



Equality Annual Report 2024



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Foreword

By Executive Mayor Jason Perry

As the Executive Mayor of Croydon, I am delighted to introduce this year's Equality Annual Report on the Council's Equality Strategy 2023-2027.

One of the things that makes me so proud to be the first directly elected Mayor of Croydon, is our strong diversity and our heritage.

That's why I refreshed our Equality Strategy last year, to ensure it aligns with my vision for Croydon as a place where residents thrive, diversity is celebrated, and services are delivered with inclusivity at their core.

Working both with, and for, our diverse Croydon communities is at the heart of all that we do as a Council, and this report showcases the breadth of that work, marking our first annual progress update in delivering this Strategy.

This past year has seen significant achievements; Despite our financial challenges, the Council was able to celebrate its year as the London Borough of Culture, through working closely with our community partnerships, showcasing over 200 events and engaging 104 schools and 14,000 young people, whilst remaining within budget.

Improvements to our Equality Impact Analysis process ensure this is factored into all the decisions that I take as Executive Mayor. Work such as our progress on the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan, our recognition as a Dementia Friendly borough, or our new Strategy for Care Experienced Young people, all underscore my commitment to listening to Croydon and to ensuring all communities are included in the work that we do.

High quality development programmes for Croydon staff also ensure we champion our own workforce and that we are setting an example as one of the major employers in the borough. As a Council, we remain committed to the George Floyd Race Matters Pledge and the Croydon Equality Pledge, whose principles are embedded across the work of this report.

It is only through working together and championing the diverse voices of our communities – which are what make Croydon so great – that we can restore pride in our place and make Croydon the best place it can be.



**Mayor Jason Perry,
Executive Mayor of Croydon**

Introduction

By Councillor Andy Stranack

Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture.

The Equality Strategy 2020-24 was updated last year to reflect the new political direction of the Council; refreshed for 2023-2027, it builds on the foundations of the 2020-2024 Strategy, whilst aligning more closely with the Mayor's Business Plan and embeds initiatives the Council has introduced since 2021

The Strategy also reflects the unprecedented financial challenge facing the Council and the new direction set out in the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-26 to transform it into one which balances its books, listens to residents and delivers sound and sustainable local government services.

Our focus is on ensuring that the objectives set out in the Equality Strategy align closely with the Mayor's Business Plan and will work to make Croydon a place of opportunity for our staff and for our residents, where everyone has the chance to thrive. We are keen to champion and celebrate the diversity of Croydon, recognising that this will be essential to restoring pride in Croydon.

This report takes stock of the first year of the newly updated Strategy. It is a four-year Strategy; though much has been achieved in year one, further progress will continue in the years to come.



Councillor
Andy Stranack

100 FACES OF CROYDON
A community-led project by London Mozart Players

Scan the QR code to see all 100 Faces

THIS IS CROYDON
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

London Borough of Culture is a Mayor of London Initiative.

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Photography by Vipul Sangoi

OVERVIEW

Croydon’s Executive Mayor Jason Perry has delegated the monitoring of the Equality Strategy to the newly refocused Workforce Equality Diversity and Inclusion (WEDI) board. Meeting monthly, this board, with officers from all parts of the Council, aligns with the Council’s long-term cultural transformation to create a fully inclusive work environment.

At each meeting, the Board reviews progress on the Equality Strategy, monitoring key staff metrics such as demographic information disclosure rates, recruitment and retention stats, and pay gap reports. Monthly ‘deep dives’ focus on various areas covered by the Strategy, including tackling violence against women and girls, the reciprocal mentoring scheme, and the new equality impact assessment (EQIA) model.

Elected members are involved through regular Mayoral, Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet briefings. This Annual Report, documenting the Council’s progress, is presented to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee, Cabinet, and Council.



This report sets out the range of achievements and progress which has taken place over the last year. Some of the highlights include:

- Croydon celebrated its time as the London Borough of Culture. Over the last year Croydon has showcased the best of the borough, from award winning theatre such as Recognition, celebrating the life of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, to local concerts and amateur arts groups bringing their communities together. Council staff have volunteered, helped deliver events and even showcased their own creative talents at numerous events across Croydon. There have been over 515,000 audience members, 200+ events, 14,000 opportunities for young people and 104 Croydon schools taking part. The Council now seeks to continue working on the legacy of the year, and supporting Croydon’s creative industries and residents to make Croydon the best place in London for culture and art to grow and thrive.
- The Council continues to champion staff and their achievements. This year we held our Staff Awards for the first time since the pandemic. The awards, supported by external sponsorship, celebrated the dedication and hard work of people right across the Council. The first Croydon Young Staff Network awards ceremony took place in October, recognising and celebrating the achievements of young staff (under 35) and young people in the community. The Council’s Long Service Awards recognised those who have dedicated more than 20 years working for Croydon.



- The Council recognises the significant value added by its staff networks, who have hosted regular ‘Tea Talks’ across the year – including from the Disability staff network, the Mental Health and Wellbeing staff network, the Race Equality Network, and the Working Careers network. These sessions are designed to be interactive and discussion led, giving staff a chance to engage with colleagues and senior leaders on issues of importance to workplace wellbeing and inclusion.

OVERVIEW CONTINUED...

- The Council is committed to staff development and has introduced Black on Board, an in-depth development programme designed to support Global Majority staff into board positions, which is showing great early success. The Council has also brought back its Women's Leadership Programme.
- Based on the feedback received in developing this Strategy, the Council is focusing more on supporting wellbeing inside and outside of work and have created new wellbeing profiles. This model ensures that staff can have their needs met at work, including any reasonable adjustments, or flexibility required owing to external caring responsibilities, without needing to repeat this information to any new line managers.
- The Council uses the London Councils job evaluation scheme which has in-built appeal rights, with the trade unions involved at the appeal hearing, which manages the risk of barriers to pay discrimination claims on the grounds of ethnicity or disability. The Council operates on full transparency and has reported on ethnicity, disability and gender pay gaps since 2019. Reports on gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps are published on the [Council website here](#).
- The Council has launched a new and improved Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process. Undertaking good quality EQIAs in Croydon helps the Council to meet its legal duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty and enables early thinking in decision making about the impact of decisions on a range of different groups.
- This year's [Director of Public Health report](#) focused on the health experiences and inequalities within Croydon's LGBTQ+ community. The report highlighted challenges Croydon's LGBTQ+ community faces, whilst celebrating the LGBTQ+ community and what is being done in the borough to support them.
- Our '[Future Croydon](#)' plans detail our aim to put our residents first. Our aim means the Council will: engage with and listen to residents, enabling them to be heard on matters that impact them; provide services in an accessible way with excellent customer care; empower residents and communities to help themselves and their neighbours; and work with partners including voluntary, community and faith sectors to transform services for vulnerable residents.



Photography by Glenn Foster

OUTCOME ONE

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

The Council is undergoing significant change, and the Future Croydon transformation plan focuses on Our Council, Our Residents and Our Place.

It sets out the Council’s commitments to transform how the organisation engages with residents and communities, provides a customer experience that is seamless and hassle free whilst also significantly reducing operating costs.

Over the last year, the Council has continued to proudly recognise the diversity of staff and residents through designing and delivering multiple apprenticeship programmes, celebrating key achievements through Staff Award services, the dedication to Equalities and the Council’s George Floyd Race Matters pledges and the creation of our new workforce EDI board.

The new transformation plan will provide effective data and digital business processes and systems that streamline the experience for staff and residents. The information will be used to baseline the Council’s position and track progress includes the 2023 residents survey and the 2024 staff surveys.



Overview

RAG	Overall, there are 43 actions which were agreed under outcome 1.
Complete	16 actions have been marked as complete. For some actions that are completed, work will continue over the course of the 4-year Strategy but the actions to enable that work have been established and embedded.
Ongoing	26 actions are in progress and further work to complete them over the course of the 4-year Strategy is ongoing. By the end of the 4 year Strategy they will be marked as complete.

Objective 1:

The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Ensure the Council’s Equality Impact Assessments are data and evidence driven.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>An EQIA is a tool used to help decision makers work through the impact any decision they are taking might have. The Council has updated and improved its EQIA process based on the following principles: a good EQIA should add value to the work of its author; it should help decision makers to identify and take early steps to mitigate against potentially negative outcomes of what they are proposing; or, give them an indication of where they may need more information in order to understand the impact better. It should also enable them to monitor impact as the policy or change is implemented, and ensure the Council works in as fair and as equitable a way as possible.</p> <p>This new process has been created in consultation with elected members and informed by legal advice and best practice from other councils.</p> <p>The new EQIA process should allow decision makers to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of proposals on the Council’s delivery of the PSED; • the impact of proposals on different protected groups; • the evidence they have available to inform the above; • where they need more information; • where they can see a likely impact, what they can do to mitigate this; • whether the proposal should continue or needs further consideration; • if elected members have the full picture on what they are agreeing to. <p>As part of this, a new template incorporates the Council’s stated commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embedding anti-racism in our practice; and, • ensuring understanding of the protected characteristic ‘Gender Reassignment’ is in line with current case law, across the Council. <p>Guidance, alongside the new template, encourages authors to draw upon all available evidence in informing their conclusions. Training and support are available to help support this process.</p> <p>The EQIA process will continue to be kept in review.</p>

Objective 1:

