



Communities, Safety and Justice

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Councillor Hamida Ali

March 2018

Latest News

Community Safety

Preventing Knife Crime

Agencies and communities came together for a three-week programme, starting in half term, to raise awareness with young people about knife crime and its impact on the community. The council's Youth Engagement Team worked with the BID, Croydon College, the police, faith groups, the London Ambulance Service, school pastors, Victim Support and Croydon Drop-In hosting a range of events in the town centre – including:

- London Ambulance Service demonstrating how people can help people with a knife injury
- Croydon's Borough Commander working with the council's Youth Engagement Service to run a Q&A titled *Let's Talk About Knife Crime*
- Victim Support, council's Youth Engagement Team, Croydon Drop-In and school pastors all being on hand during the three weeks talking to young people about support available against knife crime
- Police training members of faith groups to conduct weapon sweeps
- Workshop run by ArtHalo to create a temporary wall of anti-knife crime messages
- Croydon College encouraging people to make a personal commitment to stand against violence

During this three-week period, the BRIT School launched their production *You Choose*, commissioned by the Metropolitan Police Service and developed by the school's Community Arts Practice students. It is part of the campaign started by the council, *Choose Your Future* which champions young people and empowers them to make positive choices. *You Choose* is a 40 minute anti-knife crime production and which is being taken to a number of schools in the borough.



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Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime Visits Croydon to Hear about Croydon's Preventative Approach to Tackling Knife Crime

On 16 February Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, came to Croydon to meet with young people, head teachers, youth engagement workers and community organisations to listen to their experiences and perspectives on preventing knife crime. She reported how struck she was that the discussion centred less on enforcement tactics like stop and search and more on the impact of young people's experiences of education.

The Deputy Mayor's visit also coincided with the three-week engagement programme which agencies and community organisations developed and delivered together to talk with young people about their safety and highlight the support available for them. Sophie Linden had an opportunity to spend time in the town centre and to see this important initiative at work.

As a result both myself and Cllr Flemming have been asked to take part in a pan-London 'Justice Matters' meeting focused on Knife Crime on 23 March to share the preventative work underway in Croydon.



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Croydon's Family Justice Centre Marked International Women's Day to Highlight Support for Survivors

Croydon's Family Justice Centre (FJC) provides a range of support for women and others who team is looking for volunteers to offer support to individuals and families who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Key highlights in the last year have been:

- The FJC has supported over 1,000 women in the last year who have faced domestic abuse or
- The FJC has launched a volunteer programme and has already trained 16 people to support clientys through longer term support and guidance.
- 80% of schools and 71% of GP practices have identified anti-domestic abuse and sexual violence leads
- 38 schools have had training on domestic ause and sexual violence
- 25 council staff members (with a further 10 to follow) have undergone extensive training to become ambassadors – supporting colleagues at work

If you, or anyone you know, needs help, or you would like to volunteer, please call the FJC on 020 8688 0100, email fjc@croydon.gov.uk.

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Food Safety

In the last 3 months the food and safety team have carried out a significant number of inspections on food premises and workplaces. The large number of inspections has resulted in a higher than usual level of enforcement activity. The team have:

- Successfully prosecuted Poundworld for a mouse infestation, health and safety at work offences and poor management practice – resulting in a very significant fine exceeding £1m
- Served a health and safety at work prohibition notice which related to the unauthorised use of fork lift trucks and the use of an unguarded high level platform
- Served a number of health and safety improvement notices relating to poor practices and lack of risk assessments
- Dealt with 14 voluntary closures of food premises for the presence of rats, mice and cockroaches
- Dealt with a hygiene emergency prohibition notice for a mouse infestation in a food premises where the owner was uncooperative who was then taken to court and a hygiene emergency prohibition order was granted along with our full costs
- Investigated and responded to over 100 complaints about food matters.

Dog awareness

The council's dog warden and neighbourhood safety officers welcomed all dogs and their owners on Wednesday 28 February at Norwood Grove and on 1 March at Lloyd Park. It was part of a series of events organised by the council's dog warden and is always a chance to find out more about free microchipping, free ID tags, free behavioural and training advice, low-cost neutering vouchers, lost dogs advice, rescue dog adoption, dogs and the law, and advice on dog-related issues.





