

# Opportunity and Fairness Plan 2016-2020

**APRIL 2016**

Strategy, community and commissioning

## **CROYDON'S OPPORTUNITY AND FAIRNESS PLAN 2016 - 20**

### **'a stronger, fairer borough where no community is held back'**

#### **FOREWORD**

The main aim of the council is to ensure it makes Croydon a stronger fairer place where no one community is held back. This means being on the side of residents, meeting their needs and being ambitious to make difference to those who most need our help. A key priority for the council is ensuring we work with our partners to make Croydon a stronger and fairer place for all our communities and to achieve this we recognise the need to focus on reducing inequality in housing, community safety, attainment, employment, health and wellbeing especially in some of our most deprived neighbourhoods.

The council must demonstrate community leadership, in the services we provide, the money we spend and people we employ in order to achieve excellence in equality. Our staff and partners are important to achieving the council's ambition and for ensuring, as required by the Equality Act 2010, that we eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people and communities.

This Opportunity and Fairness Plan sets out the council's Equality Objectives for 2016 – 20 and provides a summary of the information that has informed the selection of these objectives. This information is from the Borough Profile, the recent publication of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, as well as the views of 3000 people including staff, residents, local businesses, community and voluntary organisations all of whom have contributed to the Opportunity and Fairness Commission's final report published in January 2016.

However, the council recognises that these equality objectives are not the only issues for example we need to improve the information gathered about the people who use council services so that resources and interventions can be effectively targeted. However, based on the information the council looked at, it has considered the equality objectives set out in this document to be those that require a focus over the next four years in order to make the greatest impact on improving individual and community outcomes.



Tony Newman  
Leader, Cabinet Member  
Chief Executive

## EMPLOYMENT

### TOWN CENTRE THAT LIFTS THE WHOLE BOROUGH

#### What is our equality objective?

To increase the rate of employment for disabled people, young people, over 50s and lone parents who are furthest away from the job market.

#### Community Impact

Race  
Gender  
Disability  
Age  
Six most deprived wards

#### Measures

- The proportion of 18 – 24 years unemployed in the six most deprived wards.
- The proportion of people with long-term health conditions or illnesses in employment.
- The proportion of over 50s in employment in six most deprived wards.
- The number of customers who have moved to a digital (self-service) channel of communication.

#### Why have we chosen this equality objective?

Despite falling unemployment the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 has shown there are still challenges around the proportion of working age population excluded from the labour market especially those aged 18 – 24, over 50, and those who would like to work but are unable to do so due to sickness, disability and/or caring responsibilities. There are geographical differences across the borough between ethnic groups as well as men and women.

The Opportunity and Fairness Commission found that many disabled people, those who have long-term health conditions, or with mental health concerns, want to work but struggle to gain employment. There has been a significant increase in people claiming Employment and Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit. Ill health and disability account for over half of benefit claimants and one in five are carers of adults and children.

Residents told the Opportunity and Fairness Commission that they would like to see local employers doing more to recruit disabled people and those from BME backgrounds. The Commission also found that female workers wanted better support with childcare and caring responsibilities to access the jobs market. In addition the Commission highlighted workers needed to be paid the London Living Wage. Recent figures from ONS in 2014 found 26.9% of jobs in Croydon, approximately 24,000, were below the London Living Wage and by 2015 only eight employers in Croydon had signed up to the scheme. Finally the Commission found Croydon's employers did not reflect the diversity of its population and ethnicity, gender and disability still plays a significant role in shaping outcomes.

#### What are we doing?

- Working with partners to revise the employment and skill strategy and implement a range of programmes including the job brokerage scheme to ensure a focus on groups of people living in the six most deprived areas.
- Actively promote the London Living Wage among employers in Croydon.
- Deliver greater social value through the council's contractual arrangements.
- Promoting Value Croydon among local businesses.
- Implementing new Council Human Resource Plan 2016 -20 to ensure the workforce is reflective of the wider community at all levels.

## CHILD POVERTY

### LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND

#### What is our equality objective?

To reduce the rate of child poverty especially in the six most deprived wards.

#### Community Impact

Gender  
Age  
Disability  
Race  
Six most deprived wards

#### Measure

The reduction in child poverty in the most deprived wards.

#### Why have we chosen this equality objective?

One quarter of children in the borough grow-up in poverty. Although the overall proportion of children in poverty has fallen the areas with the highest rates of child poverty have remained the same such as: New Addington and Fieldway as well as Broad Green, Selhurst and Thornton Heath. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2015 has shown that areas of Fieldway and Heathfield (Shrublands) have a higher proportion of children and young people 0 – 19 who experience child poverty at over 40%. In Fieldway 70% of the population is recorded as White, has high levels of unemployment and people claiming benefits. In addition 50% of households have dependent children and there is a high proportion of lone parent families.

