

A newsletter for Croydon parents and carers who support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

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## Update on SEN Transport

The transport team will be busy over the summer holiday period putting in place the travel arrangements for September 2021. We will contact parents and carers over the summer holidays to confirm the travel arrangements. Please do bear with us as we are a very small team and support over 1300 children and young people. However, we do understand families are anxious to know travel details and we will do our very best to notify you at the earliest time possible.

It is likely with the relaxation of Covid restrictions on 19/7/21 that the wearing of face masks will become discretionary even on public transport. However, guidance remains that face masks should still be worn in small enclosed spaces or areas which are indoors but highly populated, although this is still at peoples own discretion.

The transport services we provide are for vulnerable children and adults and the transport is invariably in small enclosed spaces (taxis) or in more highly populated vehicles (minibuses / buses). As such, we feel that staff supporting our services should continue to wear face masks whilst working on the service. This is to provide continued protection for those receiving our service and also for the staff themselves.

We will continue to monitor Government advice and will amend as and when appropriate.

The transport team would like to thank you for your continued support through this very difficult year and wish you a happy and healthy summer.

## **The Virtual School –Summer Break Activities for Children Looked After (CLA)**

### **E.M.P.I.R.E (Empowerment, Memories, Positivity, Interesting, Respect & Educational)**

E.M.P.I.R.E is Croydon's Children in Care Council & Care Leaver Forum where young people are able to shape and influence the parenting that they receive at every level. It aims to give young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives and input into the setting of Local Authority strategies which affect those in or who have recently left care.

The forum is structured in a workshop format and aims to be led by a collective of young people who are cared for by Croydon Local Authority with the support of the Virtual School. The forum has a primary function of amplifying the voice of its members by identifying themes and issues.

**E.M.P.I.R.E** run activities/trips for care leavers (CLs) and children and young people looked after (CLAs) by Croydon Local Authority and for CLs and CLAs looked after by another local authority who reside or study in Croydon.

If you would like further information on the activities and opportunities available over the summer holidays please contact [EMPIRE@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:EMPIRE@croydon.gov.uk)

## Croydon

### Children's Speech & Language Therapy

**Communication  
changes lives**

During the summer term 2021, the SLT team working with school-aged children have prioritised face to face contacts for all children on the SLT caseload with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and eating and drinking difficulties (EDD). This piece of work is ensuring that the child/young person (CYP) is kept at the centre of decision making regarding the support that they require and that the service has an up to date picture of their strengths and needs.

To achieve this, the service is:

- seeing all children with EHCPs for the SLT input specified on their EHCP;
- seeing all other children on the caseload for a face to face review;
- seeing all children currently awaiting an initial assessment.

This may involve children being seen in school or in clinic. It is really important for us to have your views on your child's speech, language and communication needs and the impact these have at home. As parents are not currently able to attend reviews in many schools (due to Covid-19 restrictions) we have devised a 'Parent Information Sheet' to enable you to contribute if you are not able to join us in person



#### **Covid-19**

We know that lockdowns have affected children differently and, whilst some have adapted well to being back at school, others are finding it more difficult. We also know that children who are feeling insecure may not make progress in their communication or eating and drinking skills or may even lose some. If your child hasn't made the progress you would have liked to have seen or has lost some skills, please don't worry! We will liaise with the school staff to take this into account when planning our work. For some, there are already extra strategies in place to help them to feel more comfortable in being back at school and being in a position to develop their speech, language and communication and eating and drinking again.

This review process will ensure we have an updated picture of your child's speech, language and communication needs and the strategies that need to be in place to support them and enable them to reach their full potential.



Next academic year, we will continue to plan our services with your child in the centre and particularly looking at the impact of their SLCN on their lives. It is crucial that the staff who work with your child on a daily basis have a really good understanding of how to support them, as they are the people working with them consistently. This means that we will continue to focus time on supporting those around your child as well as delivering any input your child needs directly from us.

