

Croydon's Annual Equality Report 2022

Foreword

As the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Business Recovery, I am pleased to introduce the annual progress report on the Council's Equality Strategy 2020-2024 which sets out the Council's equality objectives and latest analysis and action on the Council's workforce profile and gender pay gap.

Equality and inclusion is the very foundation upon which we strive to ensure residents are treated fairly and equitably by the Council and its service providers, giving individuals the opportunity to be who they are and achieve the successes they aspire to. Therefore, we have taken steps to promote understanding, tackle prejudice and remove or minimise disadvantage.

The Council's Equality Strategy 2020-2024, provides a detailed insight into our ongoing commitment to equality, set out in one place our equality objectives and other arrangements for embedding equality into everything we do and, perhaps most importantly, set out where we must improve.

In response to George Floyd's murder, the Council lit up the Town Hall on 2 June 2020, as a gesture of solidarity. In addition, on 4 June 2020, approximately one hundred people took the knee outside of Croydon Town Hall to show solidarity as a community. Many organisations made promises to improve the lives of those affected and showed other gestures of solidarity. The Council also made a commitment to improve the lived experiences of the African, African Caribbean and other communities of African heritage. We are proud that we followed through on this commitment and have developed both an Equalities Pledge and a George Floyd Race Matters Pledge. Both pledges are detailed in this report. We acknowledge that racism remains a very real issue in the UK and in Croydon, we are committed to a zero-tolerance approach to racism and other forms of discrimination both within the Council and in our community.

The Equality strategy was developed during a period of great change for Croydon. Despite financial challenges, we have committed to continue to support our staff and residents and

use our resources, and work with our partners, to achieve the outcomes detailed in this report.

Building on our last report and work carried out since 2021, this progress report provides a detailed insight into our ongoing commitment to equality. It highlights our achievements in relation to our equalities performance indicators and sets out examples through a series of case studies that describe the different ways the council is seeking to ensure that our services are fair, inclusive and accessible to all our residents and support good equalities practice with regard to our employees.

Equality and diversity, is at the heart of everything we do as a Council from the services we deliver, to the money we spend and to the people we hire. One of our main goals is that Croydon reaches the highest standards of excellence in equality and diversity. We are proud of the diversity of the Borough which makes it a great place to live and work. We aspire that it becomes stronger and more equitable where no community is held back. Hence, we are working collaboratively with partners across public, private, and voluntary sectors to make this a reality. At all levels, the council should reflect the diversity of the Borough, implement equality and inclusion in everything we do, and provide community leadership to inspire and support our Croydon partners to share our goals.

This annual report therefore highlights some of the Council's significant efforts over the previous year to incorporate equality and diversity throughout the organisation. Given our level of ambition, we believe much work is still in progress to achieve our goals. However, this report highlights significant progress on our equalities performance indicators and lays out a series of case studies that demonstrate the various ways the Council is working to ensure that our services are fair, inclusive, and accessible to our citizens and employees.

We plan to continuously assess and improve our performance, working closely with stakeholders and exploring strategic partnerships that will help the Council to meet our equality outcomes.

Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed, Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Business Recovery

Highlights of our equality achievements

- **Equality pledges:**

Following two consultations in July – August 2021 and October – November 2021 we developed two pledges, the Equalities Pledge and The George Floyd Race Matters Pledge. The purpose of both pledges was to engender a societal change in the borough and cultural change at the Council, other Croydon places of employment and community and voluntary groups. The Equalities Pledge will be launched on 8 March 2022- International Women’s Day. The George Floyd Race Matters Pledge will be launched on 25 May 2022, the second anniversary of his brutal murder.

- **Gender equality:**

International Women’s Day 2021, National awareness days, Women Career Progression Talks, Coffee morning spotlight series, Menopause Support Groups, Menopause Tea talk, Mentorship Programmes, Supporting the local Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) work, and a host of other initiatives are allowing promote equality and social welfare our female work force.

- **Children’s Race Equality Review Project:**

We held a race equality review to investigate historical claims of race discrimination and racial disparity in the Children’s Families and Education Directorate. The first of its kind at the Council.

- **Safe Space Tea Talks:**

We held a series of Tea Break meetings with Staff Network groups and the Corporate Management Teams. The purpose of these meetings was to facilitate often uncomfortable conversations. This model was based on good practice identified from Race Equality Matters.

- **A Guardians’ programme**

We developed a Guardian’s Programme, aimed at giving employees a safe space to talk about issues of concern relating to the organisational culture, bullying or other forms of inappropriate behaviour as well as signposting help and support for staff on other issues such as bereavement and loss, domestic violence, and wellbeing.

- **Partnerships for an integrated community:**

Asian Resource Centre of Croydon (ARCC), Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (CNCA) and Age UK Croydon have developed a strategic partnership that has allowed us to reach isolated groups to continuously monitor and informally assess their welfare.

- **Islamophobia:**

We adopted the all-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia, following the rise of hate crimes including Islamophobia in Croydon.

- **Staff diversity network groups:**

We have worked to strengthen the voice of our six staff diversity network groups within the council. These groups have supported change to our workforce profile by their visibility of staff diversity through awareness raising events, communications campaigns and role modelling. They have also worked actively with the community in activities such as volunteering and event promotions.

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Internal Control Board**

We established an EDI Control Board to improve governance of EDI across the organisation. It is responsible for the delivery of the Equality Strategy and the Cultural Change Strategy and is focused on improving EDI performance within the organisation.

- **Cabinet Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group:**

The Leader of the Council is establishing a corresponding Cabinet Advisory Board to monitor the performance of the EDI Internal Control Board. This will improve reporting against these key outcomes.

Background

The Equality Strategy was developed against a backdrop of prevalent international and national themes, which were particularly highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of the virus has been disproportionate, especially on Black and Minority Ethnic residents. This is as a result of long-standing structural and systemic inequalities and socio-economic determinants of health.

We also witnessed a strong social response to racism through the Black Lives Matter movement following the murder of George Floyd in the United States. This movement had its roots in United States but the underlying principals and need for change to how people of African and African Caribbean and African Latin heritage were treated, impacted strongly in the United Kingdom our Croydon community were also very heavily impacted.

In partnership with Croydon's residents, businesses, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and staff, the Council developed an Equality Strategy for 2020-2024. The goal is to deliver a combined strategic vision for equality across the borough. Our approach builds on the partnership work undertaken in the past year, with the aim of identifying priorities and key thematic areas through assessments, surveys and consultation exercises.

Introduction

The Equality Strategy provides a framework for our equality objectives, what we want to achieve, actions we will take to tackle and address inequality and how we will measure our progress. It sets out how the Council intends to meet its requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Equality Duty. The aim is to tackle all forms of inequalities in the community and in the way we carry out our work, providing examples for organisations working in our local area.

It is worthy of mention that the Equality Strategy and supporting actions are 'living' documents. Therefore, the strategy and action plan will be reviewed yearly to ensure that our policy and practice are relevant in the face of emerging and prevalent national and local

priorities. This will be particularly important as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and its inequitable impact on our communities.

Though our progress on the Equality Strategy has been severely impacted by both the pandemic and the Council's financial situation, we are proud of what we have achieved to date. We are now making steady progress through the focus brought about by the EDI Internal Control Board.

To achieve our aim of promoting equality and equity in the community, 4 key outcome areas were developed. The following sections present the 4 key Equality outcomes, the associated objectives and actions we have taken to achieve these objectives.

For ease of reference, the key outcome areas and associated objectives are shown in the table on the following page.

Equality Strategy: Plan on a page

PLAN ON A PAGE

VISION

Croydon is a place of opportunity where everyone can belong, addressing the needs and aspirations of all those who live and work in the borough

The Council addresses social inequalities as a community leader and employer

- OBJECTIVE 1: The Council's workforce reflects our diverse communities at all levels
- OBJECTIVE 2: The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society
- OBJECTIVE 3: We ensure equality training is central to the way work, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs

We work with residents to better understand our communities

- OBJECTIVE 1: Continue to increase our network across seldom heard groups
- OBJECTIVE 2: Information about the Council's work towards tackling inequality is easy to access and understand
- OBJECTIVE 3: Data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services

Use partnerships to improve access and meet individual needs as they arise

- OBJECTIVE 1: Enable better education outcomes by offering support to groups who need it most
- OBJECTIVE 2: Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life
- OBJECTIVE 3: Services are proactive in targeting group that have accessibility issues as a result of disability, age, mental health, disability, language, digital and/or physical barriers
- OBJECTIVES 4: Inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed, specifically for black boys, white working class boys, gypsy roma and travellers, and those accessing free school meals.

People in Croydon are supported to be in good health

- OBJECTIVE 1: Work with partners to tackle social isolation and bring people together
- OBJECTIVE 2: With our partners use our knowledge of specific health challenges to support improvements
- OBJECTIVE 3: We work with our partners to open the door to health services, and support them to make sure residents know where and how to access services

Key performance indicators to measure the progress were developed for each objective and embedded within the Council's Equality Strategy 2020-2024 in the form of an action plan.

Each section of the report sets out the Outcome areas and objectives and a summary of activities and projects that the Council has focused on over the last year to deliver them.

It also contains good practice case studies that provide an overview of how the Council has worked in partnership with our statutory, voluntary and community partners and engaged with our customers to deliver equality initiatives that support work on improving service outcomes for diverse communities in the borough and our staff, whilst bearing in mind that 46% of our Council staff are also residents.

Next Steps

The Council will continue to monitor progress against the Equality Objectives set out in the Equality Strategy (2020-2024) and will report annually on overall progress.

OUTCOME ONE: The Council addresses social inequities as a community leader and an employer

Objectives

1. The Council's workforce reflects our diverse communities at all levels
2. The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society
3. The Council ensures equality training is central to the way we work, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs.

Why did we choose this outcome?

Strong, visible leadership is essential to effectively embed equality throughout the organisation and community at large. The Council will ensure our leaders are not only supporting but also more importantly driving the change and championing equality.

We want to use equality analysis as an effective tool to identify needs and improve outcomes, address gaps and reduce inequality. The council believes in the dignity of all people and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We value the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution that diversity brings to our community. Our aspiration is for Croydon to be safe, welcoming and inclusive.

We welcome the diversity of our staff and customers and regard this as the strength of our borough. We want to continue to improve and increase diversity at senior levels across the organisation and our workforce profile to reflect Croydon's communities and in particular under-represented groups - at all levels – so those in decision-making positions reflect the communities they serve.