Between 2010 and 2015 in West Thornton, 24% of the population is Asian, had increasing levels of income deprivation amongst older people and children. The census found Broad Green and West Thornton to have the highest proportion of Asian families with dependent children at approximately 35%.

Recent welfare reforms will have further compounded the situation for many of those who already find it difficult to make ends meet. The Opportunity and Fairness Commission found at least eight food banks dotted around the borough that are struggling to cope with the increase in demand from people who are in need of food. At a time when money is tight many people get into debt and turn to payday loans or hire purchase. Citizen Advice in Croydon told the Commission that after benefits, tax credit and housing issues, debt represented their third biggest case load.

#### What are we doing?

- Working with partners to ensure the council's Gateway services focus on the six most deprived wards where child poverty is highest.
- Ensuring there is information and advice about benefits on offer for people looking for work including access to affordable finance.
- Working with employers to encourage childcare provision, flexible working and paying the London Living Wage.

## ATTAINMENT

### LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND

#### What is our equality objective?

To improve attainment levels for white working class and Black Caribbean heritages, those in receipt of Free School Meals and Looked After Children, particularly at Key Stage 2 including those living in six most deprived wards.

#### Community Impact

Disabled children (SEN and Carers)

Race

Looked After Children (LAC)

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (USAC)

Children receiving Free School Meals (FSM)

Six most deprived wards

#### Measures

- To increase the proportion of LAC, SEN, FSM children and those from white working class and Black Caribbean in achieving GCSE A\* - C grade including English and Maths and those achieving the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The reduction in the number of adults who have no qualifications in the borough.
- The reduction in the number of young people from BME backgrounds excluded from school.

#### Why have we chosen this equality objective?

Croydon's borough profile highlighted that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by age 5 was lower than the national average across England and significantly lower for children from poorer backgrounds. Recent research found one of the biggest influences on a child's attainment takes place during the early years and can be as simple as reading to your child. Poor levels of literacy and language among a family can have a detrimental impact on early learning and development that result in greater exclusion later on in life. In 2011 17.6% of adults in Croydon had no qualifications, however in New Addington and Fieldway, this figure rose to a third. In addition, 2.5% of the population could not speak English well or at all. This was slightly higher in women and primarily among residents in Broad Green, West Thornton and Norbury.

Despite improving attainment among children and young people in Croydon gaps remain difficult to close for BME children, disabled children with special educational needs and those receiving free school meals, especially those who are carers and living in the most deprived wards in the north and in New Addington and Fieldway. In addition, children who are looked after in care, especially unaccompanied asylum seeking children, of which Croydon has the largest number of any London Borough, experience significant difficulties including trauma and mental health issues. For unaccompanied asylum seeking children there are also often cultural and language barriers. The Young Opportunity and Fairness Commission highlighted young people's growing concerns for their mental health and wellbeing suggesting a greater role for schools and colleges to ensure their emotional health is nourished along with social networks and community support.

#### What are we doing?

- Implement a revised schools improvement programme which outlines the work with schools, colleges and Octavo that supports a focus on narrowing the gaps in the most deprived wards.
- Delivery of phase two of Best Start programme for 0-5 which includes greater involvement of the community and voluntary sector.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

### DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION - NOT IN OFC BUT CORPORATE PLAN ETC.

#### What is our equality objective?

- To increase the percentage of domestic violence sanctions.
- To increase the reporting and detection of the child sexual offences monitored.
- To reduce the number of young people who enter the youth justice system.

#### Community Impact

Gender  
 Religious belief or not  
 Disability  
 Race  
 Age  
 Six most deprived wards

#### Measures

- The number of cases of domestic abuse referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- The number of young people who enter the criminal justice system a) from BME backgrounds b) from the most deprived wards.
- The percentage of assessments undertaken where Child Sexual Exploitation was a factor.
- The number of cases accepted by the Channel Panel – radicalisation programme.
- The number of incidents of hate crime.

#### Why have we chosen this equality objective?

##### Violence

Like in other London Boroughs, overall crime in Croydon is falling. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 showed geographic inequalities with wards in the north of the borough having higher rates of violent crime, criminal damage, burglary and theft from person than in the south. Focussing on recorded violent crime, domestic abuse and sexual violence this accounts for a significant proportion of this crime where approximately 26% victims had experience three or more incidents in the previous year. The number of recorded sexual offences has increased in Croydon with 308 rape cases recorded in the 12 months to March 2015. This is part of a wider trend in increased reported domestic and sexual violence cases across London. Victims of domestic abuse and sexual offences are predominantly women.