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Action	RAG	Work to date
Ensure that Council contracts comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.	Ongoing	<p>The Council ensures that all contracts adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty. This is done through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Procurement Processes: All procurement activities are conducted with a focus on promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. This includes rigorous assessment to ensure suppliers and contractors comply with PSED requirements, and contract strategy and contract award reports are required to consider equalities implications as part of a governance approval process. • Training and Awareness: Training is provided for staff involved in procurement to ensure they understand and implement the principles of equality and diversity in all contractual agreements. • Partner Engagement: The Council actively engages with diverse communities and partners to gather feedback and ensure our contracting processes are inclusive and equitable. • Social Value: The Council is working to leverage greater social value from its contracts, which in many cases will have a positive impact on Croydon’s communities.
Encourage other organisations to adopt the Equality Pledge and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge.	Ongoing	<p>A George Floyd Race Matters workshop took place in October 2024. Around 30 community partners attended the event and took part. The purpose of the event was to reconfirm a joint commitment to the pledges, to talk about the progress made to date on their delivery in respective organisations, and to explore how partners could work together to continue to embed the principles of the pledges in Croydon. Participants at the event agreed a number of actions to take forward, including ensuring there is a continued forum for knowledge sharing.</p>



Photography by Glenn Foster

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Action	RAG	Work to date
Promote equality of opportunity for individuals of all protected characteristics by recognising and promoting significant celebrations and awareness days and ensuring that workplace practices do not discriminate against any groups.	Ongoing	<p>The Council celebrates Croydon’s diversity and raises awareness about issues in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea Talks: The Tea Break initiative provides an opportunity for all staff to come together to talk and listen in a safe environment on issues that matter to them, with a focus on equality. Through these conversations the honest voice and feelings of the Council’s workforce can emerge, and issues can be addressed. This is a key component in raising awareness of issues affecting our staff. Topics to date have included: supporting staff with disabilities, mental health and being a working carer. • Staff awards: The Croydon Council Awards and Long Service awards are now both back-up and running, recognising great service, hard work and celebrating staff achievements. This year the Council celebrated the Croydon Young Staff Network Awards, which recognises a dedicated Diversity Champion – an award aimed at recognising an individual who has championed diversity in any form within the Council and the wider community to recognise and celebrate the diversity of the Council’s workforce. • Flag-raising throughout the year: Croydon’s Civic Mayor raises the flag to celebrate a wide diversity of different events. This includes Pride, Windrush Day, Black History Month, LGBT History Month, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and a range of Commonwealth independence days, amongst others. • People and Culture Transformation Strategy: One of the key pillars of our current Strategy is to “Build an equality driven, diverse and inclusive workplace”. This underpins a number of the initiatives detailed in this report, in particular as a key thread throughout our staff training offer.
Ensure that every new strategy, service plan and staff appraisal has an equality objective linked to it and reflects our commitment to anti-racism.	Complete	<p>Service plans are compulsory for all parts of the Council and our Service Plan template, which all staff must use, contains a dedicated equality section.</p> <p>For 2024/25, it was also agreed that a standard equalities objective is included in all staff appraisal objectives. The updated appraisal guidance states that all Directors, Senior Managers and Managers have a series of five core objectives that they must adhere to, which are designed to guide the direction of objective setting across the entire organisation – one of these is dedicated to a commitment to EDI principles.</p>

Objective 1:

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Action	RAG	Work to date
Develop a culture in the Council which puts equality at the centre of service delivery through delivery of the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-26.	Ongoing	<p>Equality is a key component of the Council’s People and Culture Transformation Strategy. This four-year Strategy aims to enable the delivery of the Mayor’s Business Plan and the delivery of the strategic objective: ‘A transformed Council listens to residents and delivers good services’, specifically priority four to ‘Develop a workforce which respects and delivers for Croydon’s diverse communities’. The Council recognises that developing the right culture is essential to delivering the necessary change that sustains transformation and workforce improvement and is something that is raised repeatedly by staff and members in focus groups, networks and through general discussions and feedback.</p> <p>The delivery of this Strategy is also monitored through the WEDI Board as described in the foreword of this report.</p>
Develop a three-year partnership plan to tackle violence against women and girls.	Complete	<p>Earlier this year, the Council asked residents who have used domestic abuse and sexual violence services in the borough to give feedback on the support available through a new survey. The feedback gathered from this survey was used to develop a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) action plan, which was agreed by Cabinet on 24th July 2024. This plan outlines how the Council will work with partners including the police, health, education and social care to provide the right support, at the right time, to women and girls at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and VAWG in Croydon.</p> <p>The plan also highlights how the Council and its partners will be addressing a wide range of gender-based violence – harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender – including things that can be done to make women feel safer on streets and transport in the borough. Opportunities to work with communities to raise awareness and promote support within key areas such as schools and GP surgeries will also be included.</p> <p>The Council is also focusing on delivering specific female outreach in the town centre. The aim is to work with women and girls at risk of entering the criminal justice system by engaging and steering young women away from crime.</p>

Objective 1:

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Action	RAG	Work to date
Develop a youth safety plan with partners and young people to reduce serious youth violence and exploitation.	Complete	<p>The Council has developed a Youth Safety Delivery Plan 2023-26 that focuses on keeping children and young people safe on the streets of Croydon. The plan will crucially be delivered by working in partnership with children, young people, and young adults, communities and families, and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>This plan will achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer young people being injured on our streets year on year. • Fewer young people entering the criminal justice system. • Young people feeling safer in Croydon year on year. <p>The Council has secured £165,000 through the government’s Safer Streets Fund to tackle crime in the town centre. This funding will be used for projects aimed at reducing personal robberies, knife crime and violence in the town centre.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work with its community partners to deliver outreach sessions that will intervene with young people who are most vulnerable to offending and criminal exploitation.</p>
Develop with our community partners a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024-2028 as well as a financial inclusion strategy for Council tenants.	Complete	The Council has produced the 2024-29 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which has incorporated the views of over 300 residents. The strategy sets out the Council’s approach towards tackling homelessness and rough sleeping between 2024 and 2029.
	Ongoing	Work on the financial inclusion strategy is ongoing.



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Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>As part of London Borough of Culture, have a cultural programme that reflects Croydon authentically, is accessible to all and highlights communities that have been under-represented through ways such as film screenings and museum exhibitions.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>London Borough of Culture put our borough’s unique identity, diverse communities, heritage, culture and creativity front and centre through a range of events, which is captured in the London Borough of Culture Impact Report.</p> <p>The project team were able to turn the This is Croydon brand into an opportunity for inward investment, emphasising the creation of a lasting legacy and celebrating Croydon’s creativity from the grassroots level upwards; supporting local talent, and working closely with Croydon’s established and diverse cultural sector.</p> <p>London Borough of Culture saw festivals attended by tens of thousands of people across the borough and many events celebrating Croydon’s fantastic diversity. For example, the ‘Caribbean Influencers’ exhibition at the Museum of Croydon shone a light on the stories and influence of Croydon residents who have shaped the borough through their Caribbean roots, but are often uncredited or underrepresented.</p> <p>Across the year of celebrations, the London Borough of Culture project managed to stay within budget whilst delivering a wide range of cultural experiences, celebrating Croydon’s diversity and building a lasting legacy.</p> <div data-bbox="748 847 1962 1241"> <p>OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 114 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS (Shaped This is Croydon, 85% Croydon-based) 2,750+ ARTISTS AND CREATIVES (Involved in the programme) 8 GIANT PUPPETS (Representing Croydon's Public Space) 92% CROYDON SCHOOLS (Engaged with the programme) 655,000 AUDIENCES (30,000 in-person and 295,000 digital) 5.1M PUBLIC ART VIEWS (Out-and-about around the borough) 1,071 VOLUNTEERS (With around 15,000 hours of time donated) 11.6M VIEWS OF MEDIA COVERAGE (From 277 pieces of coverage, 95.4% positive) 60 GIRAFFES (Decorated by local artists and communities) 16,275 OPPORTUNITIES TAKEN UP BY YOUNG PEOPLE (To develop skills) 5 THINGS TO DO PER DAY (As an average across the year) 18 SHEEP & SHEPHERDESSES (As part of Rural Croydon) </div> <p>Following on from Croydon’s year as London Borough of Culture, Croydon Loves You is the Council’s health and wellbeing micro grant programme that supports people’s wellbeing and addresses health inequalities in the borough of Croydon. The 12 grants, between £300 and £1,200, allowed grassroots organisations and individuals to try new ideas, from a silent retreat for women to gardening for elders. It also allowed new groups to manage a grant for the first time, building skills. Twelve projects were funded between February and March 2024, which included zine-making for neurodiverse young people, community gardening and music sessions for refugee communities.</p>

Objective 1:

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Action	RAG	Work to date
Refer the Equality Annual Report for discussion at Full Council each year to ensure that progress delivering the strategy is visible and accountable to councillors and the community.	Ongoing	This report forms part of the commitment to update Full Council yearly on the progression against the four-year Equality Strategy, ensuring this is visible and accountable to our communities. This report is due to be considered at Full Council in December 2024



Photography by Apsara Arts

Objective 2:

Continue to increase our network across groups that are underserved

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Establish and embed effective arrangements for participation to ensure that the voice of the child and the voice of the parent/ carer informs service delivery improvement.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Croydon Care Experienced Young People Strategy 2023-25 is underway. This strategy relates to Care Experienced Young People, those preparing to leave care, and 16-18 years who have left care and continue to be entitled to access services up to the age of 25 years. The voices of Croydon’s care leavers and children looked after have shaped the Council’s promise to provide children and young people in care with stable and loving homes and support them during and after care to grow into happy and successful adults. The priority areas are; housing, education, employment and training, permanence stability and health and transitioning into adulthood have been highlighted by children and care-experienced young people as areas for the Council to improve.</p> <p>Young people will continue to be involved in shaping the services they receive, advising and challenging the Council and partners on its delivery and progress. Progress will be overseen by a new corporate parenting board, co-chaired by young people and supported by young ambassadors, who will influence the agenda and activity to keep the focus on what really matters to them and their future.</p> <p>To address the priority placed on housing by care experienced young people, the Council has created a shared protocol between Children’s Services and Housing. Updated this summer, this sets out an improved pathway for young people as they move into independence. Based on their feedback, it recognises the need for support to ensure that young people transitioning to independence have the necessary skills to live independently and are provided with safe, affordable and suitable homes.</p> <p>Alongside this, at the Cabinet meeting in October, the Council agreed to enter into lease arrangements for an improved accommodation and support scheme for Care Experienced Young People at 90 Central Parade in New Addington. Once developed, the Council will work with YMCA who will manage the accommodation whilst delivering onsite necessary support and care. This project is part of an overarching approach to realising a significant improvement in the Council’s commitment to ensuring our young people have the best start in their transition into adulthood.</p>