The Council will continue to regularly monitor, analyse and publish employment data and more importantly take actions to address identified trends. The Council aims to embed equalities practice across the organisation.

Objective One: The Council's workforce reflects our diverse communities at all levels

The workforce profile provides a valuable source of data about the Croydon Council workforce. We value the diversity of our employees and customers and see it as a strength of our community. We want to continue to improve and increase diversity at senior levels across the organisation, as well as our workforce profile, to better reflect Croydon's communities, particularly under-represented groups at all levels so that those in decision-making positions are representative of the communities they serve.

Part of the corporate performance framework has KPI's around workforce and employment to ensure diversity across recruitment, pay, disability, gender etc. These are monitored by the Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis where the Chief People Officer is in attendance to ensure areas of weakness are discussed, as well as associated action plans. In addition, we monitor and have a target for the workforce replicating the borough in terms of diversity.

Workforce representation by protected characteristics

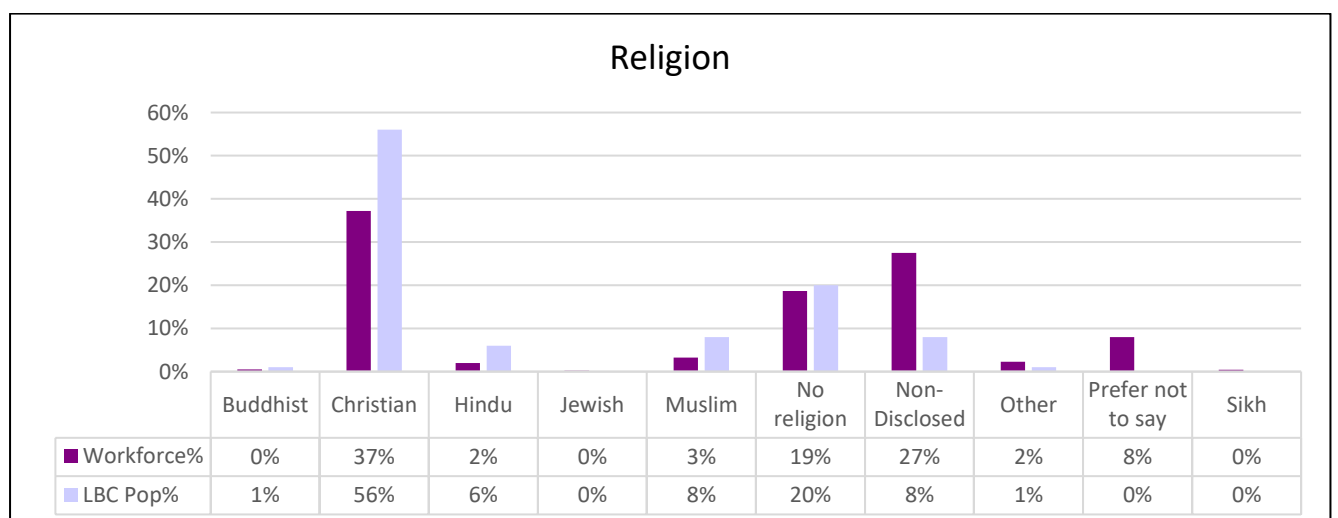
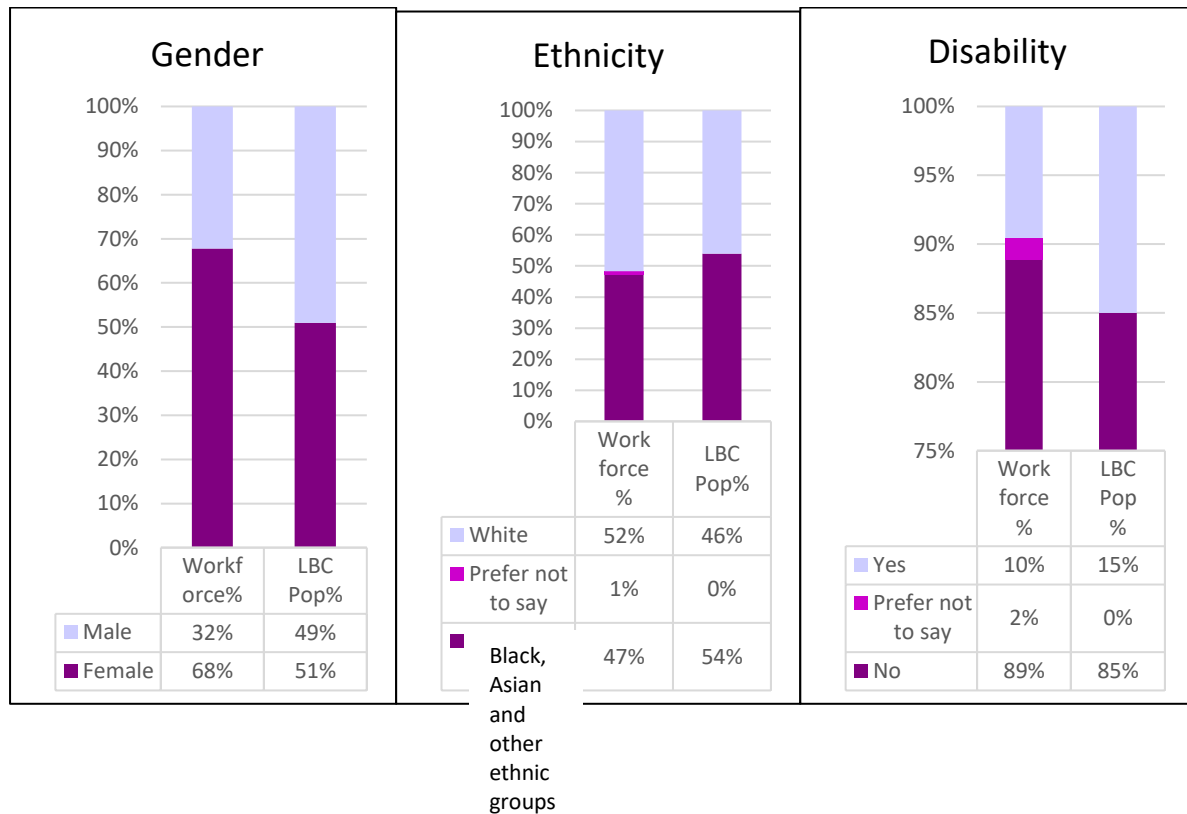
Our breakdown of the workforce is mapped against Croydon residents' 2011 census statistics regarding gender, ethnicity, disability and religion characteristics. Whilst Croydon Council workforce has a positive gender mix, there is more to do on ethnicity, LGBTQ+ and disability if we are to meet our aspiration of employing a workforce that is representative of our communities. We have made progress in increasing disclosure rates for ethnicity and disability, sexual orientation and religious belief and will continue to run campaigns to encourage our staff to share their data. There has been between 6-7% improvement rate on the key protected characteristics sharing their data over the last 12 months. We are taking our efforts to increase disclosure seriously and intend to focus in particular on improving ethnicity and disability disclosure rates by using best practice and consulting behavioural techniques to provide greater accuracy for our workforce planning and monitoring. It is useful to highlight the levels of staff who have declared that they prefer not to say in respect of protected characteristics.

Our current non-disclosure rates (as at December 2021) for the protected characteristics are as follows:

Ethnicity: 24%

Disability: 26%

Religious Belief: 27%



The 2011 census did not collect information from respondents on sexual orientation or gender identity, therefore the council does not have a community comparator to map against. The 2021 census will provide a richer data set, with the Office for National Statistics beginning to release data later this year. In the meantime the council undertakes workforce monitoring on sexuality and has collated data since 2013 (see table below).

	LBC 2018/19		LBC 2020/21	
Bisexual	15	0.65%	24	1.45%
Heterosexual	1839	79.37%	1851	85.36%
*categories recorded were 'Gay Man or Lesbian Woman'	50	2.16%	46	2.50%
Other	52	2.24%	38	1.37%
Prefer Not To Say	361	15.58%	298	9.32%

During this monitoring period we have seen a small but positive increase in LGBT representation and a decrease in those electing to prefer not to say. The council has reviewed and updated terminology to describe sexual orientation categories referencing the latest Stonewall guidance and advice.

Increasing Staff Disclosure of Protected Characteristics

The council has been committed to improving the rates of disclosure by employees of their protected characteristics to achieve an overall disclosure rate of 85%. By improving disclosure, the council would be able to:

- Build an accurate picture of the workforce
- Ensure that all members of the workforce are treated fairly (by monitoring equality of opportunities)
- Ensure that staff can be their authentic selves at work
- Make sure the workforce strives to reflect the community we serve
- Ensure that our policies are not indirectly discriminatory

As a council we also wanted to be accurate in our reporting of the diversity of our workforce as this would help us in planning new initiatives and campaigns. We are aware that there were several obstacles to staff completing their equality data which included:

- Lack of awareness by staff that their data was incomplete
- Lack of knowledge (of the self-service system) by staff regarding how to complete their data online
- Lack of insight by staff into why completing this data was important
- Suspicion regarding the confidentiality of the data

During the period 2020-21, initiatives continued including:

- Further communications on a regular basis regarding the importance of disclosure and how information is used
- Implementation of a simple online form for staff to complete their equality information easily
- Personal contact of all new starters to the council on a monthly basis by HR to remind them to check and update their equality data and give information on how this is used.

Non-Disclosure Rates: June 2018 – December 2021

	June 2018	December 2021	% change
Ethnicity	30%	24%	-6%
Disability	38%	26%	-12%
Religious Belief	36%	27%	-9%
Sexual Orientation	34%	28%	-5%

Ultimately, we aim to create an environment where staff are able to 'be themselves' so if they are willing to communicate openly and disclose protected characteristics, this shows increasing levels of engagement and confidence in the council which will be reflected in performance levels and satisfaction surveys.

