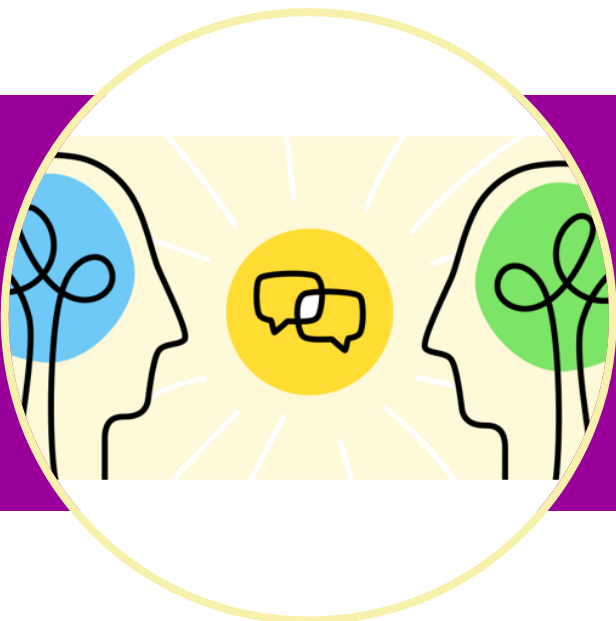


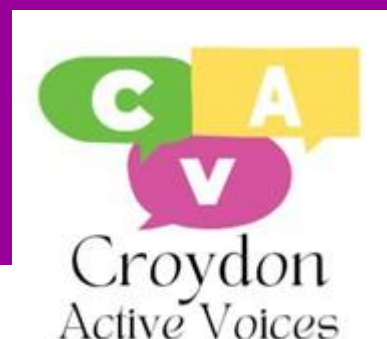


SEND Local Area Newsletter

December 2023



Kids Disabled children say we can



December 2023 Issue 3

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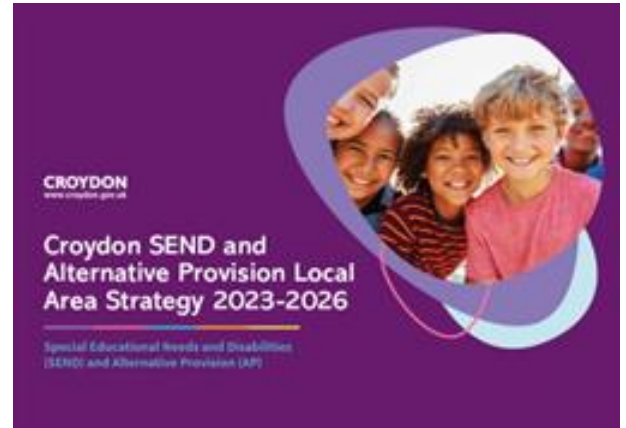
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Croydon SEND and Alternative Provision Local Area Strategy 2023-26

Launch and Priority Group Update

In October, we launched Croydon SEND and Alternative Provision Local Area strategy, which outlines the main priorities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in Croydon from 2023 to 2026.

The strategy is based on the voices of children, young people and their families and it emphasises co-production through collaboration.



This strategy is not just a document; it is a testament to our shared commitment to creating a brighter future for every child and young person in Croydon. Together, we will make this vision a reality.

Recap on our key priorities:

1. Early Identification and Support
2. Providing the support needed by children and young people with SEND during key life transitions
3. Children, young people and families, co-production and collaboration
4. Partnership delivery of transparent robust and co-produced processes to deliver quality plans
5. Integrated commissioning and data forecasting across all phases
6. Workforce development, support and wellbeing

If you would like to become a member of our priority workstreams please send your contact details to: SENDtransformation@croydon.gov.uk

Please click [here](#) for a short video that showcases our journey of development and those that have contributed to the strategy.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication, and let us embark on this journey with hope, determination and a shared sense of purpose.

Christmas Festive Season – Top Tips



For many students the Christmas break is a time of joy, celebration, and leisure. However, the idea of taking a longer break from the regular school schedule might be difficult for students with special educational needs (SEN). It is our responsibility as educators, parents and other carers to offer these kids the structure and support they need to have a happy and fulfilling holiday season. We have provided some tips to help students with special educational needs get ready for their Christmas break from school.

