



Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming March 2019

LATEST NEWS

I am pleased that Shelley Davies was successful in her application for interim Director of Education and Youth Engagement following David Butler's departure. As many of you will know Shelley has been our Head of Service for School Standards working closely with David Butler. Shelley started her new role on 11 February and I am looking forward to working with her.

I attended the Children and Young People's Scrutiny meeting on 5 February – this was an opportunity for scrutiny on the annual Education and Standards report and the Education Budget – I was also able to give my presentation on my vision for Children's services and key achievements, challenges and opportunities.



The SEN Strategy 2019-2022 setting out inclusive education for all will be coming to Cabinet on 25 March for cabinet sign off.

School Admissions – the National Offer Day for Secondary schools places was 1 March and the Admissions team have worked hard to get the offers out to parents/carers on time. The National Offer Day for Primary school places is 16 April.

I have continued to meet regularly with our new Exec Director Rob Henderson and the Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help, Nick Pendry. They are bringing so much energy and enthusiasm to their roles and making an impact already.

Children's Improvement Journey

Ofsted Inspectors were on site 19/20 February for their 5 Monitoring Visit. The official letter setting out progress to date will be published on 14 March. I attended the verbal feedback from Inspectors on 20 February and I'm pleased that they highlighted a number of positives. This visit marked a significant milestone in our improvement journey; with our staff and inspectors both recognising that the pace of change is increasing and we are ambitious for ourselves and our children and families. We are not complacent and we know there is still improvement to be made and we will be ready for the final monitoring visit in July to show them just how much more we have improved.

Positives

- **Leadership;** a renewed drive and energy from new leadership and recognition that we know ourselves well. We are moving quickly to focus on the right things in the right order.
- **Caseloads;** there has been a tangible reduction in caseloads
- **Early Help;** early positive signs that new model is welcomed by staff and that we are on the right trajectory.

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- **Thresholds;** our thresholds are broadly right.
- **Examples of good social work practice and direct work;** social workers who knew their children well and have built good relationships which are strong and child-centred.
- **Staff morale;** staff are more positive and feeling encouraged, appreciating the increased visibility of senior leaders and a more culturally diverse senior leadership team

My thanks to the improvement team for providing all the information for inspectors ahead of the monitoring visit and supporting the logistics of the process to ensure it all runs smoothly. My thanks as well to all the front line staff involved in the process with inspectors and the senior managers for their leadership.

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Budget

Following the Ofsted inspection in the summer of 2017, £10.784 million was invested in Children's Services in 2018/19 covering costs associated with additional placements, additional staff resources for social work and legal costs.

Children's Services continues to experience pressures due to the number of cases that are being dealt with but also as a result of the transition whilst new teams are being put into place, and recruitment to roles continues.

A further £15.5 million will be invested in 2019/20, with additional staffing, financial support to vulnerable families, transport provision and the management of the demand for placements being the main areas to benefit as well as including the realignment of the Children with Disability service.

This investment will begin to deliver savings in the form of placement cost reduction as the rate of increase in the numbers of Looked after Children (LAC) begins to slow and reduce, resulting in the current commissioning arrangements being reviewed, and new arrangements put in place.

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Early Help and Children's Social Care Conference

Our Children, Families and Education leadership team hosted the Conference. Rob and Nick set out their vision for the future direction of the services for some of Croydon's most vulnerable children and families. By 2021 we will have outstanding outcomes for children with a confident, competent and stable workforce who are supported, fulfilled and happy. This is our commitment to the children and families of Croydon.

Over 250 staff attended the conferences and took full advantage of the opportunity to hear directly from Rob and Nick, discuss what they heard and put questions directly to them. This will directly shape the future direction for the department.

Rob and Nick gave clear, unambiguous messages about the creation of a high-support high-challenge culture, where staff will be supported and developed with the expectation that they will do the best they possibly can, with children at the centre of all we do. All staff were invited to be part of this journey and to commit to securing the best outcomes for our children and families. Initial feedback from staff indicates that this was a really stimulating, well received opportunity to hear from and talk with the new leadership team.