Objective 2:

Continue to increase our network across groups that are underserved

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Co-design new resident voices model for adult social care to enable people with lived experience to contribute to policy making, commissioning and service delivery.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>In Adult Social Care and Health (ASC&H), the resident voices model continues to support development of the Strategic Managing Demand programme and wider improvement work, including social work practice and commissioning of new models of care and services. Where there is service or policy change, it will include an expectation of proportionate co-production and engagement with residents, carers, staff and partners.</p> <p>Below is an overview of the work the Resident Voices group have been involved with this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting a ‘Strategic Delivery Partner’ for Croydon’s Adult Social Care and Health Directorate – Nov. 2023. • Testing the updates to the Adult Social Care and Health section of the Croydon Council website – Jan. 2024 (Some group members took part in 1-1 Testing Sessions). • Strategic Delivery Partner, (‘Newtons Europe’), confirmation and update – Feb 2024 • Update on the Peer Challenge report – May 2024 • Update on the work that Newtons (‘Newton Europe’) are doing as the Council’s Strategic Delivery Partner – May 2024 • Feedback on the new Resident Feedback Form for operational colleagues to leave with residents after a visit – July 2024 • Invitation to be part of a workshop to develop micro-enterprises (small businesses) across Croydon – Sept. 2024
<p>Ensure service user surveys contain ‘how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the Council listens and acts on your feedback’.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>As part of our Customer Experience Programme, a range of steps have been taken to ensure customer feedback is routinely collected and is used to inform service improvements. As part of this, a new customer satisfaction tool is in development for use in our Customer Contact Centre to measure performance.</p>

Objective 2:

Continue to increase our network across groups that are underserved

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Review the Council’s corporate approach to community engagement, to ensure that it is effective in reaching all communities including minoritised groups and promotes a culture of sustained and equitable engagement and participation within all areas of the organisation.</p>	Ongoing	<p>The Council has set up a Community of Practice looking at our approach to Community Engagement across the organisation. This is using the Local Government Association (LGA) definition which states that engagement covers: <i>“Anything that creates a stronger two-way relationship between Council and the community. This runs from formal consultation to more deliberative and informal listening exercises. It can include co-production, crowdsourcing, events and public meetings.”</i></p> <p>The group is currently exploring a range of key activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed consultation and engagement guidance for the whole Council. • Mandatory training for all officers involved in consultation and engagement. • Ensuring regular resident surveys that are representative of all Croydon’s communities. • Setting up a representative citizens panel as a resource for the whole Council to ensure that we are regularly hearing a range of voices. • Designing our consultation and engagement materials in a way that is accessible. • Tailoring activities to different communities and actively targeting those who are underrepresented in consultation and engagement.
<p>Actively listen to and take account of resident feedback, give guidance to services on their consultations and engagements, and introduce a resident survey.</p>	Complete	<p>In 2023, as part of the Executive Mayor’s commitment to listen to residents, the Council commissioned an independent research company, DJS Research, to carry out the first residents’ survey in several years. The survey is based on industry best practice and the questions were developed in line with the LGA guidance to enable benchmarking against other councils.</p> <p>Between September 2023 and December 2023, the survey asked 1,694 residents questions to measure resident satisfaction with the Council and local services, and perceptions of the borough. Participants interviewed were carefully monitored to ensure a representative sample of Croydon’s population.</p> <p>The survey findings were published in January 2024. Residents’ views from the survey are now helping to inform the Council’s plans to improve local services. Another survey is planned for 2025 to track performance over time.</p> <p>You can read the Cabinet report and the survey results.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69% were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. • 78% of residents feeling strongly that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood, • 82% saying that the local area is a place, where people from different backgrounds get on well together, • 88% of Croydon residents report feeling safe in their local area in the daytime and • 61% report feeling safe in the evening. <p>The Community of Practice detailed above is now working to ensure this feedback is embedded into all work across the Council.</p>

Objective 2:

Continue to increase our network across groups that are underserved

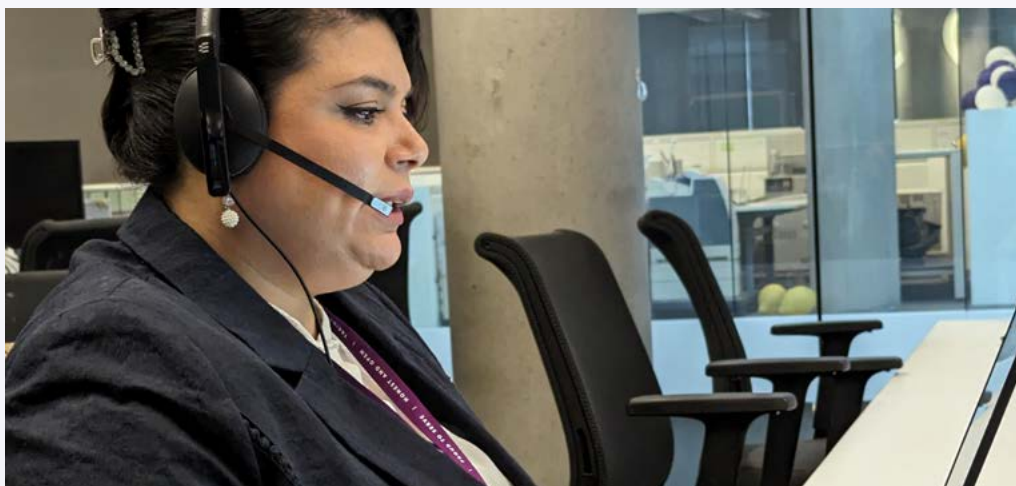
Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Hold regular question time sessions with the Executive Mayor around the borough.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Executive Mayor holds regular Question Time sessions across the Borough, these have already been held in neighbourhoods including South Croydon, South Norwood, Sanderstead, New Addington, Crystal Palace, Norbury, Purley, and Waddon.</p> <p>The sessions are designed to fulfil the Executive Mayor’s promise of listening to residents and addressing their concerns, with further sessions planned. Topics frequently discussed at these events range from street cleaning and community safety to housing, the town centre regeneration, and the Local Plan, reflecting both specific local issues and broader concerns.</p>
<p>Ensure formal consultations and service user surveys collect data on protected characteristics of respondents and use this data to identify and target improvements to services.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Council ran over 200 surveys throughout the year to gain feedback from residents on a range of different services. Surveys were hosted on the Council’s Get Involved website and services were supported with advice and guidance on their consultations and engagement to provide quality assurance.</p> <p>All of the Council’s engagements collect data on respondents, and this is used to understand how particular concerns may be linked to different populations and their needs. As mentioned above, the Council is further improving its corporate approach to engagement.</p>



Objective 3:

Data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services

Action	RAG	Work to date
Support Council staff to improve the collection of accurate, complete and up to date equality data about the Croydon population and Council service users.	Ongoing	<p>The Croydon Observatory provides access to data and information about the Borough of Croydon. It is an information sharing, mapping and reporting website that can be used by anyone. Croydon staff can use the data to inform their decision making from a range of sources, such as the Census 2021, Borough Profile, Index of Multiple deprivation etc.</p> <p>The observatory has eight main themes where data is grouped as follows: population, crime and community safety, economy and employment, housing, children and young people, deprivation, health and social care and environmental. There are also pages dedicated to the nine protected characteristics as identified in the Equalities Act 2010 and each page provides specific data relating to the areas. The exception to this is data around pregnancy / maternity which is not readily available. Regular training sessions are held for staff around the use of the Observatory and the data within it.</p> <p>To draw on a further example from around the Council; Adults Social Care and Health are undertaking an audit of equality of access to services, including ensuring that those coming through the Front Door are being given access to services like advocacy, interpreters, and braille.</p> <p>The new Data Insight Academy apprenticeship is also designed to qualify colleagues to source, format and present data securely in a relevant way for analysis. It has been launched in CYPE with over 30 apprentices and is now being rolled out across Adult Social Care, and Health (ASC&H) and hopefully the whole Council going forward.</p>



Objective 3:

Data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services

Action	RAG	Work to date
Use equality data and information intelligently to inform priorities and policies, as well as target interventions and resources.	Ongoing	<p>The Council’s new and improved approach to EQIAs is detailed above and this is a key way to ensure equalities information is informing all of the Council’s decision making.</p> <p>There is also specific work taking place in key service areas to improve the Council’s data quality. The Council are using Power BI to enable better visualisation of data from around the Council. Visualisation of areas such as workforce diversity data and diversity trends makes this information easier to analyse, and to draw insights from to inform the Council’s work.</p> <p>The Council has also now implemented the new NEC Housing System which creates automated, visual reporting to support business decision making. It provides operational, management reports and dashboards for the Housing Directorate, enabling the Council to deliver excellent customer services through multiple channels. NEC can also be used remotely and will store all of the Council’s resident data in one place, helping teams work more efficiently. Residents will be able to access housing related services through one website – Housing Online, making it easier for people to find and access support when they need it. The data insight helps the Council to understand our residents and their homes as well as providing customer access to information 24/7.</p> <p>Additionally, the Oracle Improvement Programme is well underway. Following a review by Oracle in 2023, considerable work has been undertaken to expand on the recommendations and develop detailed business cases for each of the key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance (including EPM) • Procurement • HR (including establishment and recruitment) <p>The plans focus not only on utilising the Council’s core systems to provide a single view of information in a simple way, but also enhancing the user experience and developing fit-for-purpose processes allowing the Council to better understand our staff data and baseline. This will enable staff to better inform and target work around equalities.</p>
Adopt gender as a local characteristic to ensure that we continue to hear the voices of people who identify differently from their sex identified at birth. EQIAs to consider both sex and gender separately.	Complete	<p>The updated EQIA guidance detailed above recommends that a more holistic understanding of gender identity is captured within any analysis provided under the protected characteristic ‘gender reassignment’. This ensures Croydon Council is consistent with current case law in this area. There continues to be a section for ‘sex’, as designated in the Equality Act.</p>

