

Feedback from the Healthwatch Croydon Community Engagement Session for the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024-2029)

29 November 2023

Final report – January 2024

Background to the session

The Health and Wellbeing Board are currently reviewing Croydon's Local Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy that will set out our vision, principles, and priority areas to improve the health and wellbeing of our local population in Croydon for the next five years (2024-2029).

Healthwatch Croydon, the local champion for health and social care, offered to use the opportunity of the Annual Meeting to discuss the initial ideas of the strategy to inform the pre-consultation stage.

There was a 45-minute session within the Annual Meeting where participants discussed ideas and placed them on notes under three themes, each had approximately 15 minutes.

Over 50 people attended the event and contributed to discussions.







Findings

- Importance of good mental health and link to physical health.
- Independence and self-care are key as well as access to green space.
- Support from services and building a strong relationship between services, patients, and wider community.
- Vision statement could be simpler with less jargon and grounded. It needs to focus on equity and representation.
- Access to services still of more consideration for many.
- Need to show more actions rather than just words.
- A concern about reach and awareness to that it is for all the community.
- Wider aspects around environment and social behaviour need to be considered.

Recommendations

- A significant focus on mental health.
- A focus on supporting independence and self-care.
- Environmental impact of good health including green spaces and places for healthy activities.
- Clearer, simpler, jargon-free vision statement.
- Focus on equity and representation.
- Link to specific actions rather aspirations.
- Consider wider aspects such as housing, employment, environment, and work, which influence health and wellbeing.

Part 1- What does health and wellbeing mean to you?

Key concepts:

- **Health:** The state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, not merely an absence of illness (World Health Organisation)
- **Wellbeing:** the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy (Oxford English Dictionary)
- Brought together, **good health and wellbeing** enables us to live happy, fulfilling lives and enables us to achieve our potential (Health Foundation). We would like to better understand how our local community define health and wellbeing and what matters the most to them regarding their health and wellbeing.

In the first section, we asked participants to find out about what good health and wellbeing means to them. They were encouraged to have discussions with your participants and then add any ideas to Post-it notes provided and add to the relevant wall.

We asked them to reflect on the following prompts in your discussions:

- What does good health and wellbeing mean to you?
- What are the most important factors that contribute to your overall health and wellbeing?
- What activities or practices make you feel your best physically, mentally, and socially?

Themes

Many focused on the importance of good mental health and the link between that and physical health. Independence was also seen a very important. The social aspect was also considered as significant with a good range of activities to help people structure their time. The importance of green space and a positive physical environment was mentioned by many.

Undoubtably, support from services was still very much needed and the importance of building a strong relationship between services, patients, and the wider community. Respondents also mentioned tackling disparities, prevention, access of healthy food and work and supporting carers as factors important for health and wellbeing.

Good mental health

“Can be about perception or mindset of individual – living with/ despite a condition, or just living well?”

“Simplicity; child-like experiences; little things.”

“Meaning... longevity, relevance.”

“Wellbeing – what you need to funnel positivity. Activity/Nature/Family/Friends.”

“Mental health and physical health are intrinsically linked.”

“Health and wellbeing: peace of mind, family, independence.”

“Wellbeing – not worrying about health.”

“Not having to worry! About money, food, healthcare access, personal safety.”

“Quality of life: positive mental outlook, living independently making their own choices.”

“A system which needs to be & remain in balance. Psychological, social safety. Walking in nature, yoga.”

“Quality of life means being able to function and meet your needs so you can be happy.”

Independence

“Being able to live and independent life.”

“Choice and control.”

“Move around to cook, to know what medication to take.”

“Health and wellbeing independence.”

“Self care – Doing it for me not just for others.”

“Autonomy – control.”

“Quality of life: positive mental outlook, living independently making their own choices.”

Social

“Wellbeing – social connections are vital. Support health, help spot early warning signs.

“Community- belonging.”

“Being part of a community.”

“Things that help social connection: being active, purpose, time focus, support.”

“Community celebration, for example Diwali, choir, singing.”

“Strong community spirit and social connections.”

Activities and structure

“Ensuring people are active – maybe have structure to the day.” “Wellbeing – what you need to funnel positivity.” “Activity/Nature/Family/Friends.”

“Older people have good mental health and can access adequate support.”

“Wellbeing: walking, community”

“Daily living activities.”