Until then, there are things you can do to help communication with your child/young person at home

#### Top tip for the summer:

##### Talk to your child when you're out and about

When you go out with your child, it's really easy to walk along in your own world. Depending on the age and ability of your child, have a conversation with them about something you can see, hear and smell. For example, you can talk about cars of different colours with a child at the earlier stages of communication. A child further on in their communication will love to talk about different models and what they'd like to drive. A child of any age will love the attention and they can practise their communication.

#### Top Website:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/starting-a-conversation-with-your-child/20-activities-for-20-minutes>

We are looking forward to working jointly with you and your children's schools to support your child's speech, language and communication needs and reduce the impact of them on their lives.

If you have any queries, please contact Heather Forster, Primary Team Manager, until 31<sup>st</sup> July, and then Louise Needham, who will be taking over from Heather, after 31<sup>st</sup> July.

Heather Forster  
Primary SLT Team Manager



Louise Needham  
Primary SLT Team Manager Designate

### **The Chatterbox Parent Programme - Speech and Language Therapy support for preschool children**

The speech and language therapy (SLT) service have designed The Chatterbox Parent Programme which focuses on providing key strategies, advice and activities to support children's communication development. These sessions are delivered virtually by Children's Centre practitioners with support from the SLT team.

If you would like to access these sessions or discuss your child's communication development, please contact your local children's centre, or the speech and language therapy team on:

**020 8714 2594 for details on sessions.**

### **Croydon Sensory Support Service**

The Croydon Sensory Support Service is available for children and young people with diagnosed hearing (HI) and/or visual impairment (VI), their families and settings, from 0 to 19 years (or up to 25 years for those with an EHCP).

The aim for all children and young people with sensory impairment is to maximise:

- educational progress and achievement.
- enjoyable and successful participation in school and community life.
- independence in the management of their disability.

The service is staffed by specialist teachers of the deaf and of the visually impaired, habilitation officers and specialist teaching assistants.

#### Latest news

The service has largely returned to face to face intervention for children and families this term, including home, setting and clinic visits.

After many years, the primary enhanced learning provision for children with Hearing Impairment (HI) is moving to a new home. We are delighted to be working with the staff team and governors at Norbury Manor Primary School to deliver and develop this provision from September.

We are also delighted to have appointed two new qualified and experienced teachers of the deaf for the peripatetic team from September.

We are busy finalising caseloads for September, now that most transitions for children and young people and service staffing have been confirmed. Families of children on active caseload will be notified of any changes to the allocated teacher of the visually impaired or teacher of the deaf as soon as possible, and by September at the latest.

### Summer break

The service is term time only, however there is an on-call rota system for new referrals from the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme. Any other urgent enquiries will be picked up via the service email inbox [sensorysupportservice@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:sensorysupportservice@croydon.gov.uk)

There are various online and face to face activities and support for children and young people with sensory impairment, and their families, over the summer break.

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS):

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/our-events/events-for-parents-carers-and-families/>

Royal National Institute for the Blind:

<https://www.nib.org.uk/sight-loss-advice/children-young-people-and-education/support-families-lockdown-eases>

Family Sign Language Lessons – NDCS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-L7-P7dpmdM>

Croydon Vision:

<https://croydonvision.org.uk/activities-program-cy/>

VICTA

[VICTA – Empowering Children and Young Adults who are Blind or Partially Sighted](#)

There's also the Inclusion Football Festival from Palace for Life Foundation – for more information call 020 8768 6047 or contact [MichaelHarrington@palaceforlife.org](mailto:MichaelHarrington@palaceforlife.org)

There are often lots of other activities available to all children over the summer in Croydon. If your child is taking part and you would like us to signpost providers to information about how to make their provision accessible to children and young people with a sensory impairment, please contact the allocated specialist teacher in the first instance.