Objective 4:

The Council’s workforce reflects Croydon’s diverse communities at all levels

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Support Council staff to share their equality data to improve the disclosure rates by increasing understanding of how the Council use it to drive positive change.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Council has worked closely with its staff networks, particularly the Race Equality Network (REN) to improve disclosure rates. The disclosed Global Majority staff in the Council overall is now at the same level as residents (52%), with White staff at 48% as of March 2024.</p> <p>Non-disclosure has continued to reduce for all protected characteristics from 2023 – 2024 with an average reduction of 3%.</p> <p>However, non-disclosure varies for different protected characteristics – as of September 2024 it was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity: 20% • Disability: 21% • Sexual orientation: 29% <p>The new and improved recruitment processes, supported through better back-end systems will seek candidates’ protected characteristic details from the start, which will help to improve disclosure rates for the candidates, and for those that are successful when they become employed.</p> <p>The Council will to continue to work with staff networks and managers to improve this.</p>
<p>Develop annual performance indicators to measure recruitment, learning and development, career progression and employee relations, analyse and publish data and take action to address identified trends.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>A range of reports on workforce indicators are produced on a regular basis including the annual workforce report, equalities profiling of the workforce by grade and protected characteristics, employee relations casework (discipline, grievance, poor performance by protected characteristics), staff sickness levels, and data on diverse interview panels.</p> <p>These are reported regularly into the WEDI Board (detailed in the foreword), with any concerns escalated to the Corporate Management Team. Such reports regularly result in concerted action to tackle arising issues.</p>

Objective 4:

The Council’s workforce reflects Croydon’s diverse communities at all levels

Action	RAG	Work to date
Publish an annual pay audit by gender, disability and ethnicity and implement an action plan to reduce the gaps.	Ongoing	<p>The Council operates on the basis of full transparency and has reported on ethnicity, disability and gender pay gaps since 2019. Reports on gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps are published on the Council website here.</p> <p>This is the third year in a row that the mean and median gender pay gap have been calculated at 0%, which indicates that there is no difference between average pay for both men and women in the Council.</p> <p>At the last report, both gender and disability pay gaps were at 0% for most calculations and the ethnicity pay gap has reduced for the median calculation (by 0.1%). The ethnicity pay gap is below the London average gaps which are currently 11.5% (mean) and 8.6% (median). Figures for 2023 are still being compiled at the time of writing.</p>
Ensure all Council recruitment panels represent the diversity of Croydon’s population wherever possible.	Ongoing	<p>It is a requirement for all hiring managers to guarantee that their recruitment panels are diverse. This means at least one Global Majority panel member, and at least one participant of each sex, as well as, where possible, a good age distribution. This is reported and monitored to ensure compliance.</p> <p>To support this, the Council has been successfully recruiting volunteers who are able to step in to help form diverse recruitment panels. These panels support the Council’s approach to equalities in recruitment and improving panel diversity, as evidenced through quarterly monitoring. It also provides staff who take part – who are offered training to deliver this support – with the development of key leadership skills and feedback has suggested it builds on personal confidence.</p> <p>For April - June 2024 (the latest data available at the time of writing), the percentage of all interview panels with at least one Global Majority panel member has increased from 73% in October – December 2023, to 88%. The percentage of panels with mixed sexes has increased from 68% in October – December 2023 to 83%.</p>
Use anonymous recruitment processes which don’t reveal details of race, age, gender, disability or socio-economic status.	Complete	<p>Anonymous recruitment is embedded in the Council’s approach and forms a standard part of its recruitment practice. Recruiting managers do not see candidates’ demographic information when shortlisting and selecting candidates for interview.</p>

Objective 4:

The Council’s workforce reflects Croydon’s diverse communities at all levels

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Provide reasonable adjustments for disabled staff in interviews and employment.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Council provides guidance for all managers supporting disabled employees, including supporting neurodiversity. This includes the steps to take to ensure reasonable adjustment requirements are met.</p> <p>As part of this, when workplace adjustments are agreed, employees and managers are recommended to consider recording specifics within a workplace adjustment profile document. The purpose of the profile is to capture all agreed workplace adjustment requirements employees whether they be physical or non-physical. The aim is to minimise the need to re-negotiate workplace adjustments every time an employee moves post, moves between departments or is assigned a new line manager. Each time the employee changes roles and obtains a new line manager the document should be moved with the employee and be discussed with the new line manager.</p> <p>Croydon Council is an inclusive employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. This is made clear when the Council recruits. The Council makes candidates aware that it would be pleased to consider applications from candidates seeking flexible working arrangements and support hybrid working, whereby staff attend the workplace for part of their working week and work from home, or elsewhere, remotely for the rest of the time.</p> <p>As users of the Disability Confident scheme, the Council guarantees to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the advertised role.</p>



Objective 5:

The Council ensures equality training is central to the way it works, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs

Action	RAG	Work to date
Review current equality skills, knowledge and training available to meet service needs and identify gaps.	Ongoing	<p>Nine new EDI E-learning modules have been launched since June this year. Modules have been introduced sequentially, linked to key calendar events where possible, as part of the Council's equalities offer to boost awareness and build staff skills and knowledge around core EDI practices in the workplace. As an example, for Black History Month the Council launched a module called 'Let's Talk About Race'.</p> <p>The Council's compulsory training for staff on Managing Diversity was improved and updated with this reporting year.</p> <p>In addition the new management development programme includes modules on managing cultural competence and managing diverse teams which aim to improve people management of EDI across the Council. This has specifically been designed to reflect on staff feedback, and to build on the skills needed to deliver the vision for Future Croydon.</p>
Ensure that all staff complete mandatory training in equality, diversity and inclusion, including anti-racism, every two years, attendance is monitored and managers are held to account; all officers who write reports to complete EQIA training.	Ongoing	<p>All managers are asked to monitor compliance for mandatory training amongst their teams, with non-compliance escalated to Head of Service level where needed. Heads of Service discuss compliance levels at their SMT meetings and will take steps to drive improvement. Trends in non-compliance, such as in specific directorates, are escalated to Directors and to the Corporate Management Team (CMT).</p> <p>Work is underway as part of the Council's Oracle improvement programme to improve data capture and reporting in this area. This will create a new, improved Learning Management System, which provide a much enhanced ability to monitor mandatory training completion.</p> <p>There is an e-learning module on EQIAs which all staff are asked to undertake before embarking on their analysis. This is supplemented by bespoke, tailored advice and guidance offered by the Council's equalities team. The Council also hosted a session this year for all Heads of Service, Directors and the Corporate Management Team on the new EQIA model. The Council are currently developing further, additional workshops for report authors.</p>
Provide training in equality, diversity and inclusion, now including anti-racism, for Councillors in line with staff training. Member attendance will be reported to the Ethics Committee.	Ongoing	<p>Unconscious bias/anti-racism training for members is included in the 2024-25 Member Training Programme, agreed by the Member Learning and Development Panel. The Panel is currently in the process of agreeing a provider for this training, before scheduling later in the year</p>

Objective 6:

Council staff proactively hold challenging, targeted conversations, holding staff to account, listening, learning, believing and taking action on systemic issues concerning inequality

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Ensure 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.</p>	Ongoing	<p>The Council created an initiative called the ‘Guardians’ to help develop safe space for Council staff. Guardians are specially trained members of staff who can offer support to colleagues who are experiencing an issue in the workplace.</p> <p>Eight staff-led diversity networks also provide awareness raising events, role modelling and communications campaigns. They hold ‘tea talks’ which provide an opportunity for staff to talk directly with the Corporate Management Team and raise awareness on equality issues, supporting cultural change. Topics include empowering diverse women leaders, neurodiversity in the workplace and men’s mental health. Croydon won the Bronze Trailbreaker Award for Tea Breaks from Race Equality Matters in 2022.</p> <p>The HR Handbook which is accessible to all staff via the intranet, details various policies and processes in place to support staff to address issues such as bullying and harassment.</p> <p>Further support and guidance is being developed for managers through the new management development programme to support effective teams and individual management of staff, including managing diverse teams.</p>
<p>Ensure reasonable adjustments are available (including when working from home) for those who need them, including reflecting the needs of neurodiverse staff.</p>	Complete	<p>As detailed above, and set out in the Council’s internal guidance, all managers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure workers and employees with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, aren’t substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs. This applies to all workers and employees, including trainees, apprentices and contract workers. This is based on ACAS best practice and builds on our commitments as a Disability Confident employer.</p> <p>Further support for managers is built into the new management development programme.</p>

Objective 6:

Council staff proactively hold challenging, targeted conversations, holding staff to account, listening, learning, believing and taking action on systemic issues concerning inequality