Next Steps

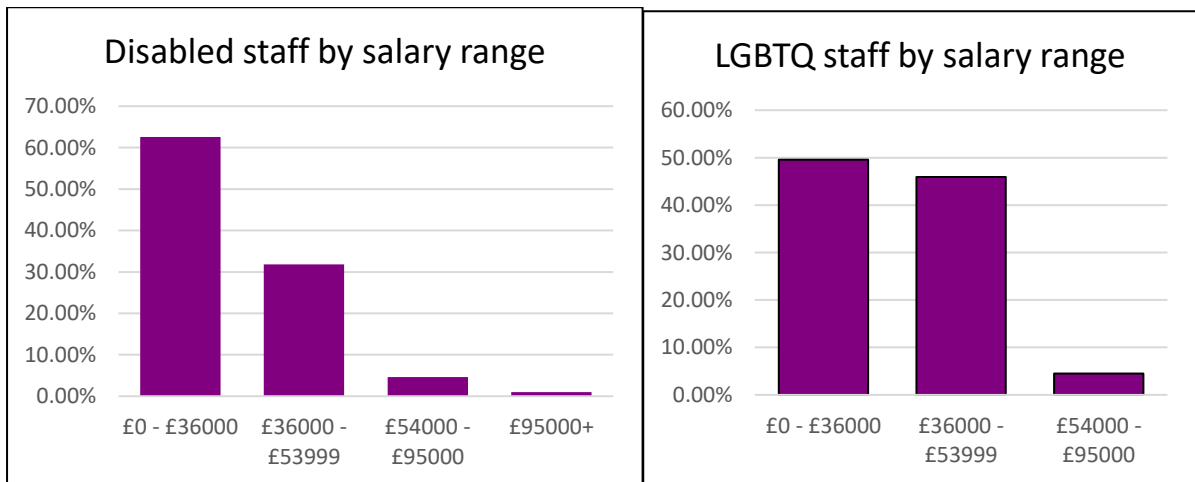
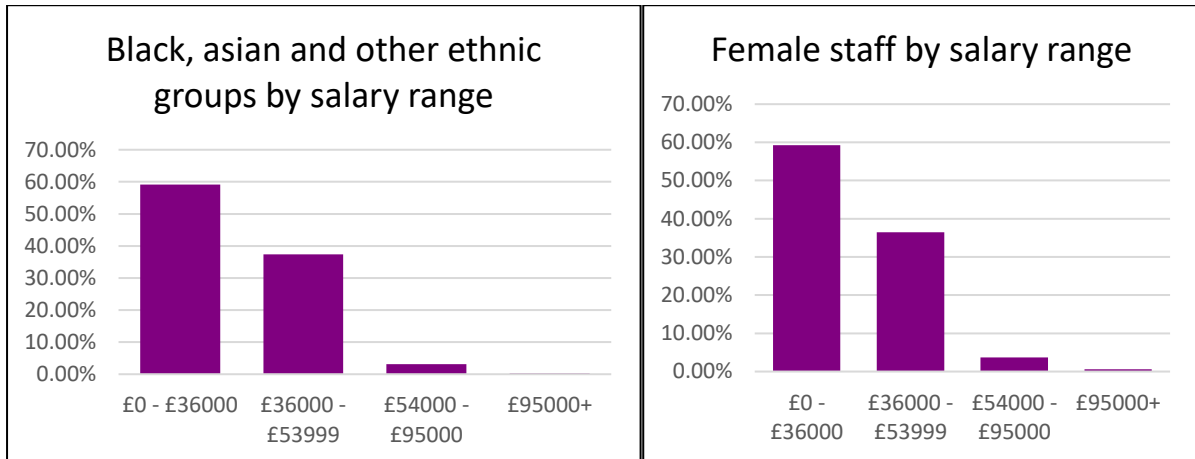
Based on the data above there will be focus in the following areas in the future:

- To have our workforce profile at divisional level be at least 70% reflective of the community we serve including declared ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation
- Understanding and tackling the issues regarding low numbers of non-white ethnic groups and disabled staff in senior management roles.
- Targeting the areas where there are highest levels of non-disclosure. These include areas where staff may have limited access or use of computers.
- Encouraging higher disclosure declarations to aim towards 85% targets particularly around ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.
- Recruitment data at its next presentation to include qualitative data – with further data around application/shortlisting/interviewed and job offered
- Improving recruitment in regard to those with a disability & those aged 16-24 years
- Benchmarking with other London Boroughs

Equalities profile by earnings

It has already been highlighted that the workforce at Croydon is not yet representative of its community in respect of ethnicity, disability and gender. The equalities monitoring of our workforce further indicates that there is also an under-representation within the workforce across salary ranges, with a negative funnelling of representation for Black, Asian and other ethnic groups and disabled staff at senior levels. It is interesting to note a more positive

distribution for staff declaring their sexual orientation. During 2021/22, a variety of senior staff were appointed which may positively influence diversity at this level in 2022. However, it is recognised that underrepresentation still exists.



NB: data shows positive declarations on protected characteristics. The senior structure covers Corporate Directors, Directors and Heads of Service. Head of Service salary range begins at £65,589.

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

From 2018 it became a legal requirement for the Council to publish its gender pay gap workforce data. A gender pay gap compares the difference between how much people from

one gender are paid on average compared with people from another gender. A pay gap shows whether the male gender is on average occupying higher paying roles than the female gender. It is not a comparison of pay between people doing the same work.

As of 31 March 2020, the Council reported a mean gender pay gap of 2.0% and a median gender pay gap of 0.0%. This compares favourably in comparison with other local authorities and regional statistics. The pay gap figures have increased slightly by 0.4% (mean) and decreased by 2.6% (median) since 2018. The pay gap figures for March 2021 will be reported on the government portal and the council's website by 30 March 2022

The Council also intends to publish pay gap data for disability and ethnicity characteristics. Further details will be published on the Council's website by 30 March 2022.

Next steps:

The council needs to address under-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees in the top 5% earners and focus on closing its ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

Consideration should also be given to an increasingly older workforce, with strategies put in place to attract younger talent.

More work is required to enable more disabled people to access employment, such as creating job carve roles and entry-level roles.

Despite the recorded improvements in workforce data collection, there is the need for the Council to, where possible/appropriate, to collect personal data from residents and customers in relation to ethnicity, sexuality, religion and remaining protected characteristics. This data will then allow a richer picture of need and inequality to be created enabling commissioned services to be more targeted and the right support and services are in place for all our residents.

Workforce policies:

During 2019, the council undertook a baseline qualitative and quantitative analysis of the workforce to inform our workforce strategy. This included a commitment to review and

update our policies including discretionary and annual leave. Our policies on discretionary and annual leave were updated in 2020 and 2021. In 2022 we will be updating our flexible and agile working policy to reflect our move into hybrid working practices.

Recruitment:

We have established a working group under the EDI Internal Control Board, which is developing a clear baseline and workforce EDI dashboard to be able to report on our workforce profile more widely and ensure actions can be taken to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

We have strengthened our recruitment policy in relation to diverse recruitment panels. Our policy is that every panel should be diverse regarding ethnicity and gender. Staff across the organisation have been trained in effective recruitment, and are available to support any service that may need support with creating a diverse panel.

Following discussion at the EDI Internal Control Board we are extending diversity to include age. This is in response to data that has identified that we are struggling to recruiting staff under the age of 35.

We are looking beyond simply having diverse panels, and seeking to identify if they have had an impact on our objective to have a workforce that reflects the community.

Details of diverse panels will now be held centrally with the Recruitment team and we will be undertaking sample audits in 2022/23 to ensure best practice and compliance.

We have also ensured our external recruitment partners provide a shortlist of diverse candidates to be considered. Equality, diversity and inclusion was the largest single scoring element in the procurement tender for the senior recruitment partner for the Council. Bidders were required to submit details of their proposed approach to ensuring a diverse shortlist, and their track record of successful diverse recruitment campaigns.

Objective Two: The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society

The Equalities Pledge and the George Floyd Race Matters Pledge

The brutal murder of George Floyd in May 2020 shocked the world and rightly brought greater focus to the ingrained racism and inequalities faced by African, African Caribbean, African Latin communities globally.

The Council lit up the Town Hall on 2 June 2020, as a gesture of solidarity for George Floyd. In addition, on 4 June 2020, approximately one hundred people took the knee outside of Croydon Town Hall to show solidarity as a community. The Council also made a commitment to improve the lived experiences of the black community in the borough and the Council's workforce.

We responded as a Council by undertaking listening activities with both employees and community groups to identify concerns about systemic racism which had impacted negatively on the lived experiences of staff and residents. We established a steering group in partnership with a number of community organisations. These included: Croydon's BME Forum, Legacy Youth Zone and the Whitgift School along with other community partners.

The aim was to challenge organisations, including the Council itself, to stretch their ambitions to change persistent structural and institutional racism faced by people of African, African Caribbean and African Latin heritage.

We originally planned to have an Equalities Pledge and Black Lives Matter Charter. Following discussion, the Steering Group decided to develop an equalities pledge and a specific Race Matters Pledge. The Race Matters Pledge, being aimed at positive action to tackle racism faced by people of African, African Caribbean and African Latin heritage rather than being aimed at all ethnicities. The aim of the Equalities Pledge was to support all other protected characteristics and ethnicities and to address all other forms of discrimination.

We held two consultations, using the Councils engagement platform “Get involved”, the first held between July and August 2021 and the second held between October and November 2021.

In response to the consultation feedback the Race Matters Pledge was renamed the George Floyd Race Matters Pledge to provide clarity about the beneficiaries of the pledge along with the rationale for its establishment.

The pledges were also focused towards organisations rather than individuals, recognising that businesses, organisations public or private and community and voluntary groups have a tremendous impact on the lived experience of their staff and customers.

These pledges each contain 10 activities for organisations to undertake to eliminate racism and other forms of discrimination and make Croydon a fairer and more inclusive borough, a place where everyone feels valued, has a voice and a sense of belonging. We acknowledged that organisations who adopt the pledges will be of varying sizes and in a range of different sectors. Therefore, each organisation adopting the pledges is asked to commit to undertaking a minimum of 3 activities per year, therefore producing incremental change year by year. This would result in completion of all activities and an improvement in equality, diversity and inclusion performance by 2025 for organisations adopting the pledges in 2022.

The pledges are to be owned by the Croydon community, led by the Council and supported by community partners.

The Equalities Pledge was launched on 8 March 2022, International Women’s Day. The George Floyd Race Matters Pledge will be launched on 25 May 2022, the second anniversary of George Floyd’s brutal murder.

Both Pledges would be monitored by the EDI Internal Control Board. Organisations that adopt the pledges will be invited to meet quarterly to discuss progress.

Both pledges build on our Hate Crime Pledge that we launched in 2019 which had resounding support.

The Equalities Pledge and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge are detailed below.