## Remark! Deaf Self Summer Activities

Remark! is a Deaf led organisation who invest in the Deaf community through Remark! Community, their charity arm, who run a range of projects including Play schemes and Youth Clubs for Deaf Children.



18 Leather Lane, London EC1N 7SU  
0207 269 2622  
fahima.hussain@remark.uk.com  
www.remarkcommunity.org

SUPPORTING LONDON'S DEAF COMMUNITY

They are running a summer holiday activity scheme for children aged 6-16. For more information see the flyer below and contact [fahima.hussain@remark.uk.com](mailto:fahima.hussain@remark.uk.com)

**DEAF-SELF**  
Playscheme

**Based in South East London**

Fun and game  
Arts and crafts  
Exciting trips!  
and much more!

Meet other Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and youth aged 6-16, also Deaf staff!

Improve your Deaf child's confidence and social skills, whilst having fun!

Fantastic opportunity to visit and explore new places

**Where?**  
Cattford Wanderers Sports Club  
Beckenham Hill Road  
Cattford  
SE6 3NU

Train: Beckenham Hill Station

Buses from Cattford/Lewisham/Bromley  
181, 54, 208, 136, 320

**When?**  
27th - 29th July  
3rd - 5th August  
10th - 12th August  
17th - 19th August

**£2 per day**

For more information and to book your Deaf child's place. Please see our programme attached

## Free Parenting and Relationship Support for Parents and Carers in Croydon

Being a parent can be tough – especially when you are feeling stressed, run down and isolated.

Croydon's Support and Interventions team offers a number of programmes that help parents and carers problem-solve, reflect on the challenges of family life and improve family relationships.

## Triple P Parenting Programme

Triple P is a strength-based, 8 week parenting programme that aims to provide parents with a number of practical strategies and enhance their confidence in managing their children's behaviour. The programme also looks at the importance of self-care and taking time out for yourself as a parent.

Triple P consists of a mix of group and one to one sessions – the group sessions allow you to connect with other parents or carers, whilst one to one sessions provide a platform to discuss your individual challenges with a named facilitator.

Triple P groups are free and open to all parents and carers in Croydon.

Please see dates for our virtual groups starting in autumn term 2021 below:

### **Triple P 0-12**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> September – 27 <sup>th</sup> October, 2021	Wednesday	10.30am – 12
15 <sup>th</sup> September – 3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2021	Wednesday	5.30pm – 7pm
28 <sup>th</sup> September – 16 <sup>th</sup> November, 2021	Tuesday	1pm – 2.30pm
1 <sup>st</sup> November – 20 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021	Monday	10.30am – 12

### **Triple P Teen**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>
15 <sup>th</sup> September – 3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2021	Wednesday	10.30am – 12 noon
16 <sup>th</sup> September – 4 <sup>th</sup> November, 2021	Thursday	5.30pm – 7pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> November – 21 <sup>st</sup> December, 2021	Tuesday	5.30pm – 7pm

To join one of our upcoming groups, please ask a professional who is working with you and your family to refer you. Alternatively, you can self-refer via our [Single Point of Contact](#).

### **Building Relationships for Stronger Families – helping parents to work together as a team**

The Building Relationships for Stronger Families programmes offers support to parents and carers who feel that stress in their relationship is affecting their family.

The programme is free to all parents, together or separated, and helps parents to look at improving their communicating, resolving arguments and agreeing on a joint approach to parenting their children.

To find out more and/or self-refer for support, please visit <https://tavistockrelationships.org/therapeutic-help/free-services>

If you have any further questions regarding any of the above programmes, please contact [karen.rasmussen@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:karen.rasmussen@croydon.gov.uk)

## **Mental Health Support Team (MHST) Croydon (CAMHS)**

### Team updates

Our team in the MHST has been busy this year! We continued to work with parents and young people as well as running our group activities and workshops. The families and young people faced unprecedented challenges following the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant that children and teenagers had to spend months away from their friends and teachers, had to adapt to online schooling and had to transition back to school again. Their parents also had to accommodate all this, as well as coping with their own difficulties. We have nothing but respect for our families and can only hope that our lives can soon return to normal.