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Conduct pulse surveys to identify the impact of organisational actions on employees' lived experience and psychological safety at work and ask: 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the Council as your employer listens and acts on your feedback?'</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The last staff survey took place in May 2024. The survey was carried out in partnership with providers Investors in People (IIP) and over 1200 people took part. IIP also conducted interviews with over 60 staff, in a variety of roles, to make sure they had a representative and diverse set of data. Here is the link to the report.</p> <p>Some of the key findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most staff consider communications from the top of the organisation to be clear and effective setting clear direction. • Most staff find their work interesting, enjoy their teams, and work well together. People feel their behaviours reflect the Council's values, but more could be done to reinforce these. • The three top areas for improvement were, 'leading and inspiring people, building capability and managing performance', with the need for consistency being seen in all three. • The Council needs to improve skills development for managers and staff to help them progress and to support retention. This will also help the Council to deliver our transformation programme and the priorities set out in the Mayor's Business Plan. To note, partly in response to this, our new management development programme has since been launched and is detailed elsewhere in this report. • Overall, the Council does well in communicating its vision and people value the updates they receive from senior leaders, but needs to make sure this runs right through the organisation with opportunities for regular feedback. <p>The Council is now developing a range of action plans to respond to this feedback, and these can expect to feature in next year's report.</p> <p>This survey will be repeatedly annually, with ad hoc 'pulse' survey where needed on different topics.</p>

Objective 6:

Council staff proactively hold challenging, targeted conversations, holding staff to account, listening, learning, believing and taking action on systemic issues concerning inequality

Action	RAG	Work to date
Continue the programme of ‘tea talks’ for staff exploring issues, led by staff networks, to create safe spaces for collective staff learning and discussion.	Complete	Monthly ‘Tea Talks’ are organised across the year – sessions so far have included those by the Disability staff network, the Mental health and wellbeing staff network, and the Working Careers network. These sessions are designed to be interactive and discussion led, giving staff a chance to engage with colleagues on issues of importance to workplace wellbeing and inclusion. The Council recognises the value these sessions add and they are planned to continue.
Ensure leadership and project meetings at all levels dedicate time to EDI issues, creating actions, identifying inequalities, tracking progress against the equality strategy, and ensuring accountability.	Ongoing	<p>Managers are encouraged to cover equalities issues as a regular item at team meetings. Any concerns can be escalated to Divisional Management Team meetings (DMTs), where equalities matters should be a regular item. Commitment to the Council’s principles and work around equality is also a recommended component of staff appraisals, as well as a mandatory consideration in all service plans. Updated service plan guidance this year recommended that plans are developed through an interactive conversation with teams, to ensure that all voices are heard, and to support a culture of inclusion and shared purpose.</p> <p>An EQIA is also a core component of the project management tool the Council uses – Verto – meaning equalities considerations are built in by default to project management processes and must be considered by project teams. Equalities also features in the updated project management guidance issued to staff this year.</p> <p>The Council’s updated EQIA guidance encourages that equalities considerations are made at the beginning of any project or programme and that is continually revisited throughout its lifespan.</p>

Objective 7:

The Council demonstrates that it is becoming an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist organisation, by embedding this principle in its strategies, decision-making, actions and behaviours, and promotes anti-racist practice

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Adopt the London Councils anti-racist statement at Cabinet in September 2023 and develop anti-racist framework for Croydon which embeds anti-racism in our strategies, actions, behaviours, EQIAs and decision making.</p>	Ongoing	<p>The Council adopted this, and our commitment to the London Councils’ anti-racism statement is built into this Strategy, and is threaded throughout the work showcased in this Report.</p> <p>In particular, active anti-racism is a criteria in all EQIAs we undertake as a Council, and is included as a principle across the staff training initiatives detailed above.</p> <p>The Council also continues to share practice and learning with London and other regional networks, to ensure it continues to learn from best practice.</p>
<p>Building on [the action] above, commit to zero tolerance of racism from employees, residents, customers, suppliers and service users by challenging racist behaviour or stereotypes expressed by individuals.</p>	Ongoing	<p>A culture of accountability is embedded across all the work the Council is doing. Delivering the Council’s Equality Strategy and its commitment to anti-racism and zero tolerance is the work of everyone across the Council. It is the Council’s commitment that this is modelled from the top down.</p> <p>Though this issue can be something that is difficult to monitor, the Council is actively monitoring grievance cases as a Council and ensuring it undertakes regular staff surveys to gain direct feedback from staff.</p> <p>The Council is working to create a culture of inclusion and safety, where all staff feel able to speak up and report incidents without fear.</p> <p>As detailed above, the Tea Talk programme supports this through raising awareness and breaking down boundaries. Challenging assumptions and stereotypes is already covered through refreshed mandatory training offer, and managers will also be further trained through the new management development programme to manage diverse teams and individual staff, and to better support staff where incidents occur.</p> <p>The Council’s Customer Experience programme is also working to ensure that staff are supported to deliver the best customer service possible, and are equipped with the tools, resources, training and support they need to do this effectively.</p>

Objective 7:

The Council demonstrates that it is becoming an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist organisation, by embedding this principle in its strategies, decision-making, actions and behaviours, and promotes anti-racist practice

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Deliver positive action leadership and talent development programmes for staff from all minoritised groups.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>As part of the Council’s development offer to staff, it enrolled three Black on Board cohorts (demand was such it exceeded the one cohort originally planned) with universally excellent feedback from the participants. This is an in-depth development programme designed to support the global majority and other racialised staff into board positions. The programme has had success in supporting an average of 70% of course participants into board level positions. Previous participants have reflected on how Black on Board has provided them with “the courage and skills to pursue a Board position, coming along with me step by step from application to interview”.</p> <p>The Council piloted the Women’s Leadership programme apprenticeship this year, which is designed to help tackle common challenges faced by new managers, such as confidence issues, managing upwards, and handling difficult conversations. The trial run has presented the Council with learning opportunities which will allow the Council to refine the process for the future cohorts.</p> <p>Further work is in progress to consider extending talent diversity programmes for disabled staff and LBQT+ staff to cover a broad spectrum of protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>The new management development programme, launched this year, includes modules on managing cultural competence and managing diverse teams which aim to improve people management of EDI across the Council. Additionally, at our Manager’s Conference in July, over 300 managers under Head of Service level were engaged in face-to-face sessions focusing on the Council’s transformation journey.</p>
<p>Establish reciprocal mentoring partnerships between Corporate Management Team / Senior Leadership and Global Majority staff and other racialised and minoritised staff.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Council has now launched and established reciprocal mentoring partnerships between Corporate Management Team / Senior Leadership and Global Majority staff and other racialised and minoritised staff. The Council has been working with an external partner to offer workshops to anyone who wants to find out more about reciprocal mentoring and how it could benefit staff development. In the most recent session, staff were asked to think of microaggressions or issues that they have experienced and how this has affected them. Global Majority Staff members at the workshop reflected on the importance of “having a voice about these issues, instead of having to make excuses for them due to nothing changing in wider society”.</p>

Objective 7:

The Council demonstrates that it is becoming an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist organisation, by embedding this principle in its strategies, decision-making, actions and behaviours, and promotes anti-racist practice

Action	RAG	Work to date
Engage with staff to explore anti-racism and how it can be promoted through employment practice and service delivery.	Ongoing	<p>This is picked up in a number of ways across the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through awareness raising Tea Talks, particularly those held by the Race Equality Network. • Through the cultural competence a module, encompassed within the management development programme. • Through encouraging key conversations in staff meetings, appraisals and work planning. • Through making active anti-racism a core component of the EQIA process, and through providing advice and guidance on how to do this well. <p>In August 2024 in Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH), the Council signed up to the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standards (SC-WRES) with Skills for Care. The SC-WRES Improvement Programme supports organisations to address evidence and make progress towards race equality. It requires local authorities to collect and submit data on an annual basis based on metrics which highlight differences in experiences of Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic staff. It holds up a mirror to reveal inequalities, supports change, and strengthens the accountability of organisations. The Council are in the early stages of this 12-month programme, and next steps will include analysing our data and developing an improvement plan. ASCH also have an EDI Board and have instigated a Staff Reference Group to ensure that the voice of the directorate is heard.</p>
Conduct pulse surveys of staff, firstly to establish a baseline of how many consider the Council to be an anti-racist organisation and then to assess improvement.	Complete	<p>As detailed above, the last staff survey took place in May 2024. The survey was carried out in partnership with providers Investors in People (IIP) and over 1200 people took part. IIP also conducted interviews with over 60 staff, in a variety of roles, to make sure they had a representative and diverse set of data. This included capturing staff feelings on our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion. Here is the link to the report.</p>
Seek feedback from the public on whether they consider the Council to be an anti-racist organisation.	Ongoing	<p>As detailed above, in 2023, as part of the Executive Mayor’s commitment to listen to residents, the Council commissioned an independent research company, DJS Research, to carry out the first residents’ survey in several years. This survey included a range of questions covering resident’s perceptions of the Council, including options to include free text comments. Though there was not a specific question with this wording, the survey looked at resident’s experiences of their neighbourhoods, looking at feelings of belonging, safety and inclusion. The majority of residents (82%) feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Resident feedback is now being used to directly inform our work as a Council, driving our service improvements. The Council will explore how to embed this question more directly in future surveys</p>

OUTCOME TWO

The Council works with residents to better understand Croydon’s communities

The Council is undergoing significant change, and the Future Croydon transformation plan focuses on Our Council, Our Residents and Our Place.

The Council’s goal is to break the cycle of inter-generational disadvantage starting in early childhood and reoccurring throughout life and improve the outcomes for all our residents, but particularly those experiencing inadequate housing, limited access to education and employment, financial hardship which are additional disadvantages for those from less well-off backgrounds.