George Floyd Race Matters Pledge

As an organisation we commit to:

- We are working to become an anti-racist organisation by embedding this in our strategies, actions and behaviours and by making a difference to the lived experience of our communities
- Committing to zero tolerance of racism from employees, residents, customers and service users by challenging racist behaviour or stereotypes expressed by individuals
- Developing our knowledge of anti-racist practice by listening and responding to experiences of staff and the wider community
- Developing an understanding of the role that power, privilege, identity and disadvantage that impacts on the lived experience of all staff in particular those from African/African Caribbean, other African heritage communities
- Undertaking whole workforce training on unconscious bias and encouraging staff to safely challenge such bias during day-to-day conversations
- Developing cultural awareness by learning more about African/African Caribbean and African other history and cultural practices to develop understanding of staff and customers through podcasts, videos, documentaries and by attending events
- Promoting good relationships between groups which share cultural similarities and those that don't by encouraging communities to celebrate together as one
- Identifying and addressing any ethnicity pay gaps
- Ensuring that recruitment processes from application, shortlisting, interview and appointment conducted in a manner that facilitates positive action in recruitment such as media campaigns, advertising imagery and interview panels that represent the diversity of the borough's population where possible
- Developing plans to address challenges where race may not be the only factor and the needs of people may also be in relation to disability, age, sexual orientation, gender or other protected characteristics.

Equalities Pledge

As an organisation we commit to:

- Positively promote the equality of opportunity for individuals of all characteristics namely: disability, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership and gender identity by recognising significant celebrations and awareness days and ensuring that workplace practices do not discriminate against any groups
- Ensuring that there is mandatory training for all staff at all levels in equality, diversity and inclusion every two years, attendance is monitored, and 100% targets set with staff and managers held to account
- Ensuring a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying, publicising the staff code of conduct, providing staff with information on what it is and encouraging people to safely challenge this where it occurs ensuring that people are not treated less favourably for doing so
- Positively encouraging applications from diverse and under-represented groups when advertising for posts and taking actions to respond to under representation in this area identified by organisational data
- Using anonymous recruitment processes which don't reveal details of race, age, gender, disability or socio economic status
- Identifying and annually publishing pay gaps based on ethnicity, disability and gender and putting actions in place to reduce such pay gaps
- Providing reasonable adjustments for disabled staff in interviews and employment
- Developing and agreeing an equality policy for the organisation which all staff sign up to, and reviewing it every 3 years
- Collecting data on the protected characteristics of staff and aiming to have a workforce which reflects the Croydon community by using positive action recruitment practices and encourage career development for underrepresented staff.
- Undertaking annual staff surveys to identify the impact of organisational actions on employees lived experience and psychological safety at work

Islamophobia

The Council has previously expressed concern at the rise of Islamophobia in recent years across the UK, and around the world. In Croydon, we have seen an increase in reports of hate crime of 35% between 2017-2020. Our “Say No to Hate” pledge recognises that hate crime can take many forms, including against race, gender equality, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability and religion or faith, such as hate crime incidents related to Islamophobia.

The Council debated this issue on 13 December 2021 along with examples of how Islamophobia manifests itself in behaviour which perpetuates hatred. Examples of Islamophobia seen in the media and in society as detailed:

- *Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.*
- *Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism and claims of a demographic ‘threat’ posed by Muslims or of a ‘Muslim takeover’.*
- *Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.*
- *Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.*
- *Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the ‘Ummah’ (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.*
- *Denying Muslim populations, the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.*

- *Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, e.g. loyalty tests.*
- *Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia (e.g. Muhammad being a paedophile, claims of Muslims spreading Islam by the sword or subjugating minority groups under their rule) to characterize Muslims as being ‘sex groomers’, inherently violent or incapable of living harmoniously in plural societies.*
- *Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.*

Following this debate we adopted the definition of Islamophobia, as developed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims. We reinforced our commitment as a Council, to fighting Islamophobia in all its forms. We welcomed the APPGs definition which has been backed by hundreds of organisations and institutions.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Internal Control Board

We have established an EDI Internal Control Board, as part of the new systems of governance in the Council. The EDI Board held its inaugural meeting on 3 November 2021. It was established to improve governance of EDI across the organisation and is the first of several governance boards to be established. It is responsible for the delivery of the Equality Strategy and the Cultural Change Strategy and is focused on improving EDI performance within the organisation, with residents and in our supply chain. It is also responsible for improving organisational culture and the lived experience of all employees.

The Board meets on a monthly basis and is co-chaired by the Chief Executive and Head of Learning and Organisational Development. Membership of the board includes representatives of each department, Chairs of Staff Network Groups, Cultural ambassadors and Guardians and the Equality Programme Manager.

The Board’s initial work is focused on the following four core priorities:

- Ensuring there is a shared understanding of organisational priorities

- Develop clear metrics and our baseline to be monitored and tracked
- Communications and ensuring transparency of the Board and its activities
- Allow opportunities for external partner voice and reflections

Each priority area is undertaken by a project team within the Board and provides a report to each meeting on progress. The EDI Board works to a forward plan of activities, with focus on progress against the Equality Strategy and Cultural Change Strategy around the four priorities above. The Board is monitoring and tracking progress against each outcome

The Board received key reports on focus areas. This includes:

- Updates on the Children's Race Equality Project where we received Lord Woolley as a keynote speaker. We plan to cascade good practice from the Children's Race Review Project though out the organisation.
- EDI risk and implementing several controls to address the risk.
- Producing an EDI dashboard, working to increase our ability to use our current HR systems to provide the data that we are seeking.
- We have reviewed the knowledge that members should have around organisational EDI priorities, identifying a range of documents to ensure that Board members have a shared understanding.
- We have also received reports from Staff Network Chairs on their progress, key activities and concerns.
- We have increased our EDI communications on both the intranet and internet and have an area on our intranet dedicated to the work of the Board. This ensures that we are demonstrating openness and transparency. We continue to provide information and signpost people to events relating to our staff networks and other cultural and celebratory days. Our EDI communication has been enhanced by EDI references to organisational events and societal challenges regarding EDI.
- In February 2022 the DI Board received a report on recruitment data, which is helping to monitor and analyse recruitment decision-making impacts by protected characteristic groups.

The Board has a forward plan which is considered at every meeting. We are currently planning a 12-month schedule of work.

The EDI Internal Control Board will also be the voice which ensures that equality issues are truly embedded into the fabric of the Council and the borough itself. The Board will promote issues which make a difference to the lived experience of real people, such as implementing the socio-economic duty of the Equality Act 2010. This addresses our Council priority to tackle ingrained inequality and hardship, like structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice. More work and employee development is required to ensure consistent practice and values across the workforce in the implementation of EDI best practice

The Leader of the Council is establishing a corresponding Cabinet Advisory Group which will receive quarterly briefings from the Internal Control Board on progress against EDI and culture change strategies and action plans. This will improve existing reporting mechanisms which are this annual Equality report to Cabinet, plus monthly briefings for the relevant Cabinet member and shadow Cabinet member.

The Council recognises its duty as a community leader in tackling inequalities and poverty and advocating for a more equitable society. We are committed to reducing inequalities and tackling poverty in particular because of the effects of the pandemic which resulted in large numbers of people losing their jobs and businesses. We acknowledge that the demographics of our Borough are split with the underlying poverty being more prevalent in the north and east of the borough than the south. We note that the north and east of the borough houses more ethnic groups than the south and has more areas of deprivation.

Every Key Decision is accompanied by an EQIA (Equality Impact Assessment)

Undertaking equality impact assessments is a key element of how the Council meets the Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. We have strengthened advice to report writers on the rationale for undertaking an equality impact assessment (EQIA). We are encouraging report writers to begin their equality impact assessment at the start of a project, proposal or plan to ensure that equalities are integrated throughout.

We have an online equality impact assessment training course on our learning platform. This takes learners through the EQIA process step by step. We also provide one-to-one guidance to report authors through feedback and coaching.

The practice of providing one to one guidance and coaching leads to an improvement in standards of completed equality impact assessments. This contributes to the development of report writers with regard to producing EQIAs and enables the Council to make more effective and informed decisions.

In January 2022, the Council updated the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The quality assurance process for the project included an equality impact assessment on all budget proposals. The Equality Team facilitated a surgery where they provided 121 feedback to report writers on the development of their equality impact assessments. The team have agreed to hold further EQIA surgery's later in the year (2022).

An annual audit of equality impact assessments will be carried out by the EDI Internal Control Board as part of the EQIA quality assurance process.

Housing Directorate:

The Council's commitment to equality and diversity is at the forefront of the Housing Improvement Plan, and the directorate's priorities as part of the Croydon Renewal Plan.

The ARK Consultancy report identified perceptions of discrimination on the basis of race in our responsive repairs and complaints services, and one of the primary outcomes of the Plan is to ensure our tenants and leaseholders are treated with respect, regardless of their protected characteristics. To enable this, we will be reviewing our complaints process, and the quality of responses to complaints, to co-design and co-produce a set of service standards with our tenants and leaseholders.

A Workforce Plan will be developed, alongside a skills audit of the housing service, to ensure housing staff are equipped to do their jobs and treat tenants and leaseholders with both respect and compassion. The Workforce Plan will also seek to ensure our workforce reflects the diverse community it serves.

Improvements to data collection will be key to enabling the housing directorate's commitment to equality and diversity. Data on the nine protected characteristics for the following cohorts will enable the directorate to mitigate any impact of particular groups: homeless applicants, temporary accommodation residents, residents on the housing register and council tenants.

In line with council-wide commissioning and procurement guidance, the procurement of our new responsive repair's contracts, and other major contracts, will support the council's equality and diversity commitments.

Adult Social Care:

All commissioning and procurement activity that is carried out for possible new contracts include evaluation around delivering to equality objectives and social value.

All Contracts have standard clauses around the Councils equality objectives and what providers should do to achieve these, which are monitored through contract management.

Equality Impact Assessments are carried out in line with any commissioned activities to support delivering equality objectives. EQIA's are developed using data, feedback and research and are regularly reviewed and updated as projects develop

The service is strengthening commitment to equalities by ensuring that every strategy, delivery plan and staff appraisal has an equality objective linked to it – this will be reviewed in each managers appraisal to ensure that this is done for all staff and reviewed regularly in supervisions.

Children, Young People and Education – Race Equality Review Board

In 2021, we undertook a Children's Race Equality Project through the establishment of a Children's Race Equality Review Board. This was the first of its kind at the Council and was chaired by Lord Simon Woolley. We established this in response to historical complaints of racism and race discrimination in the Children's Families and Education Directorate. Our plan

was to identify key issues of racism and race disparity within the directorate and develop an action plan to implement solutions.

The Board identified a number of initiatives that would support the advancement of race equality in the directorate. The Board also made recommendations to cascade these solutions to the wider organisation.