“Activities programmes – Walking, swimming.”

“Free exercise opportunities for the elderly.”

Green space and good physical environment

“Environment; Greenland.”

“Clean streets – know your neighbours.”

“Access to green spaces.”

“A warm home.”

“Warm home.”

“Good Living Accommodation.”

“Peaceful streets and communities free of antisocial behaviour.”

“A system which needs to be & remain in balance. Psychological, social safety. Walking in nature, yoga.”

“Wellbeing – what you need to funnel positivity. Activity/Nature/Family/Friends.”

“Wellbeing – making use of amenities around you – learning, engaging, support.”

Support

“Selsdon connect; Local neighbourhood group has lost their council funding and support the local community -Excellent team so helpful.”

“Kind and caring health and social care system with people at its heart.”

“Accessible GPs and services (equal access for everyone).”

“Information and support when needed.”

“Consistent and sustainable support (including statutory support for old people) to remain active and connected outside their homes.”

“Older people have good mental health and can access adequate support.”

“Bridging relationship between resident and services.”

“Family support.”

“Caring, compassionate, consistent and continued care – not from different people or carers.”

Disparities

“Disparity – lack of time, resources, skills and knowledge.”

Prevention

“Crime prevented before happening.”

“Having a holistic approach to wellbeing including sexual health and HIV which are often targeted for some but not everyone!!”

Access to healthy diet

“Healthy Diet/ Work.”

Carers

“Support for carers (accessible support and awareness of available support).”

“Carers’ own wellbeing may be low down the lot – may not make time.”

Part 2 - Feedback on Croydon's vision for our health and wellbeing (15 minutes)

In Croydon, we know that improving health and wellbeing and tackling inequalities is everybody's business, and no one individual, group or organisation can rise to this challenge alone.

In this section, we wanted to create a shared vision statement for 2024-2029. This statement will be anchored in our shared values and act as our guiding compass, inspiring and directing our collective efforts towards a future we collectively aspire to achieve in terms of our health and wellbeing.

Using insights from existing community engagement events in the Borough since 2018, local community plans, and workshops with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health and Care Board, we have developed the following draft vision statement for 2024-2029.

In this section, we wanted to seek feedback on the below draft vision and understand how it could be improved to better reflect our shared values and health and wellbeing ambitions.

“In Croydon, we envision a future where every resident leads a happy and fulfilling life supported by safe, healthy, and thriving communities. Through working together and focusing on our strengths, we actively tackle inequalities, ensuring our Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy serves as a catalyst for transformative community wellbeing.”

When providing feedback and suggesting areas for improvement, participants were encouraged to reflect on the following:

1. Does the draft vision statement reflect our shared values and collective identity in Croydon?
2. Does it reflect our collective health and wellbeing ambitions?
3. Is it brief and clear? Is it easy to understand?
4. Is the language appropriate?
5. Is there anything that needs to be added or removed from this statement? How could it be improved? Add it to the Post-it notes and place it on the relevant wall.

Themes

There was confusion about the statement suggesting it could be simpler and less corporate without the jargon. Others were concerned about how it relates to the strategy behind it and how it could be delivered bearing in mind the financial challenges. It was clear that equity and representation needed to be reflected more in it, particularly on engaging with populations who do not normally get involved. Despite this being a vision, some were still focused on basic priorities such as access to specific services such as GPs and advocacy, showing that residents still look towards services rather than visions and strategies to support them. This suggests a communications gap that needs to be bridged. Others saw this again as just words, suggesting that the vision needs to be more active, reflecting actions that will be achieved, rather than just aspirations. Others wondered how self-care could be reflected in this.

Hard to understand or confusion about its role

“Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy” – might be a bit abstract, hard to relate.”

“Needs simplifications – does reflect values – general public’s wording, too corporate level language. Needs to be resident level language.”

“Suggested simpler wording: Our vision is a community where everyone is happy, healthy and has equal access to the support they need.”

“Depends on the strategy that’s behind it.”

“What is your action plan?”

“Catalyst and transformative – bit jargon-y?”

“Need a joined up approach to health and wellbeing?”

“How can the vision go forward with funding cuts?”

Equity and representation

“Just inequality or equity?”

“Social determinants – good housing – income.”

“Many residents are home alone with no access to technology. How ought we to contact them to invite them to attend events.”