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Communities

Community Fund Showcase

The Community Fund is a three-year funding programme supporting Croydon's voluntary sector. The Fund is driven around five key themes which were identified by the Croydon Opportunity and Fairness Commission – from young people to social isolation to housing and tackling poverty to developing our voluntary sector. The Fund is made up of 37 contracts with 35 organisations and projects – 15 of which the council had not funded before. On 5 February, providers across the Community Fund came together to celebrate the first year of working as part of the programme.

Over 100 people attended the event which was hugely successful – highlighting the amazing work that is taking place across the Fund. Residents using the services being provided, volunteers and staff members from the organisations involved all told their stories about the impact of their work across our communities.





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The Fund is characterised by great diversity – in terms of scale of activity with the smallest award at £5,00 per year up to £780,000, in terms of activity from supporting our preventative approach to tackling knife crime to supporting our most isolated residents, and in terms of geography with impressive work going on right across the borough.

Croydon Community Grants

Croydon Community Grants is part of the wider Community Fund and provides £100,000 each year to communities across the borough to support local activities which contribute to the outcomes we want to achieve in partnership with communities

We've now funded 83 projects to date and January alone saw 22 bids come forward, with 9 successful in securing funding.

We're supporting a really wide range of projects right across the borough including those working with young people, addressing our health and welling, working with a range of black and minority ethnic communities and disabled people.

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Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)

Each year 27 January marks Holocaust Memorial Day, the day for remembering victims of the Holocaust and more recent genocides. In Croydon, the event was marked on 26 January with a public candle-lighting ceremony in the Town Hall foyer, followed by a civic event in the Council Chamber which was very well attended.

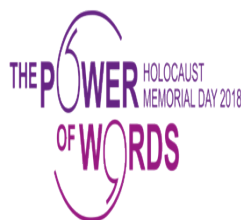
This year's theme was *The Power of Words* and the civic event featured a presentation from Wlodka Robertson about her journey and performances from local schools including:

- Poems & Reflection from Riddlesdown Collegiate
- Post Card Project presentation from St Mary's School
- Presentation from Whitgift School
- Presentation from Oasis Coulsdon

Other activities that took place in the borough included;

- Exhibition for Holocaust Memorial Day in the central library.
- Screening of film in the David Lea Cinema

Holocaust Memorial Day gives us the opportunity to consider how we can stand together to counter intolerance and exclusion today – while honouring the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides and atrocities across the world.





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LGBT History Month 2018

Celebrating the lives and achievements of the LGBT community, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month takes place every year in February. The national LGBT History Month theme for this year was 'Geography - mapping the World'.

This year, the Council worked in partnership with the LGBT community, the Metropolitan Police Service and the NHS to plan and deliver an extensive programme of events which launched on Thursday 1st February 2018 in The Braithwaite Hall, Croydon Clocktower. The launch was in the presence of the Mayor of Croydon and was attended by over 70 people.

The event included performances from local singer Katie Rose, Croydon jazz diva Gill Manly, LGBT cabaret artist Mark Bunyan, and the Rainbows Across Borders Chorus who highlighted issues affecting the community such as oppressive regimes, civil partnerships and marriage, and coming out and acceptance

Other events organised as a part of the programme included a display in the Central Library, a talk by Merrick Badger on The Troubled Life of Peter Wells, and an Exhibition - Reclined Nude Drawings in Croydon Art Store (loft), Whitgift Centre



Croydon Council jumps 95 places in Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

Britain's leading charity for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights has placed Croydon Council just outside its top 100 employers to work for.

Each year Stonewall assesses employers and employees from organisations nationwide on how inclusive their workplaces are for LGBT+ people, and the 2018



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results have placed Croydon Council in the top 30% of the 434 organisations that took part.

The index compiles information about 10 areas of each participating organisation's employment policies and practices, accompanied by an anonymous survey for all staff.

The council has an active LGBT staff network who participate in the annual Croydon Pride event, the capital's biggest such celebration outside central London, which will be held this year on 14 July in Wandle Park. The organisation has also developed a managers' handbook for supporting LGBT staff.

The Stonewall results marked the start of 2018's LGBT History Month which Croydon celebrated with this year's theme of geography by looking at the status of LGBT people around the world.