##### Child Sexual Exploitation

In Croydon, recent research conducted by the Safer London Foundation found that the largest proportion of young people recorded to be most affected by Child Sexual Exploitation were aged between 14 – 16 years old. This research has also shown Black or Black British young people were known to be affected (39%), followed by white or white British (30%) and then mixed heritage (26%). The young people who took part in the research said they are least likely to speak to adults from their religious/cultural community (27%), followed by the police (25%). They were most likely to entrust a parent/carers (20%), followed by a confidential helpline (15%).

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

### DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION - NOT IN OFC BUT CORPORATE PLAN ETC.

#### Why have we chosen this equality objective? ...continued

##### Offending by young people

Overall, the proportion of young offenders from BME backgrounds is reducing and nearly in line with the ethnic make-up of Croydon's population of young people. However, young people mainly boys from Black and Black British backgrounds are over-represented with a higher percentage involved in serious youth violence, drug or theft offences: and first time entrants to the youth justice system, and many of whom reoffend. Croydon has a higher rate of first time entrants to the youth justice system than the national average. Young offenders often present with other risk factors such as drug addiction, alcohol use and behavioural issues associated with mental health problems and special educational needs.

##### Offending by young people

Despite significant under-reporting of hate crime there has been an increase in reports to the police and remains a key indicator of not only community safety but also community relations. Most hate crime is recorded as race or religious hate crime and reported by people living in the north of the borough. The numbers of reported Islamophobic hate crimes continue to rise as does the number of reported cases of homophobic hate crime. Disability hate crime is a new category so the level of reported cases is quite low, however in the 12 months to April 2015 17 incidents had been recorded in Croydon.

##### Radicalisation

In London, Croydon has one of the highest numbers of referrals, (mainly male) to the channel project which is aimed at addressing concerns of possible radicalisation. Croydon has worked with the community and organisations such as schools and colleges to ensure concerns are addressed early.

#### What are we doing?

- Implement the Children's safeguarding plan, troubled families programme, promote channel project, deliver the domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy and youth offending plan all of which seek to increase reporting, support victims and tackle perpetrators.
- Following-up and embedding actions and proposals put forward by Croydon's Congress in particular those aimed at working with different communities to drive a change in attitudes and behaviours towards child sexual exploitation, hate crime, radicalisation, domestic abuse and sexual offending.

# SOCIAL ISOLATION

## A CONNECT BOROUGH WHERE NO ONE IS ISOLATED

### What is our equality objective?

To reduce social isolation amongst disabled people and older people.

### Community Impact

Age  
Disability

### Proposed measures

- The percentage of people who use services who reported that they have as much social contact as they would like.
- The proportion of carers who reported that they have as much social contact as they would like.

### Why have we chosen this equality objective?

Being socially isolated is different to loneliness but they are closely related and nationally 1 in 10 of people aged over 65 said they were lonely most or all of the time. Although it is important to be aware that social isolation and loneliness can affect all people across the life-course and not just older people. Recent research suggests that being isolated has a significant impact on health and wellbeing and is as impactful as other health issues such as obesity. The Campaign to end Loneliness found 3 in 5 people who report poor health say that they are lonely some of the time or often, compared with 1 in 5 who report excellent health. ONS data is based on a wellbeing survey of Croydon residents in 2014/15 suggests a lower level of personal wellbeing amongst Croydon residents compared with regional and national averages. Social Isolation can be caused by different factors such as poverty, disability, long-term illness, caring responsibilities, and age. Left unchecked it can lead to depression and poor mental health.

The Opportunity and Fairness Commission highlighted that not only does social isolation have a significant personal cost but also has an implication for public services as it can lead to people needing more social and medical support. For example GPs and hospital accident and emergency departments have visits from people who are simply seeking someone to talk to or because their isolation has resulted in depression or another preventable illness. In addition, people often have prolonged stays in hospital because there is no one to care for them upon discharge.

### What are we doing?

- Mapping social isolation community assets.
- Implementing the care place online information portal.
- Undertaking a joint strategic needs assessment.
- Hosting a congress event in June which will focus on social isolation.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board will be taking a lead in developing a borough wide plan to addressing social isolation.
- Delivering outcome based commissioning for over 65s ensuring social isolation is a key priority.

## COMMUNITY COHESION

### VIBRANT, RESPONSIBLE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

#### What is our equality objective?

To improve the proportion of people from different backgrounds who get on well together.