### Support throughout the summer

The MHST continues to offer support throughout the summer holidays. As schools are closed, we are now offering virtual appointments to our young people and to their parents as well. We also use this time to develop our workshops, improve our services and to make sure that we are ready to return to schools in September.

## Challenges and advice for the summer holidays

Children can sometimes find it challenging to lose the structure and routine of the school during the holidays. They usually start getting up later and going to bed later. While this might be tempting, it is important to keep some structure to our days even during the school break. This could prevent your child's quality of sleep deteriorating.

It might also be helpful to remember and gradually return to the usual morning and bedtime routine before school starts, otherwise the fatigue of the morning might impact on their ability to concentrate, focus, or the motivation to attend school. We would recommend doing this step-by-step, with no more than 30 minutes adjusting time per day.

Parents often find it challenging to fill the days with positive activities and take time for themselves. Remember to take care of yourselves as well, even if it is just going for a walk, eating well, or reading a book you love. It can also be a nice opportunity to spend quality time together as a family (playing board games, going for walks or bike rides).

Returning to school full-time can be anxiety provoking for children and young people so it might help to reassure them and highlight the positive aspects, such as seeing their friends again, having access to after school clubs and learning new things every day.

## Getting further help

If you feel like they might need more help, you can contact your GP for advice or speak to a member of school staff, who might be able to refer your child to mental health support services, **(MHST, Child Wellbeing Practitioner Service, or Croydon Drop In / Off the Record)**

## Parents in Partnership (PiP) and Croydon Mencap



Our aim is to improve lives of parent carers by empowering them to speak up and act for themselves, helping them to realise their potential, and feel enabled to act in a range of situations.

Our services include -

**1 to 1 support from Family Link Workers - including help with**

- navigating and understanding SEND systems for education, health and social care, and talking to professionals
- preparing for meetings to ensure parents feel heard
- advocacy at meetings
- information and support about transition / moving into adulthood.

**Information workshops and training in a range of subjects.**

**Parent participation - opportunities for the SEND community in Croydon to have their voices heard and reduce feelings of isolation.**

Please contact us for more information. Parent carers can self refer, professionals can refer families with consent from the parents.

**PiP @ Croydon Mencap**



**020 8684 5890**



**info@croydonmencap.org.uk**



**www.croydonmencap.org.uk**

**Parents in Partnership joined Croydon Mencap in April, and are now known as PiP @ Croydon Mencap.**

The former chairperson of PiP, Trisha, has joined the Croydon Mencap board.

Dee, Jane, Sharon, Sue, and Tansy are continuing their work with parent carers of children and young people who have any kind of additional needs and disabilities, aged 0-25, living in Croydon.

**Parent carers can refer themselves to the service, professionals can refer families if they have consent from the parents.**

### Contact

Contact is a national charity for families with disabled children.

They provide information and advice, run workshops and events and offer a 1:1 emotional support service.

You can find them at [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)



## Croydon Mencap Chill and Chat

**Chill and Chat**  
for parents of children with  
additional needs from birth to 5  
(term time only)



- New families always welcome
- Meet parents in a similar position to you
- Face to face sessions on Tuesday in Thornton Heath
- Zoom online singalong and storytime sessions with Makaton signing on Friday at 10.30 am
- Also -
  - Support for parents over the phone
  - WhatsApp group sharing information, advice and support

Please contact Chris or Sue for more information and to book

 [chris@croydonmencap.org.uk](mailto:chris@croydonmencap.org.uk) / [sue@croydonmencap.org.uk](mailto:sue@croydonmencap.org.uk)

 020 8684 5890



## Music and Arts for Children and Young People with SEND

At Croydon Music and Arts we offer music lessons in many Croydon schools and out of school music and arts classes. Our aim is to help our young musicians and artists build on their individual abilities to find the ways they wish to express themselves. The arts is a place where all can participate and thrive.