As captured in the refreshed [Equality Strategy 2023-27](#) itself, there is a clear linkage between poverty and underserved communities. Data for 2021/22, for example, show that in the UK the proportion of people in relative poverty after housing costs was 31% for families in which someone had a disability, compared with 18% for those where nobody was disabled.

This means that family income, excluding disability benefits, was below 60% of average household income. Data for 2019/20 to 2021/22 show that some ethnic groups also face much higher rates of relative poverty after housing costs than others, particularly those who are from a Bangladeshi ethnic group (53%), Pakistani (49%) or Black (40%), compared with those from a White ethnic group (19%).

The Council cannot tackle the underlying causes of inequality alone, but it will seek to use our partnerships to work with residents and better understand our communities. For instance, the recent restructure and emergence of the Access to Education Service has brought together under one service a range of teams that solely focus on ensuring that vulnerable children and young people can successfully access education, employment and training.

The Council has worked with its community partners to develop a new [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024-2028](#) as well as a financial inclusion strategy for Council tenants.



Overview

RAG	Overall, there are 18 actions which were agreed under outcome 2.
Complete	5 actions have been completed. For some actions that are completed, work will continue over the course of the 4-year Strategy but the actions to enable that work have been established and embedded.
On track	13 actions are in progress and further work to complete them is ongoing over the course of the 4-year Strategy. By the end of the 4 year Strategy they will be marked as complete.

Objective 1:

Information about the Council’s work towards tackling inequality is easy to access

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Provide open and transparent communications about the Council’s progress against equality objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish an accessible equality annual report demonstrating progress and share this with the Croydon community and partners. • Continue to publish up-to-date equality data on the Croydon Observatory. 	Complete	<p>The Council’s equality objectives are captured in the Equality Strategy. The Council has committed to and will report progress against the Strategy annually as part of the annual equality report, with this first update report expected at Cabinet and Full Council in December 2024.</p> <p>The Croydon Observatory provides access to data and information about Croydon. It is an information sharing, mapping and reporting website that can be used by anyone.</p> <p>Information and data on this website can be used by local government, community and voluntary sector organisations, partnership members, businesses, students and the public. It is kept regularly updated, in particular after every census.</p>
<p>Use the terms Global Majority, racialised groups and minoritised groups in everyday conversation, articles, reports and strategies, explaining why they are needed (see Glossary at Appendix 1).</p>	Complete	<p>A consultation with staff concluded this was the preferred terminology for the Council to use. As such, this is now standard practice across the Council.</p>
<p>Use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), definition of anti-Semitism and All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia as adopted by full Council. (See Glossary)</p>	Complete	<p>This has now been adopted by the Council.</p>

Objective 2:

Enable better education outcomes by offering support to vulnerable groups in targeted areas of the borough, including boys and those eligible for the PPG (pupil premium grant)

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Work in partnership with all Croydon schools, settings and partners to share best practice, deliver the very best for all our young people and ensure resources are targeted at intervening in exclusion and suspension practices where issues of disproportionality arise.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Working in partnership: The Croydon Education Partnership (CEP) has four key priorities, Inclusion, Well-being, Literacy and staff retention. This includes sharing best practice.</p> <p>Targeted Support and Intervention: The Council continues to work closely with Education Development Team link advisors and the CEP to develop and implement tailored interventions, focusing on literacy, wellbeing, and inclusion for at-risk groups. This has led to the implementation of focussed Continuing Professional Development (CPD), The Thrive Project Pilot, and the roll out of the London Inclusion charter.</p>
<p>Analyse the achievement of specific pupil groups and take action to enable better outcomes to address gaps.</p>	Ongoing	<p>In line with Department for Education (DFE) publication of school outcome dates, the Council conducts data analysis to identify underachieving pupil groups, track progress, and spot emerging gaps in achievement; 2024 validated results have not been published by the DFE at the time of writing, however a thorough analysis and recategorising of school support will take place at this point.</p> <p>The Council collaborates with school leaders and staff through the Croydon Education Partnership (CEP) to adopt best practices in particular subject areas. The partnership’s CPD offer has been expanded to support target groups as identified by the CEP and link advisor support team.</p> <p>Training sessions and conferences are provided which focus on addressing the needs of specific pupil groups, covering topics such as SEND (May ‘24 Inclusion Conference), mental health (July ‘24 Wellbeing Conference), literacy support (Literacy Network- all year around), and subject-specific strategies – please see CEP website for details of further offerings.</p> <p>The Council also offers ongoing, bespoke support to schools through regular check-ins and tailored guidance, enabling continuous improvement and responsive adjustments based on pupil progress – this is done through the Targeted, Universal and Universal + offer.</p>

Objective 2:

Enable better education outcomes by offering support to vulnerable groups in targeted areas of the borough, including boys and those eligible for the PPG (pupil premium grant)

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Signpost to information available on education, training and employment opportunities, qualifications and careers guidance, including basic English skills, post-16 provision, financial management and additionally guidance for over-50s.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT), which has retained its ‘good’ rating, after an Ofsted inspection found that the service has developed its courses to help a range of community members improve their skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of learners were positive or very positive that CALAT met their needs. • 92% of learners were positive or very positive that the courses they attend prepare them for progression into further learning or working. • 92% of learners were positive or very positive that they had good access to resources. • 96% of learners were positive or very positive that CALAT is a safe environment. • 100% of learners would recommend CALAT to other people.
<p>Share best practice and learn from our partners, for example through the Pupil Premium Network, to include best practice on wellbeing and emotional needs support.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>There are a number of ways that the Council does this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Public Health: The Education team has worked with Public Health to promote the second annual health and wellbeing survey for Croydon schools (detailed elsewhere in the report). • Youth Assembly Involvement: The team has partnered with the Youth Assembly to co-create an action plan to engage children and young people with the above mentioned survey results (launched September 2024). • Through sharing “In Focus” Reports (October - December 2024). • Through additional support from the PSHE Association to help all Croydon schools with their PSHE curriculum development in line with good practice. • Through Primary Assessment and Development Initiatives: • Leading primary assessment briefings, safeguarding forums, and SENDco briefings. • Hosting primary headteacher meetings and provide support for religious education, computing, early years, literacy, and maths. • Delivering face-to-face support and networking opportunities for education colleagues across the borough to ensure best practices in schools.

Objective 3:

Systemic inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed

Action	RAG	Work to date
In partnership with the health service, work with education and training settings to listen to the voice of children and young people on their mental wellbeing, the availability of pastoral and therapeutic support in schools, and their links to support networks outside schools.	Ongoing	<p>A two- year extension is to be enacted to continue the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Drop In for the delivery of open access counselling and advice and advocacy services. • Off the Record for the delivery of open access counselling, young carers and young adult carers services. <p>This will enable the Council to meet the corporate priority to deliver appropriate and safe emotional wellbeing and mental health support provision to Croydon’s children and young people. This supports the outcome for children and young people to be safe, healthy, happy and aspire to be the best they can be.</p> <p>The new Croydon Drop In ‘Talk Bus’ was launched in October 2023. The bus is a mobile information centre and support service which travels around Croydon visiting high streets, neighbourhoods, schools, colleges, community groups, youth centres and community events. It offers young people, aged 14 to 25 a safe place to get information and advice on things such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emotional health and wellbeing • staying safe • sexual health • positive relationships • careers and opportunities • healthy living • substance misuse • bullying • identity <p>A total of 4,116 school-aged children and young people responded to the Council’s first survey to find out more about their health and wellbeing and how they are coping following the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings show the majority who took part said they feel in good or excellent health, with most eating five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. The current survey findings are already being shared and acted on by schools, Council services, health and community organisations and services.</p>
Monitor attendance and exclusion rates and take action to address over-representation where identified.	Ongoing	<p>The Council has developed and is consulting on a new Attendance Strategy, in line with the new DfE expectations.</p> <p>A team around each school has a focus on exclusions and attendance.</p>

Objective 4:

Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life, particularly targeting those under-represented in the employment sector

Action	RAG	Work to date
Engage with local employers to increase the number and range of apprenticeships, work experience placements, improve access to career opportunities, and pay the London Living Wage.	Ongoing	Since April 2023 Croydon Works have placed 231 Croydon residents into local employment and signposted 311 Croydon residents to apprenticeships and work experience opportunities.
Promote the Good Work Standard in Croydon and support new and emerging entrepreneurs from underserved communities.	Ongoing	<p>Working with trade associations, the Chamber of Commerce and the business improvement districts (BIDs), the Council supports entrepreneurs to start, scale and grow their organisations through a series of business support programmes; 312 businesses have so far been supported since April 2024.</p> <p>Additionally, during Croydon’s year as London Borough of Culture, a range of economic opportunities were created, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 10,000 paid workdays were generated for local artists, creatives, and organisations and 2,750 artists and creatives were involved in the programme, providing significant local employment. • There were 16,275 opportunities for young people to engage in the programme, providing vital skills in creative industries and leadership. • The Music NXTGEN conference attracted 900+ young adults, offering career pathways in the music industry, particularly for underrepresented communities. • 92% of Croydon schools participated, ensuring broad exposure to creative skills for students. • 10 sustainable fashion workshops were conducted by Fashion Meets Music (FMM), helping participants develop skills in creative industries, with 62% reporting increased sales after training. <p>Read the full Borough of Culture Impact Report here.</p>

Objective 4:

Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life, particularly targeting those under-represented in the employment sector

Action	RAG	Work to date
Working with the South London Partnership, use the Work and Health Programme to ensure that residents with disabilities, care leavers and those further away from the job market receive targeted personalised support into employment.	Ongoing	The number of Post-16 young people receiving Level 3 qualifications (A Level or equivalent) is Croydon's highest in the last five years. Over the course of the year 43 17- and 18-year-old young people found places at college via the NEET team and post-16 team's work.
Work with the education sector and others to increase the number of people with the skills needed to contribute to Croydon's local digital economy.	Complete	The Council brings together key education institutions through the Croydon Education Business Partnership and the Croydon Employment and Skills Network to develop the skills needed for the borough as identified through the Local Skills Improvement Plan, ensuring the development of key digital courses that provide residents the skills needed for a digital economy.
Ensure a renewed Economic Growth Strategy creates inclusive education and employment opportunities for Croydon residents, including those with protected characteristics who are most likely to be impacted socio-economically.	Ongoing	As London Councils' representative for London Future Business and Economy, the Executive Mayor Jason Perry is co-chairing the development of a London Growth Plan. The Council is engaging with a range of partners to ensure that the Plan reflects the economic needs of Croydon. Additionally, following the launch of the Inward Investment Plan for Croydon in September 2024, the Council will now continue to develop a new partnership that will drive forward inclusive opportunities for residents and businesses. The Council will develop a new Croydon Growth Plan in conjunction with the Government's National Industrial Strategy which is due in the summer of 2025.