#### Community Impact

Race  
Gender  
Sexual Orientation  
Disability

Religious belief or not  
Age  
Pregnancy and maternity

#### Measures

The perception of people from:

- different backgrounds who say they get on well
- different backgrounds who volunteer
- different backgrounds who feel they participate and influence
- different backgrounds who have trust and confidence in public services
- The number of cultural events and programmes supported and delivered by the council across the borough.

#### Why have we chosen this equality objective?

In Croydon, communities are changing fast with the borough having one of the fastest growing BME populations in London. More than 50% of children and young people are from a BME background and approximately 47% of adults. More than 100 languages are spoken across the borough. Croydon also has the largest number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and our residents speak more than 100 languages. Croydon has a great sense of community pride but social cohesion is challenged when there are poor community relations and people from different backgrounds do get on and live isolated from each other. In addition, high levels of poverty lead to people feeling that a place is unfair, and they cannot influence change or trust organisations.

The Opportunity and Fairness Commission said that residents told them that too often there was a lack of respect amongst people living in their area and insufficient shared ownership of problems. Many residents mentioned people from different backgrounds moving into their local area and their struggle to create strong integrated communities especially at times when national or international activity can cause concern locally. We know from local police figures and recent engagement activity that there has been an increase in hate crime and extremist activity that can seek to undermine community relations.

In addition, the Commission highlighted that while migration had brought new energy and perspectives but there was recognition that communities were isolated from each other rather than working together to tackle shared challenges. However, many people told the Commission that they would be willing to do more in their local community including volunteering and wanted to participate and influence what was going on locally and across the borough.

#### What are we doing?

- Develop and implement a stronger community plan working with partners and a range of different groups to promote community cohesion, ensure there is a vibrant and thriving voluntary sector as well as tackling inequality.
- Deliver the new community fund.
- Revamp small grants programme.
- Review the community ward budgets.
- Explore opportunities to leverage external funding to the community and voluntary sector
- Develop new volunteering framework for the borough.
- Work with the community to deliver a programme of community engagement activity
- Implement key activity outlined in the Opportunity and Fairness Commission report.

## HEALTH

### HELP PEOPLE FROM ALL COMMUNITIES LIVE LONGER, HEALTHIER LIVES

#### What is our equality objective?

To reduce differences in life expectancy between communities.

#### Community Impact

Gender  
Race  
Disability  
Age  
Pregnancy and maternity

#### Measures

- Difference in healthy life expectancy at birth between men and women in Croydon in years.
- Slope index of inequality in life expectancy at birth within English local authorities, based on local deprivation deciles within each area for men.
- Slope index of inequality in life expectancy at birth within English local authorities, based on local deprivation deciles within each area for women.
- Disability-free life expectancy at birth for men in Croydon B) Disability free-life expectancy at birth for women in Croydon (in years).

*(Measures set out above for reducing child poverty, level of development at age 5, educational attainment, employment, homelessness).*

#### Why have we chosen this equality objective?

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2015 identified a number of significant inequalities in health outcomes in the borough. The causes of these inequalities are multi-factorial and deep rooted. Sir Michael Marmot recommended six areas where action will have the greatest impact on health inequalities.

- 1. Give every child the best start in life.**
- 2. Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.**
- 3. Create fair employment and good work for all.**
- 4. Ensure healthy standard of living for all.**
- 5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.**
- 6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.**

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 has show that health deprivation and disability indicator is greatest in West Thornton, Broad Green, Selhurst and Thornton Heath as well as New Addington and Fieldway. West Thornton and Selhurst have become significantly more deprived in this domain since IMD data was last released in 2010. In West Thornton it appears to be related to morbidity and in Selhurst, mental ill health and anxiety disorders. Both areas are ethnically diverse. Finally there are higher levels of income poverty amongst older people in ethnically diverse wards in the north along with a lack of access to services such as a post office or community services.

## HEALTH

### HELP PEOPLE FROM ALL COMMUNITIES LIVE LONGER, HEALTHIER LIVES

#### What are we doing?

- Delivering the Best Start programme to improve outcomes for 0-5s.
- Working to tackle child poverty through the People Gateway.
- Raising educational attainment amongst the most disadvantaged communities through the schools improvement programme.
- Increasing the rate of employment for those who are furthest from the job market.
- Improving the quality of private sector housing through the landlord licencing scheme and effective enforcement of housing standards.
- Improving access to outdoor leisure opportunities to promote physical activity and mental wellbeing in the most deprived areas of the borough.
- Integrating lifestyle services (e.g. stop smoking, weight management, physical activity) into a LiveWell model with targeted support for behaviour changes in those with greatest need.

# Opportunity and Fairness Plan 2016-2020

*(Statutory Equality Objectives)*