this protected characteristic</b> . | 279 people were registered in an opposite sex civil<br>partnership.<br>(Source: Census 2021)  |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Religion or belief | The changes in bereavement fees<br>may impact residents based on their<br>religion or belief.<br>The Hindu faith, for example,<br>believes in cremation as opposed to<br>burial. Therefore, changes in<br>cremation fees may impact them<br>more.<br>Christian ceremonies often<br>incorporate the singing of hymns,<br>and therefore the change in organist  | The predominant religion of Croydon is Christianity. According<br>to the <u>2021 census</u> , the borough has over 190,880 Christians<br>(48.9%), 40,717 Muslims (10.4%) and 23,145 Hindu (5.9%)<br>residents.<br>101,119 (25.9%) Croydon residents stated that they<br>are <u>atheist</u> or <u>non-religious</u> in the 2021 Census.<br>6.9% did not answer the question on religion. |
|                    | and therefore the change in organist<br>fee could be seen to impact them<br>more than other faiths.<br>However, the fee increases are in<br>line with CPI inflation (with rounding<br>for practical purposes) or below CPI<br>inflation and the percentage change<br>between burial and cremation is<br>consistent.<br>Therefore, <b>no impact is anticipated</b><br><b>for this protected characteristic</b><br><b>group</b> .   |   |

| Sexual Orientation     | None of the proposed changes are<br>anticipated to impact this<br>protected characteristic group<br>more than other residents.   | Languages in Croydon         According to the Census 2021,         • 84.0% of the residents who can speak in Croydon speak English as their first language.         • 7.8% speak a European language.         • 6.3% speak an Asian language.         Mayor urges Government to tackle the cost of living crisis ]         London City Hall         December 2022 - GLA YouGov Cost of living poll results.pdf (airdrive-secure.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com)         According to the ONS Census 2021, of the residents aged 16 years and over who responded to the survey:         • 87.8% self-classified as Straight or Heterosexual.         • 1.5% stated they were Gay.         • 1.2% stated All other sexual orientations         • 9.1% did not respond to the question |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Pregnancy or Maternity | Changes in fees may impact on<br>residents that are pregnant or on<br>maternity if they are not working.<br>However, additional benefits are<br>provided for residents in this situation<br>and therefore the <b>proposed</b><br><b>changes are expected to have</b><br><b>minimal impact.</b> | Maternity leave: Cost of living crisis highlights need for<br>support (personneltoday.com)<br>There were 5,252 births in Croydon in 2020.<br>An estimated 30,000 women lose their jobs as a result of<br>pregnancy every year, according to the Equality and Human<br>Rights Commission (EHRC).   |

| Note: Data disaggregating level of service use by protected characteristic group is unavailable or available in sufficient granularity to draw conclusions in many cases. This will be explored and refined iteratively to inform mitigating strategies wherever practical to do so.  |
|---|
| <b>Important note:</b> You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations, this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.  |
| When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics. <b>Please use table 4 to record actions that will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact.</b> |

## 3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

## Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:

| Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings  | Information source  | Date for completion |
|---|---|---------------------|
| The council's current data collection of protected characteristics is weak in some areas and rich in others. We are currently carrying out a project to tackle this   | Index of Deprivation by Lower Layer Super<br>Output Areas (gov.uk). | Iterative           |
| imbalance with the support of the Head of Profession for Business Intelligence and  | Other data sources to be identified and                             |                     |
| the Equalities Manager as well as analysts and services across the organisation.  | investigated.   |                     |
| The Corporate Management Team and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board are the driving force behind this work stream.  |   |                     |
| Currently an 'as is' exercise is taking place to identify areas of weakness in collection that needs to be addressed. This will be followed by a 'to be' looking at the information across the council that we will want to collect and how we go about |   |                     |
| doing this. Due to having to implement new processes for collection this project will take place in phases.   |   |                     |

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit <u>https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-andengagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation</u>