### The Croydon Young Musicians Inclusive Ensemble

is for young people aged 8 upwards and meets at our Croydon Young Musicians Saturday centre from 10.00am to 12.00pm. It is a group for disabled and neuro diverse young people as well as welcoming all others. The focus is to use creativity as a route to musical, personal and social development. The group largely create their own music through co-composition with music leaders using a variety of percussion, voices and technology.

Sessions start with group drumming to develop a sense of teamwork, rhythmic awareness and sensory regulation followed by creative sessions where the group explore themes using words, melodic motifs, sounds and rhythms on iPads and other instruments.

Musical skills are developed as a route to self-expression, communication and self-development with the key being to work with the young people's interests and aspirations as a motivation for musical learning as well as outcomes including greater confidence, teamwork, social awareness, mood enhancement and empowerment.

As a result the style of music created is eclectic and can vary from pop songs to atmospheric soundscapes and everywhere in between and beyond. In 2020 they collaborated with the keyboard and guitar Star Workshop ensemble to create a cover of the song [Hot Hot Hot](#).

### **Croydon Music and Arts and Disability Youth Service**

In partnership with the Disability Youth Service we are planning performing arts sessions at the Waddon Hub on Thursdays from 4.00pm – 6.00pm starting in October. This will be for young people aged 13 – 21 and will offer dance and drama. This will be the new home for our Storytellers group which has been meeting online since lockdown. The group explore different concepts for the stories they want to tell in their shows and have also choreographed their own dance routines.

You can sign up to the CMA groups through our website, [croydonmusicandarts.co.uk](http://croydonmusicandarts.co.uk).

### **Club Soda and Kinetika Bloco**

With our partners Club Soda and Kinetika Bloco we have recently secured funding from Youth Music for two further years for their Croydon activity.

Soda JAM meets on Mondays from 5.00pm to 7.00pm. It is for young people aged 15 to 25 with learning disabilities who want to play music and socialise with other music lovers. You can find more information [here](#).

Kinetika Bloco run regular inclusive holiday courses for young people aged 10 - 18 learning Brass, Woodwind, Steel Pans and Drums together. You can find information about their Croydon Summer School from 23 – 25 August at Stanley Halls [here](#).

Our Youth Music funding will culminate in a joint performance involving Club Soda, Kinetika Bloco and CMA groups alongside musician and disability rights campaigner John Kelly at CMA's Showcase Concert as part of Croydon's London Borough of Culture 2023 celebrations..

If you know a young person who might like to join our exciting journey please get in touch.

[croydonmusicandarts.co.uk](http://croydonmusicandarts.co.uk)

## Locality SEND Support

The Locality SEND Support (LSS) pilot scheme with 33 early adopter schools is just coming to the end of its first year. The pilot year been very successful with over 600 pupils with SEND supported since September 2020. The scheme has been so effective that it is expanding to a further 45 schools in Croydon from September 2021.



The project is aimed at better supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in Croydon mainstream schools by devolving resources to groups of schools in localities across the borough. This should ensure that help is provided at the earliest opportunity, by supporting school SENDCOs with rapid identification and assessment, as well as providing advice and resources to improve outcomes for young people.

Schools in the project benefit from:

- a dedicated Area SEND lead for each locality providing direct support
- help to review and improve the quality of school SEND processes
- assistance, advice and guidance for school SENDCOs to better support students through existing funding
- local additional resources to help support pupils' predictable needs
- access to Higher Need resources for children with exceptional needs
- in addition, each locality has an inclusion development budget for funding general SEND priorities in their locality.

We have been working closely with Headteachers and SENDCOs from our new schools to ensure that they get off to a good start in September and schools will be liaising with parents early in the new academic year.