“Young people awareness.”

“Vision: Needs to include how to engage with more people to attend wellbeing events.”

“New faces – always same faces.”

“Vision should focus on people not usually attending.”

“Sometimes fail to consider inequalities existing among the groups who support individuals – e.g. lack of resources for the voluntary sector.”

Services and information

“Access in getting GP surgeries appointments.”

“Awareness of services.”

“Health and social care is responsive to individual needs.”

“I agree with the older population support so they can have happier healthier independent lives as long as possible.”

“Advocacy for accurate information.”

Actions

“Action speaks louder than words.”

“Talk less more action.”

“Dietary; exercise; socialising; not isolation.”

“Build trust.”

“Important that it reflects the fact that it is going to be realised and for the community. This will increase commitment.”

“Stop meetings about.. instead take action.”

Self care

“Access to up to date & helpful info on how I can manage by own health.”

“De-learning habits.”

Part 3: Are these the right priorities?

As we don't have unlimited resources, we need to focus our efforts on areas that would make the most difference in our lives. In this last section of engagement, we would like to collect views and feedback on what areas the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy should focus on to make the greatest positive impact on the health and wellbeing and existing inequalities in Croydon.

The following draft priority areas of focus were identified based on available data, evidence, and insights; feedback from stakeholders in health and social care and our local Voluntary and Community Sector; local community plans of six community partnerships and feedback from community engagement events in Croydon since 2018 (see appendix A).

In this section we asked for feedback on:

1. Do we have the right priorities in place?
2. Are there any key areas missing or are there any areas that need to be removed?

Themes

There was a distinct emphasis on ensuring that services were a priority from GP appointments to talking therapies and support for older people and healthy living. Another key priority was around reach, ensuring that all aspects of the community, young and old, healthy, and unwell, were part of the conversation and contributed to making this happen.

There was also a consideration of raising awareness of this strategy as well as some conditions not always considered in plans. There was sense that making sure that tackling inequalities was a key priority and enabling people to have a good quality of life. Some focused on wider aspects such as apprenticeships, fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour. Some also saw the limits of the strategy and the need to ground it. Only one response stated it worked well as it is.

Services

“GP Appointments.”

“Access to talking therapies.”

“Referrals to scan etc.”

“Physiotherapy and Occupational services.”

“Support Age UK who support older people possible – exercise, socialise, information.”

“Frequent evaluation of services.”

“Available activities and resources across the borough. For example, healthy options in Purley.”

Reach

“Reaching residents in care homes / activities.”

“Involve all stakeholders (voluntary. Private sector etc).”

“Aligned partnerships working for explicitly – coproduced, co – ownership with the community. Empowering community (and organisations) to decide and collaborate.”

“Working at grassroots level. Letting communities lead (better understanding of the issues and better connection and engagement with their communities).”

“Bridging the Gap (communication) Parents, Children, Young People.”

Awareness

“Awareness building.”

“Awareness of hereditary diseases e.g. Sickle Cell Thalassaemia etc.”

“Lupus awareness.”

“Sickle cell awareness.”

Addressing inequalities/ inequities

“Maybe stuff missing in terms of actively addressing inequalities – for reaching seldom heard, isolated.”

“Getting equitable service? for money spent.”

“Ensure everyone understands the priorities.”

Quality of life

“Good Health to enjoy life.”

“Mental health,”

“Age with dignity.”

“Simplicity of life.”

Prevention

“Priorities – High prevention.”

“Increase work with parents/ families. Prevention approach for unwanted pregnancies & crime rates.”

Wider aspects

“Apprenticeships to meet staff shortages.”

“Tacking anti -social fly tipping more trees lined roads.”

“Allotments; Grow fruit in veg more access. Community projects- Plant a tree-lined roads.”

“Healthy environments.”