## 3.3 Impact scores

### Example

If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

- 1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
- 2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact )
- 3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula Likelihood x Severity and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example Likelihood (2) x Severity (2) = 4

|       |            |            |    | /erity<br>npact | 3       | 3 | 6         | 9      |     |
|-------|------------|------------|----|-----------------|---------|---|-----------|--------|-----|
|       |            |            |    | Sev<br>of In    | 2       | 2 | 4         | 6      |     |
|       |            |            |    | 0 0             | 1       | 1 | 2         | 3      |     |
|       | 1          | 2          | 3  | Ris             | k Index | F | Risk Magr | nitude | _Ke |
|       |            |            |    |                 | - 9     |   | High      |        |     |
| I     | Likelihood | l of Impac | :t |                 | - 5     |   | Mediu     | m      |     |
| <br>• |            |            |    |                 | - 3     |   | Low       |        |     |

#### Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

## Table 3 – Impact scores

Note: The data to populate is table is not available to inform the Equality Impact Score. Evidence for the above is drawn from the Index of Deprivation Score for the 5% most deprived areas in the country and should not be used to draw conclusions. Further research is planned to develop a more reliable indicator. And as stated previously, individual fee changes will require their own assessment, the table below represents a generic view:

| Column 1                     | Column 2  | Column 3  | Column 4   |  |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| PROTECTED GROUP              | LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE  | SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE  | EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE  |  |
|                              | Use the key below to <b>score</b> the<br><b>likelihood</b> of the proposed change<br>impacting each of the protected groups,<br>by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against<br>each protected group.<br><b>1 = Unlikely to impact</b><br><b>2 = Likely to impact</b><br><b>3 = Certain to impact</b> | Use the key below to <b>score</b> the<br><b>severity</b> of impact of the proposed<br>change on each of the protected<br>groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3<br>against each protected group.<br>1 = Unlikely to impact<br>2 = Likely to impact<br>3 = Certain to impact | Calculate the <b>equality impact score</b> for<br>each protected group by multiplying<br>scores in column 2 by scores in column<br>3. Enter the results below against each<br>protected group.<br>Equality impact score = likelihood of<br>impact score x severity of impact<br>score. |  |
| Age                          | 2   | 2   | 4  |  |
| Disability                   | 2   | 2   | 4  |  |
| Gender                       | 1   | 1   | 1  |  |
| Gender reassignment          | 1   | 1   | 1  |  |
| Marriage / Civil Partnership | 2   | 1   | 2  |  |
| Race                         | 2   | 1   | 2  |  |
| Religion or belief           | 2   | 1   | 2  |  |
| Sexual Orientation           | 1   | 1   | 1  |  |
| Pregnancy or Maternity       | 2   | 1   | 2  |  |

## 4. Statutory duties

#### 4.1 Public Sector Duties

| Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council's ability Equality Act 2010 set out below.                        | to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the     |
|---|--|
| Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups   | X  |
| Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation   |  |
| Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups   |  |
| <b>Important note:</b> If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Se be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below. | ctor Duties set out above, mitigating actions must |

### 5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

**Important note:** Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

## Mitigations

Residents currently pay specific fees and charges for a wide range of activities and services such as registrars services, leisure activities, care related charges, etc. An increase in fees will affect all those in, and out of the borough, who pay to use specific service(s). It appears that there is no significant disproportionate impact on groups or individuals that share one or more protected characteristic. The Council has in place various schemes to support residents who experience financial difficulty, some of whom will fall within the protected characteristic groups and may be affected by the proposed increases, to help mitigate impact. Listed below are some examples of what support is currently available, taken from a wide range of support schemes across the council.