Objective 5:

Services are proactive in targeting groups that have accessibility issue

Action	RAG	Work to date
Raise awareness of the Council’s partner support services, such as for translation, interpretation, Braille, easy read and digital support and hearing impairment support.	Ongoing	The Council work closely with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector to support Croydon residents. For example, the Council works with Croydon’s Citizens Advice Bureau to offer a universal Information, Advice and Guidance service to all Croydon residents. This service is being improved and updated through a new contract launching in the next financial year. It includes a core commitment to ensure accessibility for all residents.
Use data collected by services about accessibility to inform equality analyses.	Ongoing	As detailed above, the new, improve EQIA process encourages a robust use of all relevant data. The Council’s guidance encourages authors to draw upon all available evidence in informing their conclusions. Training and support is available to help support this process.
Design services to best meet the needs of all residents, including an appreciation and mitigations to ensure residents do not become digitally excluded.	Ongoing	<p>As part of the Council’s Future Croydon plans, work is already underway on plans to embed a positive customer experience as part of the design and delivery of all services, which is consistent across all interactions with residents, partners, businesses, members, and staff. This includes developing the digital customer offer and enhancing customer access. The work that the Council does will be informed by customer feedback, meaning it can be responsive to any needs identified, including concerns around digital exclusion. This workstream has been under way for several months and reports progress to Transformation CMT and to the Mayor’s Advisory Board (MAB) on a regular basis.</p> <p>Overseen by a dedicated programme board, this work has focused on key areas this year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding a ‘Customer First’ culture: with new ‘Customer First’ Training introduced, as well as undertaking mystery shopping across directorates using volunteer Customer Service Ambassadors. • Enhancing Customer Access: including working with residents to develop a Customer Promise for the whole organisation and using satisfaction surveys across all customer touchpoints. • Improving Resident Engagement: through a Council wide resident engagement approach with priorities agreed and developed by a new Community of Practice Group, detailed earlier in this report. • Improving the Digital Experience: by refreshing and improving the Council website and making it easier for residents to self-serve.

Objective 5:

Services are proactive in targeting groups that have accessibility issue

Action	RAG	Work to date
Support asylum seekers with access to English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) provision, community integration and school places for these groups.	Ongoing	<p>The Asylum Seeker Support Fund works with a range of organisations within the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) to support individuals and families who have been placed in Croydon by the Home Office while their asylum claim is processed. The programme provides information, advice and guidance to individuals and families who have received their asylum decision and are faced with making decisions on their next steps.</p> <p>Currently 10 VCFS funded organisations across the borough deliver a range of 6-month projects, in accordance with the fund's aims. Projects range extensively including the provision of practical support through outreach/drop ins, move on support such as support to find accommodation, access to employment and ESOL support. Some organisations have a broad offer, providing practical and emotional wellbeing support within the community and in partnership with other organisations whilst others provide services and support for specific groups such as single people, children, families, young people and women and girls.</p>



Photography by Glenn Foster

OUTCOME THREE

People in Croydon are supported to lead healthier and independent lives for longer

The Council will work with partners and the voluntary, community and faith sector to promote independence, health and wellbeing and keep vulnerable adults safe as set out in Croydon’s refreshed **Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-29**, putting the voices of Croydon residents at the forefront of the Council’s approach to ensure it achieves the following objectives:

1. Good mental health and wellbeing.
2. Supporting residents to eat, sleep well and adequately heat their homes.
3. Healthy, safe and well-connected communities.
4. Supporting children, young people and families.
5. Helping Croydon’s older population to live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives.

In June 2023 Croydon became a dementia friendly borough. The Council will support Croydon’s Dementia Strategic Plan developed with NHS partners and Croydon Dementia Action Alliance to make life easier for Croydon residents living with dementia, their families and carers.

The plan has been developed by Croydon’s Dementia Action Alliance, which includes Croydon Council, Age UK Croydon, local health and social care services, emergency services, the voluntary sector and more. The Dementia Plan is also a top priority in Executive Mayor of Croydon Jason Perry’s business plan to support residents to lead healthier and independent lives for longer.



Overview

RAG	Overall, there are 11 actions which were agreed under outcome 3.
Complete	2 actions have been completed. For some actions that are completed, work will continue over the course of the 4-year Strategy but the actions to enable that work have been established and embedded.
Ongoing	9 actions are in progress and further work to complete them is ongoing over the course of the 4-year Strategy. By the end of the 4 year Strategy they will be marked as complete.

Objective 1:

Work with partners to further tackle social isolation

Action	RAG	Work to date
Work with VCFS partners to increase the number of volunteers and volunteering opportunities.	Complete	The Council’s Volunteering Brokerage service has a positive impact on the community by enabling residents to volunteer locally. It not only helps reduce isolation but also builds strong community support networks and even leads to employment opportunities for some residents. The current service is delivered by Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) , who have created the Volunteering Centre whose presence in the Centrale shopping centre is a significant asset, attracting over 1000 people to get involved in volunteering each year.
Work with Health partners to support outreach services and signpost socially isolated people to outreach and support services.	Complete	<p>The One Croydon Alliance is a partnership between the local NHS, Croydon Council and Age UK Croydon. Focused initially on improving the health and wellbeing of older people in the borough, the Alliance now covers the health needs of people of all ages in the borough. The alliance works to join-up the services available to offer more coordinated support that will help look after peoples’ physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>One Croydon Alliance partners, alongside the Council, include Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group, the Croydon GP Collaborative, our mental health colleagues at South London and the Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, and Age UK Croydon, as well as other representatives from Croydon’s VCSF sector.</p> <p>Additionally, Healthwatch Croydon works with partner agencies, including those within the One Croydon Alliance, and VCS organisations, to ensure that the voices of residents contribute to the promotion of people’s independence, health and wellbeing and help to keep vulnerable adults safe.</p> <p>Particular attention is paid to ensuring that the voices of marginalised communities and hard to reach groups are heard and conveyed to local leaders and decision makers, so that their needs are considered in the design and operation of local services From April 2022- March 2023, Healthwatch Croydon has had over 75 residents reach out for advice on topics such as Mental Health and the cost-of-living crisis.</p>
Develop a menu of volunteering options and encourage Council staff to use their volunteer days on social priorities, for example supporting work to reduce social isolation.	Ongoing	<p>This year, an initiative was launched to encourage staff to collectively commit to 300 hours of volunteering during Volunteers Week.</p> <p>The response was overwhelming, with nearly 400 hours pledged to various volunteering activities. These included litter picks, volunteering at the Museum of Croydon, befriending young people in care, and assisting with work experience for 30 young individuals. Additionally, collaboration with Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) led to a talk at the Council to raise awareness about local volunteering opportunities and the Council’s volunteering policy.</p>

Objective 2:

Work with our partners to understand and reduce health inequalities

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Work with partners to implement the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Croydon’s Health and Wellbeing Board was established following the Health and Social Care Act 2012. It brings together partners across the health, social care and voluntary and community sectors to work together to improve health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities in Croydon.</p> <p>The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS) sets out how the Health and Wellbeing Board will work together as a partnership, along with residents, to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities over the next five years. This Strategy presents a refreshed vision for Croydon’s health and wellbeing, refining the collective focus for the next five years to achieve this vision. It also sets out guiding principles for how the Council will work with partners to deliver these priorities.</p>
<p>Listen to underserved groups and protected groups most likely to be impacted such as autistic people and people living with dementia and their carers, and take account of their views when the Council commissions and develops health services.</p>	Ongoing	<p>As one key example of this work in action, Croydon achieved Dementia Friendly Borough status in June 2023. Behind this is Croydon’s new Dementia Strategic Plan, which clearly outlines how the Council will deliver better care and support to people living with dementia, and their carers, so that they can lead full and active lives.</p> <p>This strategic plan is delivering on the pledges made to achieve Dementia Friendly status. It sets out a clear direction for all the partners of the Croydon Dementia Action Alliance to work together, to maximise impact on the wellbeing and independence of people with dementia living in the borough.</p> <p>Additionally, as another example, rates of immunisation vary across Croydon’s different communities, and as such a targeted approach is needed. Multiple community immunisation events have been facilitated alongside a Croydon Immunisation plan. The goal of the immunisation events is for more children, adults – and their communities – to be protected from vaccine-preventable diseases, allowing local Croydon residents to live happier, healthier lives.</p>

Objective 2:

Work with our partners to understand and reduce health inequalities

Action	RAG	Work to date
Target health checks to eligible residents identified as high risk and/or living in areas of high deprivation.	On track	<p>The Fronrunner Programme aims to harness all the skills and experience available to improve health and wellbeing in the borough, enable people to live independently for as long as possible, and keep adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect safe. It is intended to support Council and NHS teams to work more closely together to improve care and support available in the local community and triple the number of residents to regain their independence at home, particularly after a hospital stay. The Fronrunner Programme has the potential of a £3.2 million saving each year with fewer patients requiring ongoing packages of care due to an improved intermediate care offer.</p> <p>Additionally, rates of immunisation vary across Croydon's different communities, and as such a targeted approach is needed. Multiple community immunisation events have been facilitated alongside a Croydon Immunisation plan, to target those who may be harder to reach. The goal of the immunisation events is for more children, adults – and their communities – to be protected from vaccine-preventable diseases, allowing local Croydon residents to live happier, healthier lives.</p>
Respond to the recommendations of the Director of Public Health Report 2022.	On track	The Council's Public Health team are currently scoping a review on how the system has responded to the DPH report and this will be further reported in due course.