Communication and Preparation

Effective communication is the key to a smooth transition during the holiday break. Begin by engaging with parents, caregivers, and special education professionals to understand the specific needs of each student. Collaboratively create a plan that addresses any potential challenges and outlines strategies to support the child during the break.



Ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page regarding the student's strengths, areas of improvement, and any specific routines or coping mechanisms they rely on. A well-informed support system will contribute significantly to a positive holiday experience.

Create a Visual Schedule

Many pupils with SEN thrive on routine and predictability. During the Christmas break, their usual school routine may be disrupted, leading to anxiety and stress. To alleviate this, create a visual schedule that outlines the daily activities, events, and transitions during the break.

Use pictures, symbols, or written words based on the child's communication and comprehension abilities. This visual schedule can act as a reassuring guide, providing a sense of structure and reducing uncertainty.

Incorporate Learning Activities

While the holidays are a time for relaxation, incorporating enjoyable and engaging learning activities can help pupils with SEN maintain cognitive stimulation. Tailor these activities to the child's individual needs and preferences.

Explore activities that align with their interests, such as sensory play, arts and crafts, or interactive games. By making learning enjoyable, you can keep the child's mind active and provide opportunities for skill development.

Provide Social Stories

Social stories are a valuable tool for preparing pupils with SEN for new or unfamiliar situations. Create social stories related to the holiday season, focusing on key aspects like family gatherings, festive traditions, and changes in routine.

These stories can be personalized to address specific concerns or challenges the child may face during the break. Reading these stories together can help the student understand and navigate the social dynamics of the holiday season.

Sensory-Friendly Celebrations

The sensory environment during the holidays can be overwhelming for some pupils with SEN. Work with families to identify sensory triggers and adjust the holiday celebrations accordingly.

Create a quiet space where the child can retreat if they become overwhelmed. Provide sensory friendly activities and consider adjusting the lighting, noise levels, and decorations to create a more comfortable environment for those with sensory sensitivities

Health and Wellbeing Support and Resources

Mental health Lead Resource Hub: Mentally Healthy Schools

On 7th November 2023, a new online resource hub launched the Mentally Healthy Schools site. Commissioned by the Department for Education, Anna Freud have collaborated with a range of education and mental health experts to produce this new hub for mental health leads and other education staff.



The hub will support schools and colleges to embed and sustain a whole-school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

It offers practical resources and tools from trusted organisations, including senior mental health lead training providers, all under one roof, further supporting mental health leads to continue to develop their role and better support the children and young people in their setting.

The hub has been designed in consultation with a wide range of sector and professional bodies to ensure it is suitable for different setting types and age ranges, distinguishing between the bespoke needs of a varied workforce.

This resource hub has been created in partnership with and funded by the Department for Education, with new resources added regularly.

For more information, please visit the [Mentally Healthy Schools website](#).

Kids

CROYDON SENDIAS SERVICE

FACE TO FACE DROP-IN SESSIONS AT CROYDON CARERS SUPPORT CENTRE FROM 10AM TO 12 PM ON TUESDAYS TERM TIME ONLY

Croydon SENDIAS service offer independent, impartial, confidential and free of charge legal advice and support for young people (YP) and families who have children/ YP with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

If you need legal advice, support or assistance with:

- ☐ Requesting EHC needs assessment,
- ☐ Understanding EHCP process,
- ☐ Annual EHCP review process,
- ☐ Appealing LA's decision,
- ☐ Discussions and meetings with school/Local Authority on SEND

The following sessions on:

- 09th 16th 23rd 30th January
- 06th 20th 27th February;
- 05th 12th 19th 26th March;

For more information contact:

Email: Croydon@kids.org.uk

Phone: +44 20 8152 4558

Website : Croydon SENDIASS - Kids



There are limited places available. If you are interested, please book a place by sending your full name, the name of the session you would like to attend and your contact details to croydon@kids.org.uk.