The Children's, Families and Education (CFE) Race Equality Staff Advisory Group was responsible for being the staff voice and bringing staff views from all service areas to influence and inform the development and implementation of the work of the CFE Race Equality Review Board. It provided advice and constructive feedback to the board on key actions and outputs as well as testing whether immediate actions that derived from the board were having an impact on the ground. A survey was conducted which had a total of 276 responses. A webinar was also held by the Director of Early Help and Social Care and the Director of Education to discuss the survey results and way forward.

The survey found that staff do not feel comfortable having conversations at work about race. There also was a general view that staff do not feel listened to and that senior leadership need to be more accountable.

As a result of this feedback, the department piloted the Safe Space initiative as a means of addressing some of these issues. Safe Space is an initiative run by the organisation Race Equality Matters. The initiative aims to:

- Enable brave conversations
- Facilitate uncomfortable discussions
- Drive meaningful change
- Provide ethnic minority employees with a voice in the organisation
- Ensure senior leaders do not overlook or ignore race as an issue to take action on
- create change in the workplace
- Provide a way to initiate meaningful action on race inequality across organisations

A total of three 2 hour safe space sessions were held, supported by senior leadership. Participants had the option to take time out of session if required. The pilot within CFE is being rolled out across the wider organisation to also address wider concerns relating to

bullying and harassment across all protected characteristics. We are aware that we are on a journey and wanted to bring staff along with us. We created safe spaces that allowed for real raw elements to this piece of work. This saw numerous untailored conversations that gave staff the opportunity to be themselves, be authentic and share their lived experiences as well as how this work can make an impact/difference.

The Children's Race Equality Review Board made six recommendations, which will be incorporated in to the work of the EDI Internal Control Board:

- Keep race on the agenda
- Create more safe space initiatives
- Improve senior representation of Asian, African, African Caribbean staff
- Develop a Race Equality Chamber
- Ensure that the Council intersects race with the wider equality agenda

Guardians' programme

The Council has launched a Guardians' programme to support all staff to feel able to take control of situations that cause them concern in the workplace – such as perceived bullying or inappropriate behaviour. It provides staff with a safe space to confidentially share concerns about behaviour or the culture at Croydon, talk through issues and be signposted to relevant support and guidance by specially trained members of staff. Guardians respect and maintain absolute confidentiality over issues raised with them except in cases in which the issues might amount to a criminal offence. The Guardians' programme complements existing support for staff such as our HR team and policies, our staff networks, Trade Union representatives and our Employee Assistance Programme.

Staff Network Groups: Good Practice Case Studies

Disability Staff Network

2021 to 2022 has been a tough year for the network as working remotely has made it difficult to connect with staff on a personal level. However throughout the year the network has signposted and advised staff on sickness policy queries, EAP, dyslexia assessments and accessibility issues. The network has also engaged with other services in the council by conducting presentations around Disability Awareness. These have voluntarily been undertaken by network members, on top of their working role, as they are passionate about raising awareness in the workplace and promoting equality.

“The proudest moment for the network was chairing our Tea Break focusing on employee’s experiences of working for LBC with a disability or LTHC (long term health condition).

This was a really good chance to connect with senior leaders and highlight the barriers and obstacles that others may not be aware of as everybody’s experience is different. The talk was open and honest, and the network felt that Corporate Management Team (CMT) really want to change the culture within the organisation. We are looking forward to another Tea Talk with CMT regarding working at LBC with a Sensory Impairment.

Going forward, the network is focused on expanding by recruiting more members, increase disability disclosure to enable us as an organisation to better support our employees and understand our staff demographic. Sessions will be held around identifying as a disabled person and how some staff may not deem themselves disabled and the network aims to break down this barrier of participation. The network is aiming for staff to feel they are able to be open and honest about their disability or LTHC without it negatively affecting their role as many feel this will be the case.

Race Equality Network Retrospective 2021

Each year the Race Equality Network creates a retrospective summary of the past years' events and projects, delivered by a small volunteer group made up of executive leads and steering members, in support of staff of Croydon Council's Race Equality Network and allies. This is the networks way of showcasing the wealth of projects that foster a better understanding of the needs and challenges of our Black, Asian and minority staff through their lived experiences. This is done by constructing regular discussions, forums, events, and celebrations – including film and book clubs – that are a great way to network with colleagues in a non-formal environment. The network maintains an ethos that “a strong team is one in which employees work closely together and contribute to the overall quality and success of a business” which includes the network, our allies, the wider community, and the organisation for change to take place.

The network has highlighted a number of successes:

- In support of staff health and wellbeing we held various events that included two sessions (returned by popular demand) from Award-Winning Social Entrepreneur, Claudine Reid MBE on 'How to Take Control' of your life. We already had a forum called Voices, which enable our members to have a safe space to discuss their feelings around the financial crisis and restructures during 2020/2021 and bring in more topical subjects like racism in the media after the Euro Finals. Additionally, we hosted a presentation from representatives of Employment Assistance Program, provide pastoral support and widely sign-posted organisation-wide initiatives like the Guardians Programme and workplace stress support found on the Intranet.
- Lifestyle and self-help topics are so well received that its success led us to host several financial workshops, which included a talk on Money Management with Croydon Credit Union, and a series of 3 events delivered titled 'Financial Focus' with finance & insurance specialist, Chrystal Chaplin-Walsh who then went on to introduce the network to social media and tv sensation, Emmanuel Asuquo. The members could not get enough of these empowerment sessions.
- Our platform success meant that people were coming to us, and we were connected to the Office of National Statistics to collaborate on raising awareness to the more

underrepresented Afro Caribbean Community on the benefits of the 2021 Census survey. We hosted a session that encouraged staff to ask questions and address concerns directly with ONS and understand how they can help themselves to ensure the needs of the community are addressed by completing the survey and being represented.

- In spring we held our very first male only represented discussion, called Hard Truths; Home Conversations. These sessions are tailored to enable interpersonal experiences on hard hitting race topics. The male steering group leads took to the floor to speak on barriers to career progression, role-modelling, media perceptions and mental health in black, Asian and minority ethnic males. Topics were so prevalent that we did not get past the first subject of barriers to career progression.
- With the organisation's introduction of the Tea Break in May 2021, the Race Equality Network hosted the first in the series and focused on "the lived experiences and barrier to career progression" at Croydon Council among the Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff. This received wide recognition of areas for improvement whereby asking that the organisation review policy and practice for Diverse Interview Panels, Recruitment Controls, and the interview processes and ask that they consider career pathway and talent management systems.
- We delivered a series of 7 (4 books and 3 films) coordinated book and film clubs, where the members are invited to vote for their chosen books and films. These sessions are about having a forum for deep and meaningful discussions about our views and connecting with each other over shared experiences. The genres range from history, biographies, fiction and nonfiction, self-help, and really anything else. During these sessions we learn, raise awareness, and build empathy and understanding of our diverse ethnic cultures and lived experiences through the art of storytelling and movie making. Together we read 'Queenie', by Candice Cartey-Williams, 'Why I am no longer talking about race', by Reni Eddo-Lodge, 'Born a Crime', by Trevor Noah and 'The Impressionist', by Hari Kunzru. We watched, American period crime drama, 'Detroit', biopic inspired by Madam CJ Walker, 'Self-Made' and a Christmas musical with an emphasis on black actors and music, 'Jingle Jangle'.

- Collaborative work with the wider community and our counterparts at Croydon University Hospital (NHS), Croydon BME Forum and the Foundation for Mental Health. With them we have marked Windrush Day, South Asian Heritage Month (for the first time) and Black History Month.
- Maintaining an in-work social media platform on Yammer for members only, where we raise awareness of a calendar of memorial and celebratory days that identifies with the community in which we operate which is so much more diverse than we can represent.
- Towards the end of 2021, a new Sponsor, Kerry Crichlow, was appointed

The network seeks feedback from all participants and attendees. Overall, they were 'satisfied' and significantly 'very satisfied' with the quality of events held; zero reports of unsatisfied or very unsatisfied feedback. We have a similar response to members feeling mostly comfortable about asking questions and speaking up at events and feeling welcomed and supported by the group. A handful 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with feeling it was a safe space, details of which would need to be explored.

Over 70 responses were made regarding future events and topics of discussion. Ultimately, participants want more; more speakers, more books and films, more race topics, more lifestyle presentations, more about career development – more voices to be heard.

In 2022 the Race Equality Network will hold elections for the executive team and its steering group. A campaign is underway for a new administration for the network which includes a review of our Terms of Reference, roles, and responsibilities and how we promote expressions of interest to the final vote by all our members. The campaign is planned to promote these roles as a significant contributor to career progression. The network will also encourage and promote group participation and gain more volunteers.

Women's Network achievements 2021-2022

The women's network held several events during the period 2021-2022. These are presented below.

- International Women's Day 2021: The Women's Network held a week of virtual events during the week of 8th March to celebrate women and support the theme
- #ChooseToChallenge: promoting individual responsibility for challenging stereotypes, fighting bias, broadening perceptions, improving situations, and celebrating women's achievements. Events through the week included panels with external speakers, internal female leaders and fun activities (incl. Zumba, Chair Yoga and creative writing workshop).
- Ad-hoc events/ guest speakers: A number of ad-hoc sessions have been held across the year to raise awareness of different topics led by network members, including: a summer celebration networking quiz; a presentation from HR on the Council's workforce gender profile; and group discussion led by a member of the educational psychology team on feminism.
- National awareness days: The network has acknowledged and shared information relating to national awareness days relevant to members, including Cervical Cancer Awareness Week, International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
- Coffee morning spotlight series: Started running a monthly "Coffee Morning Spotlight", shining a light on our female senior leaders and predominantly female teams. In these sessions we hear about their careers, experiences of being women in leadership positions, advice for aspiring female leaders etc. These have been very well received by members.
- Women's Career Progression Tea Talk: Hosted the Tea Talk with CMT in December on Career Progression for Women. The session discussed the challenges for women going into leadership positions, and what development opportunities are offered to women in the organisation. The main outcome of this has been the start of the review of the council's mentoring programme.
- Supporting the local Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) work: A session was held in January by the Council's Strategic lead for Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Modern Slavery, who spoke to members about: how we're tackling VAWG in Croydon; the initiatives being undertaken alongside the Met Police; and how staff can

get involved and support the VAWG work in 2022. There have also been opportunities shared with network members to get involved in, including sharing a 'Safety for Women and Girls in Croydon' questionnaire to help the domestic violence team to help them with their bid for Safer Streets Fund from the Home Office; raising awareness of the Met Police Street Safe initiative; feeding back on the Met Police VAWG Action Plan; and helping the Council's domestic violence service to test the "Ask for Angela" initiative in bars.