These results are really encouraging and reflect the success of our LGBT network, whose work alongside our other staff networks both celebrates our employees' diversity and enables us to meet the diverse needs of our residents. These results stand us in great stead to make Stonewall's top 100 next year.

Sign up for this year's Royal Wedding & Big Lunch Street Parties

Croydon residents will once again show their community spirit by hosting street parties on Saturday 19 May 2018 to celebrate the Royal Wedding and on Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 June 2018 for this year's Big Lunch.

In previous years, residents from across the borough have come together to share food and celebrate with their neighbours. Last year, hundreds gathered for street parties across the borough in celebration of the Big Lunch, which also supported the Great Get Together initiative in memory of the late Jo Cox MP.

Keen to see as many people as possible take this chance to get together with their neighbours, the council is doing all it can to make it really simple to set up a Royal Wedding or Big Lunch street party. The costs of closing your road will be covered, and the council will even provide road-closure signs – saving your street more than £1,000.

All it takes is a 10-minute visit to www.croydon.gov.uk/biglunch to apply to hold your street party and we will do our best to help you make your event a success.



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You will just need to say when and where the event is being held, what sort of facilities will be offered (e.g. if you plan to sell alcohol or intend to provide catering from an outside source). For the latest application deadlines, answers to frequently asked questions and a list of available green spaces, visit www.croydon.gov.uk/biglunch

The Big Lunch website – www.thebiglunch.com – also has a useful frequently-asked-questions section, offering advice on a range of issues, including the important subject of public liability insurance. You will also find details of discounts arranged with insurers.

Responding to Social Security Reform

Influencing government policy

Croydon has been instrumental in successfully lobbying Government to exclude Emergency Accommodation Housing costs from Universal Credit and to be paid through Housing Benefit and the abolition of the seven-day waiting period. This policy along with other operational issues relating to the implementation of Universal Credit has resulted in increased rent arrears to £2.8m for 2,235 Emergency Accommodation residents.

From 11th April 2018, all nightly let emergency accommodation will move back under Housing Benefit control. Currently we have around 800 households that may potentially have their housing costs paid through Housing Benefit.

Impact of Benefit Cap

Hundreds of households are affected by the Benefit Cap – and are most likely to be living in private sector rented accommodation. The council has worked with these households in a range of ways to mitigate the impact of the cap – through budget advice, support to draw up action plans and discretionary financial support if necessary.

The Gateway Service held an event at Crystal Palace Football Club on 7 February to support families in bed and breakfast accommodation – supporting nearly 60 people with Universal Credit claims, rent arrears, employment support, Best Start and using the Homefinder and Choice Based Lettings services.

Working with Croydon Plus Credit Union

Since April 2017, the Gateway service has referred 122 residents to Croydon Plus to set up accounts, where they have struggled to open a bank account. Out of these 35, have money being paid directly from the council to pay their rent. 16 loans have



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been provided to help residents consolidate their debt into one place, where in many of cases residents have at least one payday loan. In each case, not only has it reduced their outgoings, it's also allowed them to start saving.

Child Poverty, Financial Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Gateway service is leading on a collaborative strategy that brings together best practice across the council, public health, and voluntary sector partners to tackle the issues affecting Croydon residents. The strategy aims to promote a holistic whole-family approach to housing and financial sustainability, health and wellbeing, income maximisation for every resident including those with complex needs. An internal interactive help tool has been developed that makes clear how to refer to the Gateway service and all available support both internally and in the community – in relation to accessible financial support, child poverty and well-being, debt management, budgeting, immunisation, food and fuel poverty and online skills.

Key outcomes achieved for our residents Apr 2017 to Feb 2018

- 227 residents supported into employment with budgeting (financial stability) and housing sustainability
- 151 residents not in education, employment or training supported into college, university or employment with 40 now part of an apprenticeship
- 2,451 residents helped with discretionary support of £2.7 m, the majority of which was spent in preventing homelessness and moves into the private rented sector
- £11.5m maximised benefit income for residents
- 4,418 blue badges, freedom passes and taxi cards approved
- 2,464 assessments for Housing Benefit supported accommodation
- £14m raised through Financial Assessments for residential and domiciliary care
- 606 vulnerable residents with no recourse to public funds supported with subsistence and accommodation.