- The Council in partnership with Nimbus Disability offer a discount card to all children and young people on our disability register. The card is free and is part of a national access card scheme, giving benefits and discounts to facilities and activities across the country, such as leisure, sports and fitness, cinema etc.
- There are discounted rates for all leisure centre activities for Croydon residents with disabilities. If a disabled person needs a carer with them in order to access leisure centre services, the carer is entitled to free entry.
- Free holiday activity clubs with healthy meals for children.
- Croydon Council Leisure Centres offer discounted rates for residents Seniors 60+ years and Juniors 4-15 years old.
- Croydon Council Money Advice Service for advice on paying your bills and debt worries. All advice is independent and confidential.
- Healthy Homes is Croydon Council's free energy advice service aimed at Croydon residents on low incomes, and those more vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home (especially families with young children, older residents, and residents with pre-existing medical conditions).
- Council tax discount for care leavers, single person occupier, residents with disabilities and full-time students.
- The Council has a statutory duty to protect those on low or, or no income, and supports claims for Council Tax support, Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.
- Adult Social Care users are subject to a means tested financial assessment which will assess affordability to contribute to, or not, to service provision required (as defined by the Care Act 2014).
- Croydon Works to help residents into employment or to receive training to support them into work and funding of the voluntary sector to provide advice and guidance.

## Table 6. Decision on proposed change

| Based on the i     | Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter X in column 3 (Conclusion) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.   |                                   |  |  |  |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Decision           | Definition   | Conclusion -<br>Mark 'X'<br>below |  |  |  |
| No major<br>change | Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken<br>all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. If you reach<br>this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision. |                                   |  |  |  |

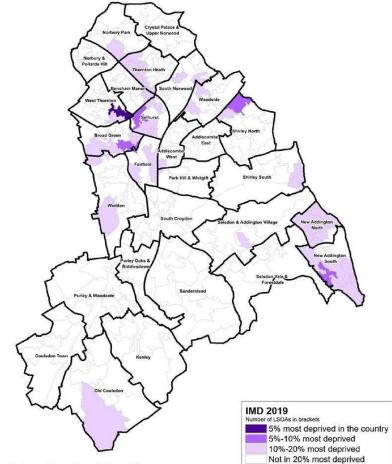
| Adjust the<br>proposed<br>change                         | <ul> <li>We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form</li> <li>Whilst changes in fees and charges may impact in some cases, this impact is considered to be minimal as set out in the information above.</li> <li>Mitigations and adjustments are already in place to support residents that may help them manage debt or financial vulnerability detailed. This includes signposting and discretionary support.</li> <li>Service departments will need to collate data on their service users to monitor impact. Some departments will have existing service level data regarding some protected characteristics and not others. Where data does not currently exist, each service must create an action around collecting data across all protected characteristics. As data is received the EQIA should be updated, demonstrating data and evidence where change has been made.</li> <li>Residents should be provided with details of support organisations in both digital and non-digital formats.</li> </ul> |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Continue the<br>proposed<br>change                       | We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.  |   |  |
| Stop or<br>amend the<br>proposed<br>change               | Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated.<br>Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.  |   |  |
| Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? |   | Meeting title: Cabinet<br>Date: 6 December 2023 |  |

## 7. Sign-Off

| Officers that must approve this decision |                             |  |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Equalities Lead                          | Name:<br>Position:          | Denise McCausland<br>Equalities Programme Manager                          |
| Director                                 | Name:<br>Date:<br>Position: | Allister Bannin<br>03/11/2023<br>Director of Finance (Deputy s151 Officer) |



Indices of Deprivation 2019 Croydon Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)



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## **INFOGRAPHIC 1**

In Croydon, 1567 people live amongst the 5% most deprived in the country (Dark Blue)

In this area,

| 50% are male   | (Croydon 49%) |
|--|---------------|
| 27% are 0-15   | (Croydon 22%) |
| 30% are White ethnic group                                       | (Croydon 55%) |
| 35% are Black / African / Caribbean / Black British ethnic group | (Croydon 20%) |
| 24% are Asian / Asian British ethnic group                       | (Croydon 16%) |
| 7% are Mixed / multiple ethnic group                             | (Croydon 7%)  |
| 4% are Other ethnic group  | (Croydon 2%)  |
|  |               |