- Mentoring programme: following on from the tea talk on Women's Career Progression, the Women's Network has started working with Learning & Organisational Development to review and bolster the Council's mentoring programme. A session is going to be held in March by the L&OD team about the benefits of mentoring and coaching, how to sign up and some positive experiences of those who've done it themselves. Staff will have the opportunity to help shape how the programme could work going forwards.
- Menopause Support Groups: a member of the steering group has continued to hold regular menopause support groups (a sub-group of the women's network) and menopause bitesize training sessions for staff members.
- Menopause Tea Talk: Will be hosting the Tea Talk with CMT in March on Menopause. The session will discuss the symptoms of menopause and why it's important to understand them, and how we can support colleagues experiencing the menopause. A lack of understanding can lead to inadequate support for those experiencing the menopause and can have a negative effect on not just the individual but the wider organisation – resulting, for example, in increased staff absence or even resignations that could be avoided

Working Carers' Network Group

As is the case with other Network Groups, the Working Carers' Network Group provides staff at Croydon Council the opportunity to connect, support one another, discuss issues of

relevance and occasionally socialise. The group moved online in 2020 but is looking forward to restarting face-to-face events in the very near future.

In 2021, the network ran a creative writing competition for carers, from which it had some incredibly powerful and moving experiences shared. The written pieces were shared on the intranet and resulted in some amazing responses. One carer commented:

“must just tell you I have had some really lovely and heartfelt responses from staff reading my story. It seems to have really resonated with some people about their own situations past and present. Another member of staff said it had made her think about a colleague who is in a similar situation and how she must be coping. I was really touched that people took the time to write and tell me. It might not have happened but for the competition so thank you and if it makes just one person be a little more compassionate towards a colleague who is/was a carer, it is a great thing.”

The network tea break event with senior leadership was also a real highlight:

“this really felt like a safe space for our members and all employees with caring responsibilities. Coming together as people in similar situations, finding their voices within the organisation was incredibly empowering.”

The network is in the process of developing a ‘Carer Passport’. A Carer Passport is a record which identifies a carer in some way and sets out an offer of support, services or other benefits in response. This helps to improve and embed identification, recognition and support for carers in their day-to-day working life.

LGBT+ Allies’ Network

2021 to 2022 has been a difficult year for our network members. It has been difficult to increase in person visibility as Pride events were cancelled and flag raising ceremonies to mark awareness days in the LGBT+ Community have been virtual.

In the tough financial challenges facing the council, network members have experienced an increase in negative comments from colleagues because of sexual orientation and gender

identity plus with the decision for the council to withdraw without consultation with network members from the Stonewall Diversity Champion programme there is a feeling amongst members of being afraid to speak out and challenge homophobia, transphobia and biphobia behaviour at work.

The network is very proud of the Tea Break for Pride month in June 2022 where the Chief Executive and members of the executive Leadership team agreed to the following pledges:-

- Agree to educate oneself on issues and challenges faced by the LGBT + community
- Agree to challenge homophobia, transphobia and biphobia behaviour in workplace
- Agree to consider stating pronouns and take the opportunity to explain why you are stating pronouns
- Agree to have an 'open door' policy to listen to concerns from members of the LGBT+ community working at Croydon Council

The virtual tea break was well attended with over 70 staff members joining including the Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive. Following the tea break session there was agreement to encourage staff to add their preferred personal pronouns to our corporate email signature – making it clear how staff would like to be referred to and also shows that staff respect gender identity and choice of pronouns of others.

Throughout 2021 to 2022 the network has continued to arrange a programme of network meetings with guest speakers and opportunity for staff to speak in a safe space. It has marked the following LGBT+ Community National awareness days by flag raising outside the Town Hall and sharing on the council official social media:-

- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia - 17 May
- Pride month – progress pride flag purchased from donations from network members and proudly flown outside the Town Hall (June 2021)
- National Coming Out Day – 11 October 2021

Network members are looking forward to supporting Croydon PrideFest on 14 July 2022 and LGBT+ community events being held at Stanley Arts and the Oval Tavern. National awareness

days will be observed by arranging for the rainbow flag raising outside the Town Hall on the following dates:

- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia - 17 May 2022
- Pride month – June 2022
- National Coming Out Day – 11 October 2021

And for the Trans flag raising outside the Town Hall to mark the following:

- Trans day of visibility – 31 March, 2022
- Trans day of remembrance – 20 Nov, 2022

Work is planned to address the current workplace culture where some network members are afraid to speak out and challenge homophobia, transphobia and biphobia behaviour in the workplace, with a programme of network meetings with guest speakers and opportunities for staff to speak in a safe space throughout 2022/23.

Objective 3. The Council ensures equality training is central to the way we work, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs

As a Council, we strive to ensure that equality training is integral to our work. As a result, we have taken key actions, including:

- Developing on line Unconscious bias training, equality and diversity training as well as Mental Health First Aider training as a consequence of Black Lives Matter.
- Face to face training has been limited due to financial constraints. However, work is being progressed with Beyond Business School (BBS) to train trainers to roll out culture change, including EDI improvements.
- Work is being prepared to roll out the culture change programme which will include EDI understanding and practice improvements.

Case Study: The Resilience Team

On 7th October 2021 the Resilience Team held an engagement event with the Council's emergency response officers (EROs) on diversity and inclusion. When EROs are at the scene of an incident, in a rest centre or coordinating the response behind the scenes in the Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC), they may come into contact with people from a variety of different backgrounds. It's important to ensure that EROs are mindful and provide an excellent quality of care to all of those who are impacted by an emergency. The ERO Engagement Session on Diversity and Inclusion had guest speakers talking about extra steps that can be taken to ensure we're being inclusive when supporting residents whilst responding to an emergency. This included a talk from the Equalities Manager on the importance of EDI, the secretary of the LGBT+ network talking about pronouns and the Chair of Faiths Together In Croydon talking about being mindful of cultural and faith requirements.

Outcome Two: The Council works with residents to better understand our communities

Objectives

1. To continue increasing our network across seldom heard groups.
2. To ensure that information about the Council's work towards tackling inequality is easy to access and understand.
3. To ensure data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services.

Why did we choose this outcome?

The administration's new priorities and methods of operation emphasise the importance of the Council's relationship with citizens, communities, businesses, and other stakeholders. In order to achieve this goal, it will fully engage Croydon people, communities, and partners in its quest to become a more efficient, successful, and financially sustainable council. According to national and local research, organisations and services that do not consider the requirements of seldom heard groups frequently let them down. It also recognises that one of the most important methods to verify compliance with the general equality requirement is to collect and use equality monitoring data.

The majority of the data on equality is based on age, gender, disability, and ethnicity. However, it is evident that we lack information with regard to some characteristics in some circumstances. We are trying to bridge our data gaps in order to improve our understanding of our communities.

Our data on who uses our frontline services, particularly transactional behaviour such as over the counter, over the phone, and on the web, has gaps. We understand the value of having high-quality data and how it can assist in targeting resources and enhance people's outcomes.

Objective One: To continue increasing our network across seldom heard groups

Public Health

We have continued to increase our work across seldom heard groups:

- The Council has expanded outreach to grassroots groups greatly over the past year through the Healthier Communities Together programme. The programme has set up Local Community Partnership that bring together active citizens, local Voluntary and Community Sector groups with the statutory teams and other service delivery organisations.
- Six Local Community Partnership forums have been set up across Croydon and are seeing an increase in the number of groups supporting people from seldom heard groups.
- Active citizens will be supported to harness the ideas and insights of the community to co-produce local health and care services. Decisions on priorities and funding will be taken by the Local Community Partnership on the basis of locally agreed priorities, with necessary approvals from the Local Voluntary Partnership Board. The community is starting to participate and not passive recipients of the local health and care services.
- The Healthier Communities programme has introduced community connectors The Service connects with community and faith groups to help their members access community-level services and activities that will help them maintain independent lives and which help prevent their circumstances deteriorating to a point where they might need higher level health or social care services.

Adult Social Care

There are a range of activities that the service utilise to increase the number of partners and local influencers that represent and /or work with seldom heard groups:

- Our Localities work with One Croydon and our Person Centred good conversations are anchored in our partnership working. An example is the Local Community Partnerships events in Croydon.
- We have regular and lively Provider meetings to ensure a range of voices are heard.
- We have a sub-group of the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Board called the Voice of the People
- Voice of the Resident is a key strand of our new Strategy and we work closely with One Croydon, CCG and community and voluntary colleagues to engage with our residents on a range of topics and to make sure their feedback results in action
- We have partnership boards for Carers, Learning Disability, Autism and Adult Social Care users
- Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to develop their influence engagement and representation in decision making and decision making (Healthy Communities Together)

The service works closely with Health, One Croydon, CCG, and Providers to share data when appropriate.

Objective Two: To ensure that information about the Council's work towards tackling inequality is easy to access and understand.

Adult Social Care

We aim to be open and transparent about what we are doing, the progress we have made as well as the challenges we face. The Council has taken steps to ensure access to and appropriateness of services is monitored regularly. We are working to ensure easier access to translation as well as to accommodate the needs of sight and hearing-impaired staff and members of the public. We will continue to design services that best meet the needs of citizens, where technology is an enabler rather than a barrier to service improvements, and services are a delight for citizens and officials to use. This means prioritising citizen and user needs by using user research and user testing as the basis of all service improvements. This will include mapping of satisfaction data collected broken down by equality groups and vulnerable communities in order to better understand key gaps in provision around accessibility. This information will be analysed, acted upon by services and used to inform equality impact assessments.

We have taken several steps to collect relevant data whilst ensuring data collected is disseminated: easily accessible and understandable.

These include:

- Widened use of social media and use of website. Youth Engagement has an account but also disseminates information to schools and partners.
- The Local Voluntary Partnership form information is translated into different languages to ensure different community groups can access the forum.
- COVID work has extensively reached out to all our residents in different ways.
- Family Hubs bid
- Early Years' strategy

- The Once Croydon team produces monthly newsletters and have just started a Facebook account.
- Information is shared via the GP social prescribers and the Local Community Partnership meetings
- Multi-pronged approach, from a digital perspective, adult social care etc.

To ensure that information about the Council's work on addressing inequality is easy to access and understand, newsletters, social media, and third-party support (such as schools, partners, GPs) to disseminate information have been extensively leveraged. However, there is still a need for a coherent approach for letting people know how they can access their services. Additionally, there is the need for improved access/ community support for people with learning disabilities.