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VIRTUAL SCHOOL

We were delighted to welcome Nadhim Zahawi, Minister of State for Children and Families to Croydon last week. The purpose of his visit was to observe the education of our UASC students in the Interim Provision. The provision was established a number of years ago to provide our students with an educational placement whilst awaiting a mainstream placement. The provision is based at St Andrew's CE High School.



During the visit Nadhim observed a music session, met with five of our UASC students, a number of foster carers and school staff to discuss their stories and views of the education that they are receiving.

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The Minister was very impressed with the quality of education being delivered by the education staff and the breadth of the curriculum offer by provision.

Our young people were champions for Croydon full of hope and aspiration.

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DELIVERING OUR AMBITIONS

Legacy OnSide Youth Zone

Plans to open the Legacy OnSide Youth Zone in June 2019 are well underway. The £6.5m partnership project, of which £3.25m has been funded by the council, will deliver a significant universal offer with a range of activities for Croydon's young people to engage with. The Legacy Youth Zone will have a positive impact on our young people's health, wellbeing and confidence and enable them to contribute positively to our local community.



There is commitment from the council to invest in our young people and give them opportunities to engage in youth activities as well as exploring their future direction. This project will deliver the largest youth activity venue that the borough has seen.

Further Founder Patrons have agreed to support the Youth Zone, including 'Chequers Contract Services' a locally based company that is actively engaged in supporting Croydon.

An exciting stage in the project was the Hard Hat Tour that took place on Friday 15th February where key supporters, including members of our youth forums and the Young People's Development Group, were able to have a first look inside the Legacy Youth Zone, ahead of the grand opening this summer, and hear about the range of activities that will be on offer for our young people.

The Legacy Youth Zone team continues to meet with partners and explore opportunities on how they can work together to support our young people. They have attended the Big Localities meeting as well as the BME Forum's Youth Violence Forum and there are links between what our Young People have highlighted as being key priorities to them, through our Youth Congress events, and what they will be able to engage with in the Youth Zone, such as employability activities.

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The team is currently interviewing for an Enterprise and Employability role. Once appointed they will be responsible for delivering the 'Get a Job Programme', enabling those young people who are currently NEET into employment. This programme has been successful in other youth zones and will be replicated through our Croydon Legacy Youth Zone.

The work of the Young People's Development Group is progressing well. They have been actively engaged in a number of key decisions of Legacy. This has included choosing the uniform colours, helping with the colour design of the climbing wall, developing designs for the Capital Funders Wall and involvement with recruitment of staff. The group has also linked up with teams across the Onside network to speak about issues affecting young people.

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Safe & Well delivered by the Youth Engagement team

Safe & Well is a 5 week preventative programme aimed at KS2 & 3 students. Delivered by members of the Youth Engagement team, the programme is designed to build resilience in young people, enabling them to confidently identify risky situations and avoid them coming to harm or being exploited.

Schools refer young people to the programme:

- who have had at least one fixed-term exclusion or are approaching this;
- who are displaying antisocial behaviour in their local community and/or school;
- whose families have been affected by knife crime.

Although only in its 2nd half term of delivery, the Safe & Well programme is proving a great success in both of the primary and secondary schools worked with so far, with many asking for the programme to be repeated with other groups of students. One of the participating schools has noted a remarkable change in students:

"Since the Safe & Well program started there has been a significant change in the young people's attitude in school, this was something that was noticed by the teachers of these students."

Over the 5 weeks, the session facilitators create safe learning environments where students share experiences, discuss real life situations that may present for them as well as have their thoughts challenged by their peers and the facilitators.