There has been some great feed-back from parents of pupils who have benefitted from the LSS pilot scheme. Here are just a few of their comments:

- "I think this is a good project and fully support the initiative going forward, thank you."
- "This has undoubtedly given us a great chance of specialist treatment in what seems to be a narrow availability of treatment which would otherwise be out of our reach, but could literally be life changing and determine our child's future. It has also given us hope and much needed support in such a stressful and emotional time."

- “By having 1-1 supporting my child and helping to engage in the lessons at a level he can cope with. And giving him time to complete a task to help him interact with other children and learn to play as a group”
- “I feel this will help enable him to progress on positively for his future goals.”
- “To continue doing what they are doing, with the effort and resources not only that they already have, but if needed and especially when quite specific - additionally sourced.”

For more information including a list of our new schools follow us on twitter.

[www.twitter.com/CroydonLSS](http://www.twitter.com/CroydonLSS)

## Relationships, Health and Sex Education

You may have been contacted by your child's school about two new statutory subjects that have been introduced in schools – Relationships Education and Health Education. In primary schools, these are usually linked to the sex education part of the science curriculum, and the whole area is referred to as RHSE, which is short for Relationships, Health and Sex Education. All schools, including special schools, now have to teach RHSE. In secondary schools, Relationships and Sex education is now being taught.

These subjects will be taught to all pupils, and they will be adapted to fit the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The overall aim of RHSE is to give children the skills and knowledge they need to form healthy and happy relationships, and to know how to get help if they need it. With many children with SEND being vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, it's especially important that they are helped to stay safe throughout their lives.

We would like to reassure you that all teaching will be delivered in an age-appropriate and sensitive way – just like any other subject. Materials will be adapted so that they can be understood and children's needs will be the main focus of the lessons.

**Relationships education** focuses on how to build safe and healthy relationships. For very young children this might start out as learning about who is special in our lives, and how we can learn to be a good friend. Older children will learn about things like prejudice and online safety. For children with SEND there will be close links to the work schools are already doing in preparing pupils for adulthood.

No particular viewpoint will be promoted. Children will be given factual information and helped to understand the law, as well as given a chance to form their own ideas and opinions.

**Health education** looks at a wide range of topics, including healthy eating and the changes we go through as we grow up. The science curriculum remains unchanged and it is here that students will look at life cycles and reproduction.

If you have any questions or concerns about RHSE please contact your child's teacher or feel free to email me at [zoe.barkhammanlow@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.barkhammanlow@croydon.gov.uk)

You can read the full government guidance on RHSE at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

## Croydon Autism Strategy

Last week families, health professionals, charities, emergency services and council officers and members attended a virtual launch event for Croydon Autism Partnership Board (APB)'s new three-year autism strategy, which will use feedback from over 500 local people to improve access to public services for people with autism and encourage wider understanding of barriers they can face.

The strategy, whose aims include improving the health and prospects of local people with autism and follows public consultation last year, will include an action plan due to be finalised this autumn. Measures proposed will include a better diagnosis process, making public spaces more autism-friendly and offering autism-awareness staff training to local employers.

Autism is a lifelong neurological disability and a person with autism's ability to cope and interact with others can vary considerably. Croydon has between 8,000 – 11,000 residents with autism, including 395 young people who receive specialist support at school or college.

If you are a person with autism, or a parent or carer, you are welcome to join one of the council's working groups to help determine what services for people with autism will look like in future. For more details contact Kevin Oakhill, autism social inclusion lead, at: [kevin.oakhill@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.oakhill@croydon.gov.uk)

# AUTISM STRATEGY ON A PAGE (SOAP)

"Our vision is that Croydon will become a place where autistic people feel welcomed, understood and supported to live happy and productive lives."

## Whose strategy is this?

- Croydon's Autism Partnership Board
- Our autistic residents and their families / carers
- Croydon Council
- Croydon Health Services
- Croydon Mencap
- South West London Clinical Commissioning Group

And more partners to be confirmed

## How did we produce it?

We started by looking at the National Autism Strategy. Based on this we consulted with the public, with over 500 responses, and produced our own Croydon targets. We then turned this into a draft strategy. This was discussed and agreed with all of our partners, and with lots of members of our autistic community via a regular Working Group. Finally it was approved by each of the partners.