Objective Three: To ensure data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services.

Improving our data collection is a key priority for us and will require a systematic approach. The approach will be guided by a corporate standard of data collection which will be developed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Internal Control Board.

One of the Board's key priority areas is to "*Develop clear metrics and our baseline to be monitored and tracked*". This priority area is responsible for the development of a corporate data collection standard and the development of equality dashboards for the organisation and for our customers.

Our current process of data collection has been inconsistent across departments with some departments performing better than others. We are currently working on culture change in this area, a whole workforce approach will ensure that we improve our standard of data collection and ensure that the change sticks. This involves educating staff on why they need to collect the data and supporting staff to ask customers questions about protected characteristics by telephone, face to face or online at our access points to the Council.

The Council is required to pay due regard to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when exercising their functions. This includes having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as detailed:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. (Section 149(1)(a))
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Section 149(1)(b))
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Section 149(1)(c))

The Public Sector Equality Duty enables the Council to deliver a more responsive and informed service that meets the needs of our customers. As part of our EQIA process, we sign post report authors to the Croydon Observatory for borough wide data. In the absence of service user data, we provide feedback to report authors indicating that the collection of customer data should be included as an action plan item.

Historically we have not routinely collected customer data on sexual orientation from residents or younger people. We are now addressing this data gap along with gaps in respect of other equality groups.

We anticipate that it may take some time for customers to feel comfortable with requests for information that they may perceive as being highly personal. Through clear communication we will explain to customers why we are collecting the data and what the data will be used for. We will also provide assurances that our data collection is for statistical purposes only, in relation to their equality characteristics. We are committed to utilising data to enable the Council to make more effective decisions, giving due regard to all sections of the community.

Public Health

In Public health, we use data (and evidence) extensively, from a variety of sources such as Public Health England Fingertips, ONS, NHS, CCG, and other current soft local intelligence in all our work programmes to influence programme activity, looking at areas (down to Ward level) and people who are most in need of various health issues. We examined a range of data across the protected characteristics such as ethnicity, age, genders, disability etc.

An example of this is our COVID 19 programme, where we analysed epidemiological data across all the wards, and population profiles to influence decision-making and where to locate our COVID 19 testing sites.

Recently, the service has utilised Mentimeter (online interactive survey platform) to gain feedback from young people about vaccine hesitancy.

Housing Directorate:

The directorate's approach to resident engagement has been strengthened and broadened in response to the ARK Consultancy report. In summer 2021, an extensive door-knocking exercise and resident survey was completed to capture tenant satisfaction across a number of high-rise blocks. The survey captured some protected characteristics, including race and age.

The delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan will ensure that all our residents have the information they need in relation to housing, whether that be via the Council's website, telephone, correspondence or in-person. Improvements to our existing 'front door' and telephony system will be key before proactive targeting of groups by protected characteristic can be achieved.

Improvements to data collection will be key to enabling the housing directorate's commitment to equality and diversity. Data on the nine protected characteristics for the following cohorts will enable the directorate to mitigate any impact of particular groups: homeless applicants, temporary accommodation residents, residents on the housing register and council tenants.

Despite all the achievements, there is the need for improvement with regards to collecting personal data from all the residents who have contact with the council. We rely mainly on workforce data for an internal view and the use of published data, such as the Census and projections to determine the makeup of the borough. Census data is out of date, although 2021 census data is expected this year.

Outcome Three: Use partnerships to improve access and meet individual needs as they arise

Objectives

1. Enable better education outcomes by offering support to groups who need it most
2. Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life
3. Services are proactive in targeting group that have accessibility issues as a result of disability, age, mental health, disability, language, digital and/or physical barriers
4. Inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed, specifically for black boys, white working class boys, gypsy Roma and travellers, and those accessing free school meals.

Why did we choose this outcome?

The council is aware there is still some distance to go to eliminate discrimination and reduce inequalities. It faces challenges around deprivation and inequalities in a range of domains relating to income health, education and housing.

Research has found that inequality can develop as a consequence of inter-generational disadvantage starting in early childhood and reoccurring throughout life. We know it is a set of complex needs that put children at a greater risk of repeating a cycle of exclusion experienced by their parents. Inadequate housing, poor diet, lack of access to decent open spaces and many other factors can compound disadvantage for children from less well-off backgrounds.

There are significant inequalities in educational achievement in Croydon. We will work in partnership with all Croydon schools, settings and partners to share best practice and deliver the very best for all our young people and ensure resources are targeted at and focus is on those groups that currently under-perform.

Low-wage and unskilled work, such as part-time, short-term contracts, self-employment, and insecure employment, has increased nationally and locally in recent years. The coronavirus pandemic has imposed extra strains on local communities, highlighting already-existing disparities, limiting prospects for individuals leaving school, and increasing the number of people unable to find paid work. As persons with established work skills and experience re-enter the labour market, vulnerable people such as the long-term unemployed, disabled people, and those with low reading levels are most likely to be left behind. Some of the poorest people frequently lack fundamental knowledge and abilities. As we endeavour to build an inclusive economy, the Council will engage with its partners, including developers, to continue to provide fair employment and excellent work for all, particularly those who are most excluded from the labour market.

The Council has implemented the Good Works Standard, which offers employers a framework of best employment practices and will continue to promote new and rising entrepreneurs from underserved areas.

Objective One: Enable better education outcomes by offering support to groups who need it most

We are committed to supporting all children, young people and families who live, work and play in the borough so that they are able to enjoy equality of opportunity and realise their full potential. In order to achieve this, all practitioners supporting children, young people and their families must work together effectively. Working with children, young people and families, and identifying their needs, requires a shared awareness and understanding of different levels of need as well as the most appropriate support and services.

Our social care and Education staff produce regular schools newsletter content including information and updates in relation to race, racism, and discrimination. Response to concerns raised about diversity within publications.

We have worked with schools to establish a curriculum and change group to better support groups that need it. This includes cross borough engagement and activities and links with London Borough of Hackney on schools pledge.

Objective Two: Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life

The Employment, Skills and Economy Team enables and supports the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the borough, developing an environment that encourages business to invest in our district centres and to employ local people with the right skills. The service encompass the following functions:

Employment and Investment - positioning the borough for growth by creating policy and practice that generates investment and collaboration, creating new jobs in the borough through inward investment and by supporting and working with our existing businesses base and external partners to enable business support that enables economic recovery;

Employment and Skills - linking our unemployed residents into jobs created by regeneration and growth through Croydon Works and other pathways to work initiatives;

Adult Learning - helping our residents move into better paid jobs and out of poverty through bespoke training and support packages, ensuring that our residents have the right skills for employment and life through CALAT (Croydon Adult Learning and Training), ensuring that our schools and colleges are equipping their students with the skills and attitudes that employers want.

Achievements:

- Croydon Works have placed 1,900 people into work & training supporting Croydon businesses with the talent they need.
- Economic Development has delivered £14,488,834 additional restrictions grant funding to 4,991 businesses.
- Working with partners to support the delivery of an externally funded programme of business support activities which include property, legal and Human resources to helping businesses access new markets and innovate in their business.
- CALAT is currently working with 2,274 learners, 4,654 enrolments, delivering 640 courses.

Objective Three: Services are proactive in targeting group that have accessibility issues as a result of disability, age, mental health, disability, language, digital and/or physical barriers

Adult Social Care:

This is integral to the service – the people we work with are mainly 18+ older people, mental health, substance misuse, physical and learning disability, sensory impairment and transitions. The service has a strong network of partner organisations who provide commissioned and voluntary support for these targeted groups.

The Croydon Interpreting service offers support in both interpreting and translations in any language required. We are working to increase visibility of and access to the service both internally and externally. We are championing the use of Easy Read and other accessible formats across the Council and with our partners. Our Sensory Impairment Team champion a range of accessible formats for the people they work with, and we share this across the Division

We design our services around the needs of our residents by using user research and user testing as the basis of all service improvements. We gather quantitative and qualitative data ahead of service design, and for operational day to day work. We work closely with Public Health colleagues, using the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) and other key evidence and research to inform our commissioning and service design. We gather information and routinely seek feedback and insight from residents and people who have used our services in formal and informal ways, for example:

- Carer's Survey
- Domiciliary Care survey
- Working with Croydon Health Watch
- Provider Services and Active Lives
- We are currently developing the Local Account

Children, Young People and Education Directorate

The service places significant importance in the voice of the child and the voice of the parent across our service provision. This has been vital in developing services for all clients, including those with additional accessibility requirements.

Our work with children and families takes into consideration their individual characteristics and these are taken into consideration when we provide services. For example, the social work assessments completed for parents who may have a learning need are tailored and accessible to them.

We commission independent services that provide “advocacy” for children and families (for example Bernardo’s provides support for children we care for, children who are subject to child protection plans etc.), so that their voices are heard

We undertake regular client surveys to ensure we receive feedback from children, parents and carers and understand what’s important regarding support/service.

We have adopted an early years’ strategy which includes priorities aimed at addressing inequalities. The strategy was informed by parent survey and workshops to develop the priorities.

We work with partner organisations to support newly arrived children and young people into education and community resources, including outreach. These particular vulnerable young people have specific accessibility needs, and the Council works quickly to ensure these are understood and to identify immediate needs, including appropriate safeguarding checks.

Most of our outwards facing staff (social workers, social worker assistants, personal advisers etc.) have received training around promoting equal opportunities for service users. The access to systemic training further enhances the knowledge and skills of staff working with a diverse group of residents.

Objective Four: Inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed, specifically for black boys, white working class boys, gypsy Roma and travellers, and those accessing free school meals.

What has happened?

One quarter of children in the borough grow-up in poverty. Child poverty varies significantly across the Borough. Although the overall proportion of children in poverty has reduced, the areas with the highest rates of child poverty have remained the same namely: New Addington, Fieldway, Broad Green, Selhurst and Thornton Heath. Almost four times as many children live in poverty in Fieldway (30%) than Sanderstead (8%).

Food insecurity has increased significantly. The growth of food banks is symptomatic of the poverty some residents face, with new migrants, young people without work, training or financial support from their family, those with mental health conditions, those on low wages and sanctioned benefit claimants among the poorest and most marginalised in the community.

Key Actions

The Council has collaborated with several partners to undertake a number of initiatives and approaches which have contributed towards combating the impact of child poverty. Some of the key actions taken so far include:

- During the pandemic, we were assisting in funding food and activities in excess of £1 million.
- Continued to Improve the implementation and uptake of free school meals, helping thousands of children in the Borough claim free school meals.
- Increased uptake of free childcare provision in the borough.