The thought-provoking and engaging programme has achieved a plethora of positive outcomes, e.g. in every school thus far 100% of students have said that they:



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- enjoyed the activities;
- had developed their skills;
- had strengthened friendships;
- felt happy and well;
- felt supported by staff;

Some quotes from young people:

- “I love that I can **share** things that’s on my mind freely.”
- “I learnt that gangs can have a **bad** effect on my life”
- “I feel **safe to talk** to an adult if something was on my mind”
- “I learnt **grooming** can come from all different types of people.”
- “I used what you taught me in a **risky circumstance** and it **defused** the situation.”
- “Saying no can **save my life**”

If you would like more information about the Safe & Well program please contact jo.jack@croydon.gov.uk

Steps to Success Event



The 14-19 strand of the Youth Engagement team held a Steps to Success event at Braithwaite Hall. The event was targeted at specific groups; the morning comprised designated time slots for schools and from 2.30 pm, the event was open to NEET young people aged 16-25.



The event welcomed in excess of 120 students from 10 school groups and a total of 53 visitors in the afternoon; 14 of which were parent / carers or support professionals.

Whilst at the event, young people were able to talk to the 18 Education and Training Providers about their courses, as well as make applications whilst at the event.



Over half of the schools that attended, reported back that the majority of the students they brought to the event had submitted applications either whilst at or shortly after the event. This, a particularly pertinent achievement for these students as they were originally selected to attend the event because they hadn't yet made any Post 16 applications.



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Whilst queueing to sign in during the afternoon, one young person cited that he had bought his friend along because he had attended an event previously and the job that he held now, he secured as a result of attending a previous event and wanted the same fortune for his friend who was looking for work.

The event was deemed by Providers and schools alike as a worthwhile activity and signifies the importance of brokering contact between schools and Providers in order to enable young people to make important steps in their future pathways.

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Signposting at Strand House



Visualisation of proposed fascia sign

A planning application has been submitted for the installation of a large fascia sign on the side elevation of Strand House to publicise the service and this centre. In addition to this new signage has already been installed above the learners entrance and installation of three lamp column flags on Thornton Heath High Street, Whitehorse Road and Whitehorse Lane will be complete by the beginning of March 2019.

Better promotion of CALAT's service in Thornton Heath fits in with the Council's Gateway North Croydon project, which focuses on delivering more localised and joined up service offer in specific areas across the borough.

Social Media

CALAT has just reached a social media milestone... 2000+ people who both 'like' and 'follow' our Facebook page. This figure has been achieved through both organic and paid for advertising and is a great boost to any publicity posted through the platform.



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Permanent display in Clocktower foyer

Establishing a permanent stand in the Clocktower centre foyer has been approved and will help further promote CALAT's services. To complement this and our Summer / Winter open day stands there will be a regular 'manned presence' at the display to answer any questions prospective learners may have.

Digital signage in CALAT receptions



The service is also exploring options to install digital signage at our receptions to show class/timetable information for each site as well any other relevant information about Council services.

Apprenticeships

The ILM Leadership and Management Apprenticeship programmes at level 3 and 5 are due to start on 1st March 2019. Both cohorts are on track for overachieving their target of 10 Apprentices per level. This programme is a key investment in Croydon council staff to enable them to receive valuable qualifications alongside the apprenticeship which is paid for by the Council's Levy pot. This programme will prepare staff from supervisory to departmental managers to be our leaders of the future as well as increasing productivity in the workplace.

New programmes for September 2019 will include an extended Apprenticeship offer to local authority maintained schools in School business professional level 5, Advanced practitioners for learning support staff level 4 and Supporting teaching and learning level 3.

ESFA Adult Education Budget (AEB) 2018/19 mid-year funding estimate

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The latest funding return and mid-year estimate was submitted to the ESFA on the 6th and 11th February 2019. The service is once again on track for achieving 102% of its Adult Education Budget funding allocation which is great news for the future sustainability of the service and future funding levels allocated once this budget is devolved to the GLA in academic year 2019/20 and beyond. The achievement of this outcome has been due to increases in enrolment and learner numbers as well as the number of learners accessing childcare support funding and additional learning support.