Limits

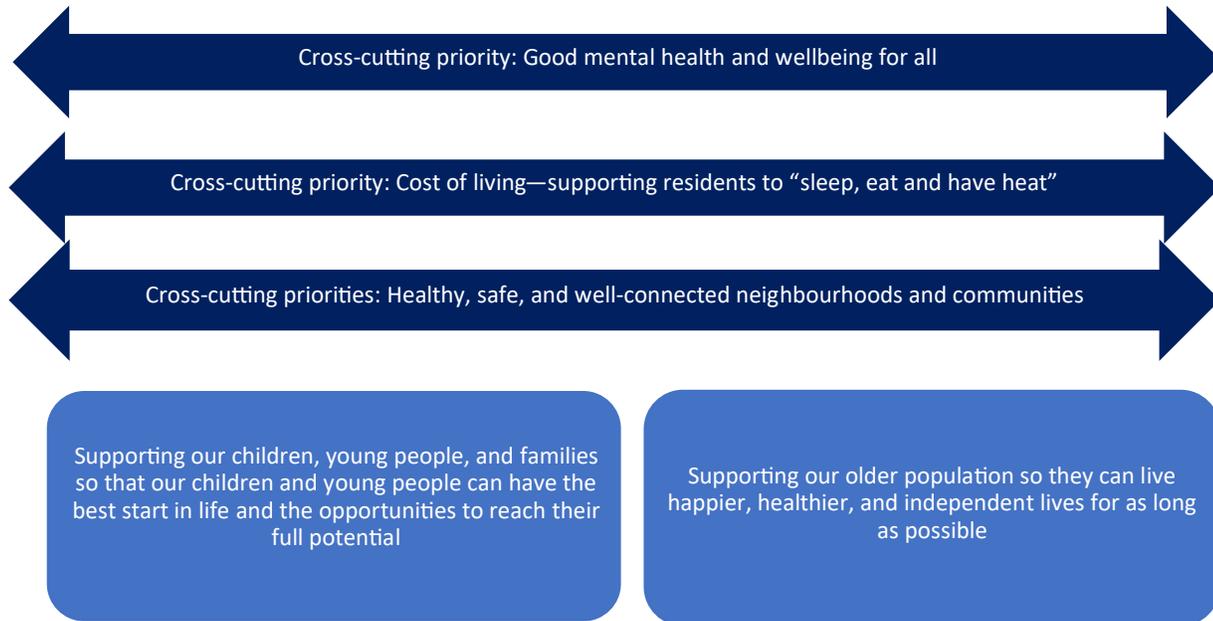
“Transformative – What does this mean? Vision sounds lovely but realistically with financial issues what is possible?”

“What is the action plan to achieve this?”

Works well as it is

“Similar to Age UK priorities works well.”

Appendix A: Draft priority areas of focus:



Guiding principles (these principles will guide our actions towards these priorities):



For Reference: Priority areas for 2024-2029

Croydon has a diverse, vibrant, and growing population. With a population of 390,719, it is now the **largest borough** in London.

- Croydon has the **largest population of children and young people** in London, where one in four of our people are under 18 years old.
- Croydon also has a **relatively high proportion of older people**: around one in seven people in Croydon are over 65 years old.
- Our communities come from **diverse backgrounds**: around 52% of our population are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups, and around 5 in 6 (84%) of people speak English as their main language. After English South Asian (4.8%) languages, Other European (EU) language (4.7%), Portuguese (1.3%), Spanish (1.0%) and East Asian (0.8%) are the most common main languages.
- The latest data shows that between 2018 and 2020, the average life expectancy for men in Croydon was **79.8 years**, while it was **84.7 years** for women. However, during this time, men from the most deprived areas in Croydon were expected to live **just under 5.8 fewer years** than men from the least-deprived areas. The gap in life expectancy between the poorest and richest areas in women was **6.2 years**.

Our health is more than just an absence of illness and that it is a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Our health and wellbeing are shaped by many factors. Existing research suggests that while healthcare itself contributes to between 15 and 25% of our health and wellbeing, wider factors such as the quality of our homes, our access to education and good quality jobs and working conditions, the strengths of our social connections and quality of neighbourhoods, and whether we experience poverty and discrimination play a greater role.

To create safe, healthy, and thriving communities, we need these right building blocks in place. In Croydon, we believe in the power of partnership and collaboration to do this. To make a meaningful difference in our health and wellbeing, we need to work together and take collective action across our life course to promote good health and wellbeing and prevent ill health.

While we are bold in our ambitions, we know that we have many challenges to consider for improving our health and wellbeing and tackling health inequalities in Croydon. Our [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) summarises these key challenges and compares the health and wellbeing of our residents to London and England. The figure presenting Croydon's Journey of Life on the next page shows how key health and wellbeing outcomes across our life course in Croydon compare with data from London.