Whilst significant work has been undertaken to provide accessibility to free school meals, more work is needed to include more schools within the scope of operation. This is still work in progress and not where it needs to be. Some schools do not fall under the jurisdiction of the local authority and some young people who are residents, school outside of the borough. However, some exclusions remain avoidable and there is a long way to go with this outcome.

The number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time has remained fairly stable. There has also been a reduction in youth re-offending rate. Between January 2021- December 2021, there were 31,922 number of crimes (83 per 1,000 persons), with anti-social behaviour (29.7%) and violence and sexual offences (30%) accounting for the highest percentage of crime. Whilst crimes relating to anti-social behaviour in Croydon is higher than national figures (22%), it is lower than that of London (34%). In contrast, crime relating to violence sexual offences are lower in Croydon (30%) compared to 32% nationally.

Outcome Four: People in Croydon are supported to be in good health

Objectives

1. To work with partners to tackle social isolation and bring people together.
2. Work with our partners uses our knowledge of specific health challenges to support improvements.
3. We work with our partners to open the door to health services and support them to make sure residents know where and how to access services.

Why we chose this outcome

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2018 identified a number of significant inequalities in health outcomes in the Borough. Health inequality speaks about differential and avoidable differences in health and wellbeing outcomes amongst people who are otherwise equal.

'Inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in society – in the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. The magnitude of health inequalities is a good marker of progress towards creating a fairer society. Taking action to reduce inequalities in health does not require a separate health agenda, but action across the whole of society'.

Within Croydon we have embraced a preventative model, working with communities at a locality level to reduce the likelihood or impact of a range of issues.

Harms caused by COVID-19 have amplified existing health inequalities, and in some cases increased them. The largest disparity found was age, but the risk of dying among those diagnosed with COVID-19 was also higher in males, than females; higher in those living in the more deprived areas than those living in the least deprived; and higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups. Ongoing effects of the

economic impact of COVID related restrictions are also widening inequalities e.g. by disproportionately affecting workers who are female, young and on low-incomes.

The Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board already has reducing health inequalities at its heart as an overarching theme for the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and in its delivery through the Health and Care Plan.

Objective One: To work with partners to tackle social isolation and bring people together

Significant work has been undertaken to tackle social isolation and bring people together. From targeting youth work to distributing grants to organisations working with vulnerable people over the age of 60 and collaborating with entities to provide welfare calls to residents, the Council is ensuring significant impacts are made where it is needed the most. Our statutory care services do important work, but initiatives like this are a key tool to reach as many vulnerable residents as possible, identifying any additional support that might be needed.

We are working with Voluntary & Community Sector partners to increase the number of volunteers addressing social isolation and support families in the community. Our Localities work with One Croydon and our Person Centred good conversations are anchored in our partnership working. An example is the Local Community Partnerships events in Croydon

Through the Community Fund, the Council commissions Croydon Voluntary Action to provide a volunteers service, as part of the infrastructure support in place for VCS organisations. This matches volunteers with organisations, many of which address social isolation, for example lunch clubs. We continued to encourage Council staff to volunteer on social priorities within Croydon. Many residents are familiar with us already, having built relationships through COVID-19 befriending work. It is great we now can continue this contact with a consistent approach across all partner organisations.

We work with our partners to open the door to health services, and support them to make sure residents know where and how to access services.

A key part of our work is the localities ICN+ and the Integration of Health and Care (ICS), part of this is the 'Talking Points' where residents are supported and signposted to a variety of statutory and non-statutory services that will help them to live independent lives.

The key actions that the Council has taken to deliver this outcome so far include:

- COVID support – funded a number of community grants, to those who are vulnerable and excluded. Befriending services are also supported.
- Council grants to provide welfare checks for elderly residents across Croydon. Asian Resource Centre of Croydon (ARCC), Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (CNCA) and Age UK Croydon will be working together to each provide welfare calls to 500 residents. The joint Winter Check Calls project will focus on people who are known to their organisations but not currently in receipt of statutory council-run adult social care services. Following calls, each organisation will consider necessary onward referrals within the three partner organisations, council, or other sources of support. All 1,500 residents will be contacted by the end of March 2022. Partners have begun reaching out to residents already and are getting a great response from calls.
- The Council continued to support residents with the confidence and access to use the internet, thereby improving social inclusion.
- We worked in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group and GP practices to support outreach services, work within communities to signpost socially isolated people to services and promote online and offline directories of services. This has a positive impact on mental health and social isolation and helped to reduce the use of costly statutory services.

No doubt, more work is required with key strategic partners to address common issues of EDI and isolation. We can learn from each other and improve our practice. Whilst we are making a significant and positive difference when and where it is most needed, more targeted youth work is required.

Case Study: Partnerships for an integrated community - Asian Resource Centre of Croydon (ARCC), Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (CNCA) and Age UK Croydon

The Council partnered with three organisations; Asian Resource Centre of Croydon (ARCC), Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association (CNCA) and Age UK Croydon to facilitate welfare calls for 1500 residents with a focus on isolated individuals without easy access to the Council's services. Entities will individually identify people that are not in receipt of statutory

adult social care services offered by the Council. The calls are intended to check on the safety and wellbeing of individuals, and provides a medium to informally assess individual circumstances, all with a view to providing the required follow up support leveraging Council, organisation or other third-party resources.

Sue McVicker, the Chief Executive Officer for Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association explained that:

“CNCA are pleased to work with partners to call or visit vulnerable adults across the borough, ensuring they are safe and well. By working in partnership, we can fast track anyone we are concerned about to adult social care or for support with getting food, medication, and housing or benefit advice”

The Council recognises the importance of its statutory services. However, this project has demonstrated the importance of support and partnerships to reach the isolated group and bring about the most desirable social impact where it is needed.

The same sentiment was echoed by Ima Miah, chief executive officer for Asian Resource Centre of Croydon who argued that:

“There is incredible human value to a personal call during the winter when elderly people are more likely to be isolated. These calls can identify areas for further support but also provide helpful informal troubleshooting discussions around everyday issue”

The importance of the programme was further highlighted by Susan Underhill, programmes director for Age UK Croydon, who asserted that:

“This programme is providing a timely resource to support older people in Croydon during what is always a challenging winter period. It is helping Age UK Croydon to work with partners to reach out for a friendly, person centred phone conversation to understand individuals’ situations and connect them with support and solutions”.

Overall, the project has demonstrated a positive outlook and targeted the Council’s goals for impact. The project is set to end in March 2022.

Objective Two: Work with our partners and use our knowledge of specific health challenges to support improvements.

We have a statutory public health function, which works across the organisation to focus on improving population health and wellbeing. Improvements in life expectancy and reductions in preventable deaths partly reflect changes in lifestyle over time. Good overall performance however masks significant variation within the borough which continues to be an issue. Outcomes still tend to be poorer in areas of higher deprivation. Lifestyle advice and support is being brought together through the Live Well programme, an integrated lifestyle programme with the overarching aim of reducing health inequalities across the borough.

The Council has established a health and well-being steering group over the past year driving several mental health initiatives. Some of the actions we have taken to achieve this outcome include:

- Mental Health first aid (MHFA) training, mental health first aid champion training, mandatory eLearning on mental health has been on offer for a year. Over eighty individuals attended all the thirteen sessions held between January 2021 and January 2022. Courses such as MHFA, MHFA Refresher, MHFA half day awareness, and MHFA Champions were facilitated to cater to requirements of the target groups.
- We are developing a health and wellbeing strategy for the workforce. This will be interdependent with a new workforce strategy for 2022-2026.

We are updating our public health service plan. The plan outlines all our key areas of health and wellbeing. A brief summary is below:

- Children and Young People - To work strategically with partners to ensure those children's needs are met, also looking at how vulnerable adolescents can be supported.
- Sexual Health - Commissioning and collaborating on universal and targeted services and advice around contraception, relationships, sexually transmitted infections (STI) (including HIV) and abortions across the complex matrix of providers and stakeholders.

- Mental Health and Substance Misuse - Responsible for planning and commissioning substance misuse prevention and treatment services for all ages. This includes harm reduction services such as needle exchange services.
- Healthy Lifestyles - Enable individuals to make healthy choices and give communities the tools to address their own particular needs.
- Health Protection - Work in partnership with the local health, social, public and private agencies to prevent or reduce the harm from infectious disease and environmental hazards.
- Health and Care Integration- One Croydon - Work in partnership to determine the strategic direction for the One Croydon Alliance, ensuring a focus on reducing health inequalities and a population perspective to health management.
- Health Intelligence - Statutory duty to fulfil public health functions by using the best available appropriate health intelligence and evidence.
- Creating, Leading, and Enabling Partnerships & System Leadership - Creating and establishing opportunities for collaborative working by combining the relative strengths of different stakeholders.
- Healthcare Public Health - Providing public health advice and expertise to the CCG as well as the Local NHS- some of this is included in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Croydon CCG.

Objective Three: We work with our partners to open the door to health services, and support them to make sure residents know where and how to access services

We have taken several steps to achieve this objective including:

- COVID Testing service co-located in the Alwynne Club, libraries, fire stations, community centres e.g. Shrublands, scout halls, vaccine sites.
- COVID van to promote testing and vaccination.
- There has been extensive door to door information-giving about testing, vaccination and wider health and wellbeing in high risk and deprived areas – over 127,000 doors knocked on, with 73,000 conversations around testing, 66,000 around vaccines, 22,000 around COVID isolating and 10,000 about other health issues.
- The One Croydon team produce monthly newsletters and have just started a Facebook account. Information is shared via the GP social prescribers and the Local Community Partnership meetings.
- The Community Mental Health First Aiders programme is reaching into community groups who would not normally have access to this type of training. Likewise the newly commissioned trauma informed training. The learning here is that the equal opportunities form needs to be integrated into the training application form, or the data is not sufficiently complete. Over 200 different community groups have been reached through this training. Over 600 people have been trained.
- MHFA Posters and postcards for use by people and groups in the community who do not use social media to let people know about the MHFA training.

It is worthy of mention that since August 2021, we have employed several community assets in tackling this objective. These assets were co-created with Printwell and include:

- Article in Open House
- Tower block posters for communal living

- Headline flyer
- Pavement signage
- 4 page pamphlet
- Wear a face covering poster for businesses
- Safe working in council buildings
- Feedback form
- Online survey (not attached)
- Van wrap (inside back)
- Van wrap (outside)
- Panels for testing screens
- BME Croydon flyer
- High vis jackets