Objective 3:

Work with the Council’s partners to ensure equitable access to health and care services and enable residents to know where and how to access services

Action	RAG	Work to date
Work with partners to implement the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy and develop a new strategy for 2024 onwards.	Ongoing	<p>As detailed above, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS) sets out how the Health and Wellbeing Board will work together as a partnership, along with residents, to improve the health and wellbeing of Croydon’s local communities over the next five years. The refreshed strategy sets out a shared vision for a healthier, happier and safer Croydon. It is framed around five key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good mental health and wellbeing for all. • Cost of living: supporting our residents to eat sleep and have heat. • Healthy, safe and well-connected neighbourhoods and communities. • Supporting our children, young people and families. • Supporting our older population to live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives. <p>To achieve this vision, key actions and decisions will be guided by the principles of tackling health inequalities, putting prevention first across the life course, integrated partnership working, evidence-informed decisions and actions, and working with Croydon’s communities to develop shared solutions.</p>



Photography by Vipul Sangoi

Objective 3:

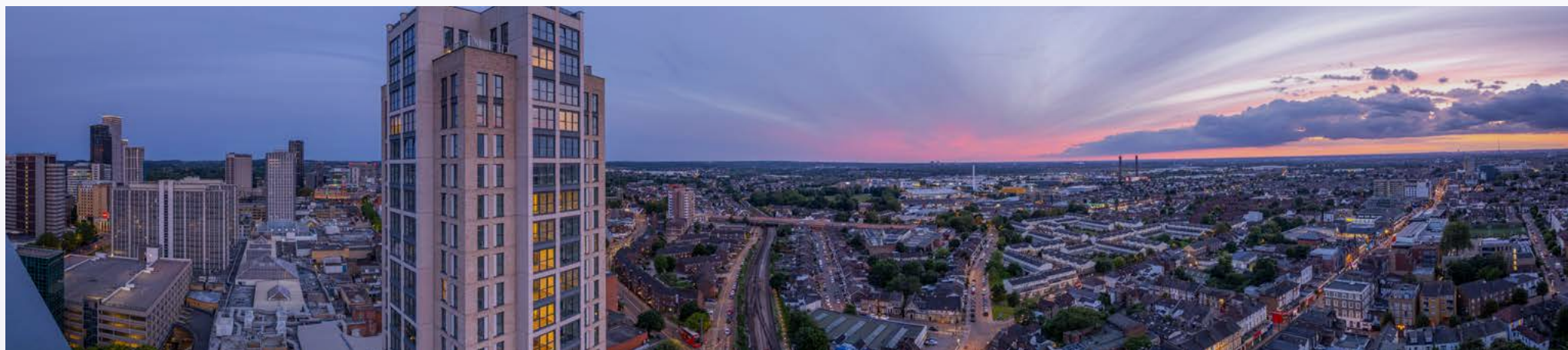
Work with the Council’s partners to ensure equitable access to health and care services and enable residents to know where and how to access services

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Continue to support the development of local community partnerships and hubs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The launch of the first Croydon Family Hub at the Woodlands Children’s Centre in Selsdon is designed to make it easier for Croydon families to get easy access to health and education information, advice and support. Family Hubs are informed by the Family Hub Parent Carer Panel which has been running since July 2023. These meetings discuss various topics that feedback into the family hub workstream groups to help shape and co-design services for children.</p> <p>Additionally, since 2020, the National Lottery has invested £500,000 in Croydon, supporting the delivery of the Healthy Communities Together (HCT) programme, which is a collaboration between the King’s Fund, the Council, NHS and the local VCFS. Since its inception the programme has delivered a wide range of initiatives including the development of Local Community Partnerships (LCPs) in six Croydon localities.</p> <p>The LCPs’ vision is for local people to have greater control over how the places they live and work in are enabled to thrive by strengthening and sustaining partnerships that are well connected, fully representative and mandated to set local priorities, promote joint working and influence local spend in their locality. They were set up to identify gaps in service provision by listening to Croydon’s residents and working together with the VCFS and key statutory partners to meet these needs.</p> <p>In early 2024, the NHS added an additional £108,000 of Ageing Well funds to the Localities Communities Fund resulting in a further six projects being funded across the borough.</p> <p>The partners involved are now exploring next steps for the programme.</p>
<p>Support the NHS to develop new Health Centres to increase access to primary care, community services and work with the voluntary sector, to reduce inequalities in access to health and social care across the borough.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Residents in the south of the Borough now have easier access to essential health services thanks to the opening of a brand new Community Diagnostic Centre at Purley War Memorial Hospital. The expansion of these NHS services comes as a result of a significant investment in the local health system and promises to make vital tests and screenings more readily available within the community. As a result, patients living in the area who have been referred for diagnostic testing such as X-rays, CT scans, cardiology and respiratory screening can now access care even closer to home.</p> <p>The launch of these centres is the latest in a number of initiatives designed to improve to health services across Croydon. In December 2023, the Trust’s new, state of the art intensive care unit also opened its doors to some of the borough’s most seriously ill and injured patients.</p>

Objective 3:

Work with the Council’s partners to ensure equitable access to health and care services and enable residents to know where and how to access services

Action	RAG	Work to date
<p>Work as part of a Croydon system to reduce barriers to access mental health services and support shifts to more culturally appropriate provision, for example by maximising the impact of and amplifying the learning from the Ethnic Minority Health Improvement Project (EMHIP) work and South London Listens.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Mental Health forms ‘priority one’ of the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, detailed above. Building on the success of the ongoing Mental Health Transformation Programme, which aims to deliver preventative and person-centred mental health care to residents, this details how the Council will continue to work to ensure residents can get the help and support they need at the place and the time they need it. The Council will continue to focus on promoting mental wellbeing, preventing mental health conditions, and preventing self-harm and suicide.</p> <p>Working as a whole system and across organisational boundaries, the Council will take action to ensure residents have access to the tools they need to achieve and maintain good health and wellbeing throughout their lives. The Council will support the development of Croydon’s Multiagency Self-harm and Suicide Prevention Action Plan, Croydon’s Dementia Strategic Plan and associated action plan as well as Croydon’s Autism Strategy. In line with the South West London Mental Health Strategy, the Council will work with our partners, to promote positive mental health and prevent mental ill health across the borough.</p>
<p>Develop an updated multi-agency harm reduction and suicide prevention strategy.</p>	Ongoing	<p>A multi-agency harm reduction and suicide prevention strategy has been developed alongside an action plan for delivery. This is due to be presented at the Health and Wellbeing Board in October 2024 (prior to the time of drafting this report).</p>



Photography by Glenn Foster

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Whilst the Council has made significant progress and increased the pace of its improvement, the financial challenge remains significant and exceptional in nature. Residents want their Council to work better for them, to understand them and their needs better and to support the different communities of Croydon more effectively.

This March, the Council launched our Future Croydon: Transformation Plan where it has set out its ambition to radically change over the next five years, saving £100m and becoming a cost-effective Council – that always puts residents first.

Our Council:

Our aim: 'is to be the most cost effective and efficient Council in London'. To achieve this, the Council will need to maximise the opportunity new technology brings in everything the Council does while being totally focused on its residents and customers.

The 2023 Residents' Survey found that only 45% of residents are satisfied with the way the Council is run and 32% are dissatisfied. More residents think that the Council doesn't provide value for money than do. Our aim means the Council will: adopt a 'customer first' culture, prioritising value, and outcomes over process; offer residents choices in the way they want to interact with the Council, making sure that no-one is left behind; and, organise its services around residents' needs and experiences to prevent duplication and "residents falling between the cracks".

Our residents:

Our aim: 'is to put residents first'. The Council knows from the 2023 Residents' Survey that only 41% of residents feel that the council listens to them while 47% feel the Council does not listen and 47% do not trust the Council.

Our aim means the Council will: engage with and listen to residents, enabling them to be heard on matters that impact them; provide services in an accessible way with excellent customer care; empower residents and communities to help themselves and their neighbours; and, work with partners including voluntary, community and faith sectors to transform services for vulnerable residents.

Our place:

Our aim: 'is to be a cleaner, safer, and healthier borough'. The Council know from the 2023 Residents' Survey that just under seven in 10 residents (69%) report that they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live and just over three fifths of residents (61%) report that they feel safe in their local area during the evening.

The vast majority of residents (82%) agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. These are huge strengths that we can build on. Building on our strong local neighbourhoods and working together with our partners, the Council want our all our communities to be at the forefront of driving the change that matters to them.

Our aim means the Council will: restore Croydon's place as an important economic hub in south London; unlock the aspiration and enterprise of our young people address social issues, perceptions of safety and cleanliness; regenerate the town centre and manage the benefits of our £18.5m investment in the Council's 'Reconnecting Croydon' programme.

All of this work will underpin, and be fundamental to, the Council's efforts to continue delivering the Equality Strategy 2023-2027. Further progress will be documented in next year's Annual Report.

Equality Annual Report 2024

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