## What does the strategy say we will do?

There are lots of different areas in the strategy where we have committed to make changes from 2021-2024. The most important of these include:

- A wide programme of training and awareness raising for organisations and the public
- Improvements to the diagnostic pathway for children and adults
- Improve our data and information about autism so that we know more about what's needed
- Improve early support and intervention to reduce the need for high-cost "crisis support"
- Listen to and support autistic people, but also their families and carers
- Make buildings and public spaces more autism-friendly
- Support autistic people with other health conditions or facing multiple barriers
- Always work with autistic people when working on changes to services for autistic people
- Create a detailed action plan with clear owners, and report back regularly on our progress

## What happens next?

The partners will agree an action plan to make sure that it is clear what will be done when, and who will do it. The Autism Partnership Board will monitor this to make sure it is happening. The Working Party meeting will continue, with members mainly made up of autistic people and their families, to ensure that we are always listening to what they want. Most importantly, we will begin working on making all of these things happen to make Croydon more autism-friendly.

## How can I get involved?

Contact Kevin Oakhill, Autism Inclusion Lead at Croydon Council, on

[kevin.oakhill@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.oakhill@croydon.gov.uk)

You can read the more detailed strategy [here](#).

## Local Area SEND Inspections

Local Area SEND Inspections were introduced in 2015 to find out about the impact of the reforms set out in the 2014 Children's Act to improve services for children with SEND and their families. The Local Area includes the Local Authority's Education and Social Care Departments, schools, colleges and early year's settings along with Local Health Services. The inspection is jointly led by inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQA).

A key focus of the inspection process is talking to families, children and young people to find out about their experiences of support in identifying needs and the help that is needed to support educational development and wellbeing.

The majority of Local Area SEND inspections have now been completed. The Croydon Local Area has not been inspected yet but this is likely to happen in early autumn.

In over half of the local areas inspected serious weaknesses were identified in aspects of the provision provided. Common weaknesses identified included:

- Strategic leadership with a lack of forward planning to improve and develop services
- Processes for requesting and issuing EHC plans and the quality of plans
- Joint working between, education, health and social care
- Engagement /relationships with parents

Local areas are asked to produce actions plans to set out how they will address the weaknesses identified. Inspectors will then lead a follow up visit to check progress.

However, it became evident that a one off inspection would not be good enough to drive and sustain improvements to SEND services. As such, planning is in place to enable a more regular cycle of inspection and accountability, with an increased scrutiny on the impact of services and provision for the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and whether this is making a real difference.

### **Have your say!**

As noted the Croydon Local Area SEND Inspection is expected in the autumn. Different services and agencies supporting children and young people within our community, including parent groups, are preparing for this inspection. Preparation involves the Local Area having a clear view of what they do well in identifying and supporting children and young people with SEND and what areas can be improved on. You or your children may have already been involved in forums to inform this evaluation of the current quality of provision.

During the inspection, there will be a range of other opportunities to share your views. Inspectors will:

- Speak to parents and carers during visits to nurseries, schools and colleges at the time of the inspection
- Meet established groups of parents and carers in the local area
- Talk to parents and carers, in a range of settings across education, health and social care
- Meet with parents and carers at an open meeting during the inspection

Once Croydon is notified of the actual inspection date, this will be publicised to all families with children with SEND with details on how you can have your say. It is important that you take this opportunity to voice your views and get involved in shaping improvements to SEND provision.

## Get in touch

**Croydon SEN Enquiries:** [senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk)

### **SEND Local Offer**

Services, advice, information and what's on in and around Croydon  
[localoffer.croydon.gov.uk](http://localoffer.croydon.gov.uk).