



# Safer Croydon and Communities

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Hamida Ali

#### July 2020

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## Equality and Diversity

### Response to Black Lives Matter movement following the tragic murder of George Floyd



On 2nd June, Croydon stood in solidarity with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities around the world as it lit the town hall purple to remember George Floyd. Croydon wanted to show the world that it stands with strength and pride in its support of those protesting peacefully against racism and injustice across the world.

A number of initiatives have taken place to support staff members which includes;

- Staff mental health / emotional wellbeing support – providing information through intranet
- Providing opportunities for staff to talk about how they feel with others in a trusting and supportive environment
- BAME staff network conversations
- Executive Leadership Team discussion on equality, racial injustice and the council's commitment to tackling racism
- Lets' Talk about Race sessions
- Internal communications campaign

#### Summary of our equality and inclusion work to date

- Reassurance regarding ongoing Covid-19 risk assessments
- Ongoing mental health and wellbeing support for staff affected by recent events
- Further opportunities for staff to talk (e.g. 'coffee and chats')

#### Culture Board task and finish group identifying urgent actions to take:

- Recruitment: anonymous shortlisting, diverse shortlists, diverse interview panels
- Creation of data observatory to bring together diversity and inclusion data regularly

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- Craft a small number of key diversity and inclusion metrics and targets
- Clarify guidelines on areas left to managers' discretion
- Learning and development refresh for all managers on the public sector equality duty

#### Informing our wider equality strategy

We are required to review our equality objectives currently set out in our Opportunity and Fairness Play, 2016-2020 and will be developing an equality strategy on which we will shortly consult through a public engagement planned July – August 2020 via online focus groups, online survey and telephone interviews. The draft strategy will be brought to Cabinet in the Autumn. We will also be working in partnership through the Local Strategic Partnership to address inequality in Croydon.

## Safer Croydon

### Collaborative approach to violence reduction to be at the heart of new community safety strategy

A collaborative approach to reducing and preventing violence in Croydon will be at the heart of the borough's new community safety strategy.

The process of developing the new three-year-strategy will cement the holistic, public health approach to reducing violence currently adopted by the council's Violence Reduction Network (VRN).

We have published a [new strategic assessment](#) which provides an analysis of crime data and anti-social behaviour in Croydon over the last three years. It identifies several common themes and factors of violence which will drive the new strategy and be the focus of future public engagement, which will ensure the borough's communities and those directly impacted by different types of violence - including victims, their families and perpetrators - are at the strategy's core.

Views, experiences and ideas will be sought from residents, communities and partners, including those from the voluntary sector involved in violence and safety work, to ensure a diverse range of voices, experiences and representatives of Croydon's community contribute to the development of the strategy, which is expected to be adopted next year.

Tackling domestic abuse will be a key focus, after data showed the crime has and continues to be a key driver in other forms of violence in the borough. The statistics show the offence not only impacts the victim themselves, but is also a common factor

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in the lives of a number of young people who become high risk of serious youth violence.

Other themes to be discussed and considered as part of the strategy's development include protecting young people from violence and exploitation; disproportionality within the criminal justice system and the impact this has on how they experience violence; and resilience, trauma and trust, which will explore the protective factors in individuals and communities.

To make a significant impact and reverse the year-on-year rise in crime Croydon has seen over the last three years, we must continue our borough wide multi-agency partnership working. We must also strengthen it further by working directly with more community groups, and in particular those affected by crime, as part of our efforts. This collaborative approach - engaging with a wide range of residents and professionals on key themes including domestic violence, serious youth violence and disproportionality in the criminal justice system, coupled with using data to identify patterns and trends - will not only enable us to gain a better understanding of the key issues and how they impact on violence in Croydon, but to develop a strategic approach that evolves to really address the actions needed to reduce crime.

### **Croydon off-licences and supermarkets highlight domestic abuse support**

Off-licences and supermarkets across Croydon continue to highlight services and support available to survivors of domestic violence through a campaign in partnership with the FJC and Croydon Police. The campaign saw the posters detailing the contact number for Croydon FJC and the free 24-hour domestic abuse helpline, put up in every one of the borough's 400 off-licences and at supermarkets across Croydon, publicising where domestic abuse victims can seek help.

**FJC**

Care and support in Croydon for those experiencing domestic abuse

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

Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and weekends, 10am-4pm.

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The supermarkets were also offering safe spaces within their store, where those seeking help will be given access to a phone, where they can call for support and advice.

Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams also distributed posters around the borough to ensure as many residents as possible are aware of the help available and where to find it.

New statistics have revealed in the six weeks up to 19 April there were 200 domestic abuse arrests – almost five a day - in Croydon. The police were also called to 561 domestic abuse offences in the borough during this period – around 13 offences a day.

Croydon FJC team increased its opening hours and is now providing a seven day a week service during lockdown to ensure week-long support is available to domestic abuse victims.

The team is there to listen and provide advice to ensure people are able to leave their homes if they are at risk and are also able to provide advice on housing and legal concerns.

This new campaign is vital to make sure that anyone facing domestic abuse knows help is available in Croydon and where they can access it. It's really positive that off-licences and supermarkets in the borough are working with us to help publicise this important message.



The FJC doesn't share its address publicly to help protect those using its service. If you need help, support or advice please call 020 8688 0100. Further information is available at <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community/dabuse/fjc>



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Those needing support outside of the centre's opening hours can call the free 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Hotline on 0808 2000 247. In an emergency, call the police on 999.

## Communities

### Croydon's Voluntary and Community Sector COVID-19 Emergency Fund

In March 2020, the council established a emergency grant fund to support local voluntary and community groups supporting vulnerable residents through the COVID-19 crisis. We committed £250,000. 76 local VCS groups applied for grants of up to £10,000 to strengthen their work and help residents through the pandemic.

Applications included support for costs for food to be distributed to those in need, Personal and Protective Equipment (PPE), volunteer expenses and ICT associated with having to work and deliver services remotely because of the need to social distance.



Two organisations that were successful in their bid for grant funding were Cassandra Centre (CC) and Advice Support Knowledge Information (ASKI).

CC and ASKI partnered up to deliver hot meals to the elderly and vulnerable in Norbury, Thornton Heath and surrounding wards. CC chief executive, Jennifer McDermott, said: "When lockdown started we acted quickly and started delivering food to elderly people, to those with mental health concerns and to those suffering domestic abuse."

The charity secured a private donation which initially enabled volunteers to deliver the cooked meals four weeks ahead of securing the council's £7,668 grant funding. Jennifer added: "We started with 30 residents in Croydon, but soon demand grew and we were preparing over 100 meals a week."

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As well as delivering quality food, the charities are also working to help reduce the isolation and anxiety of those who are self-isolating by helping them sustain their wellbeing. This support has been offered through weekly online exercises sessions, and by increasing their access to other support and essential services via a telephone call to each person each week to check on their needs.

One vulnerable young man, who has epilepsy, and complex mental health needs is finding lockdown very hard. He lives a long way away from family, and the isolation has been making him feel very anxious. He has been finding it very difficult to sleep, which is a big concern for his family, as the sleep deprivation can trigger seizures. His mum, Brenda, was full of praise for the charities: "Thank you so very much for helping my son. The care and hot meals you provide for him are greatly appreciated. He received a lovely meal on Thursday and was very glad of it. "He is far from home and it's reassuring knowing he isn't totally alone. He isn't managing well at the moment. These difficult times and circumstances are especially hard for him. Thank you again for all the help - your work is amazing."

Croydon Covid-19 Mutual Aid group (CCMA) received a £5,000 grant to continue its work to promote emergency food assistance.

- The group, set up with just a few people on Facebook who wanted to help their community in response to the pandemic, but it quickly expanded to encompass more than 3,800 volunteers.
- Residents from every part of Croydon are volunteering with CCMA, working together to make sure vulnerable and housebound local residents are supported.
- This includes everything from buying shopping and collecting medication, to delivering emergency food supplies and connecting residents to specialist support services.

Another example funding was Good Food Matters. The organisation has been running since 2006, have been supplying quality meals to vulnerable people and since the start of the Covid lockdown, has seen demand rise from 40 meals a week to 220. Its £8,780 grant has helped it meet this demand by providing funding to buy more ingredients, with food distributed via food banks in New Addington and Fieldway, and through Croydon Voluntary Action and Croydon BME Forum food distribution points.

The group also supplies the council's Food Stop in New Addington, which helps families in need by providing very low-price groceries.

At the end of May the fund was closed as the budget was close to exhaustion and a number of pending bids were still being assessed. The table below sets out the grants we made through the fund.



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Organisation	Project Name
South West London Law Centres	Croydon Covid Response
Gage	The Lioness Circle
British Bangladeshi Society Croydon (BBSC)	Food Bank, Cooked Meal For NHS, Soup Kitchen For Homeless And Food Delivery Services For Elderly
WCMC Drop-In & Community Centre	WCMC Drop-In & Community Centre
Another Night Of Sisterhood	Tea & Biscuit Club
Croydon Vision 2	Assurance Crisis
His Grace Evangelical Outreach	His Grace Foodbank
Legacy Youth Zone	Legacy Youth Zone's Emergency Community Response
Jags Foundation	Covid-19 Keeping Our Children Safe
Age UK	Supporting Local Need: Food And Essentials Hub And Telephone
Centre Of Change	#Hope2020
Samaritans Of Croydon And Sutton	Maintain The Running Of The Branch
Croydon Drop In	Croydon Drop In
Upper Norwood Library Trust (Unlt) 2	Virtual Connections – Unlt Response To The Covid-19 Crisis
Good Food Matters 2	Elderly Wellbeing Zone
Arcc	Arcc Covid 19 Food Bank And Care Packs

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St Francis Monks Hill	St Francis Food Stop
Home-Start Croydon	Home Visiting
Caridon	The Caridon Foundation Big Staycation
New Addington Baptist Church	Community Family Project
Revivify Cic	Community Care Package
Croydon Covid19 Mutual Aid	CCMA
Cva1 - The Community Food Hub	The Community Food Hub
Cva 2 - The Volunteer Response	The Volunteer Response
Guiding Hands	Foodie Friday's Lets Cook Saturdays
All Inclusive Advice & Training	Financially Inclusive Communities
Pamper Indulge And Give	Holistic Wellness Hub (HWH)
Freedom Together Cic	Support 4freedom
Croydon Refugee Centre	Befriending And Mentoring Unaccompanied Minors
Citizens Advice Croydon	Remote Advice For Croydon
Linguahouse	Young People Development
Purley Oaks Children's Centre	Purley Oaks Pantry
Elim Pentecostal Church	Alive Community Centre Food Bank
South Norwood Community Kitchen	SNCK Covid 19 Community Aid

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Project 4 Youth Empowerment CIC	Covid-19 community support
Cassandra Learning Centre and ASKI	Reach Out
The Family Centre	Food Stop Plus
Good Food Matters	Cooking for the community

We

value and are extremely appreciative of the strong relationships we have with our community and voluntary sector who have been a vital part of the response in Croydon to the pandemic – way above and beyond their usual activities.

We are so grateful to every community organisation and volunteer across the borough for all they have done in the toughest circumstances to support those who needed it most.

Details of other funding support available for the sector can be found on our [webpage](#).