Croydon MUSIC & ARTS

INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLES

Saturdays at Croydon Music and Arts

Creative Music Makers at 10am **Access Music Makers at 11:15am**

Lyric Writing **Carnival Percussion**

Performing at public events

Singing **Music Technology**

£35/term (Free for Pupil Premium students and Looked After children)

Thursdays at Waddon Youth Centre

Access Studio at 5pm **Dance and drama**

Free for 13–25 year olds with special educational needs

To find out how to get involved,
scan or click the QR code or visit
www.croydonmusicandarts.co.uk/inclusivity



The Write Time 'Take Charge' Programme



The Write Time will be running another round of their brilliant "Take Charge" programme from January 2024.

The 6-week programme is dedicated to promoting family harmony for parents with young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and offers a comprehensive range of 1-to-1 and group support, including mentoring activities and counselling.

They facilitate weekly coffee mornings, providing a safe and welcoming space for parents to gain knowledge and understanding of their children's needs and difference's and can also support with EHCPs, DLA and benefits support and advice to those who attend.

We believe this programme has the potential to transform the lives of families in our community by empowering parents with essential relationship management skills, fostering positive family dynamics and open communication.

Here are some feedback quotes from parents who are currently attending 'Take Charge' sessions:

“

"Eye-opening conversations"

"A positive outlook for my future"

"I've learned the support I have in my life"

”

For more information or to book a place please email holliechisnall@thewritetime.org.uk or sukbahra@thewritetime.org.uk or visit the website by clicking [here](#).

The flyer for the 'Take Charge' programme is divided into several sections. At the top, it has a blue header with the title 'Take Charge' in a yellow script font, followed by the subtitle 'Reducing Parental Conflict Programme' in white. Below this, a paragraph explains the programme's purpose: 'Our programme is designed for parents with a child/young person who has SEND. We offer a range of mentoring, activities and counselling to support parents to achieve a more harmonious family life.' The middle section features a photo of two women sitting on a bench outdoors, talking. To the right of the photo, a yellow box titled 'What can you expect?' lists the programme's offerings: 'Coffee mornings', 'Learn your rights', 'Counselling', 'Mentoring', and 'Group and 1:1 activities'. Below the list is a blue button that says 'You choose what you need.' The bottom section has a green background with four icons and their corresponding descriptions: 'Expert advice' (heart icon), 'Interactive activities' (cup icon), 'Personalised support for you and your child' (two people icon), and 'Valuable resources' (crossed arrows icon). The footer is a blue bar with the text 'No fees - it's all free!' in white script font, accompanied by a yellow starburst graphic.

Take Charge
Reducing Parental Conflict Programme

Our programme is designed for parents with a child/young person who has SEND. We offer a range of **mentoring, activities and counselling** to support parents to achieve a more harmonious family life.

What can you expect?

Take Charge is a free programme offering:

- Coffee mornings
- Learn your rights
- Counselling
- Mentoring
- Group and 1:1 activities

You choose what you need.

Expert advice **Interactive activities** **Personalised support for you and your child** **Valuable resources**

No fees - it's all free!

SEND Local Area Learning Development Workshops



Learning Development Workshop:

Collaboration and communication with children and young people with learning needs

This session will be delivered by **Communicate 2 U** and will be collaboratively facilitated by our Occupational Therapists and Communication Experts.

Our Communication Experts will deliver key messages and facilitate activities using their preferred communication methods including song and drama.

Workshop objectives:

- Understand the importance of adapting our communication to mirror the communication strengths of our service users
- Learn about intercultural communication theory: an evidence base developed by staff and communication experts at Communicate 2 U
- Practice using 'words plus...' communication to communicate common messages in health, social care and education including non-verbal communication, pictures and drama
- Generate goals to take in to practice



You can join the January Learning Development Workshop by clicking [here](#). We will continue to provide monthly SEND Local Area Workshops and have included our monthly schedule with upcoming themes for 2024.

Learning Development Workshops		Theme
Wednesday 22 nd November 2023	14.00-15.30	Health Professionals only
Wednesday 17 th January 2024	14.00-15.30	Collaboration and communication with CYP with learning needs
Wednesday 21 st February 2024	14.00-15.30	Transitions
Wednesday 20 th March 2024	14.00-15.30	Autism Friendly Environments
Wednesday 17 th April 2024	14.00-15.30	Autism for girls and how it is presented
Wednesday 15 th May 2024	14.00-15.30	Preventing exclusion for CYP with SEND
Wednesday 19 th June 2024	14.00-15.30	Behavioral support in schools and community
Wednesday 17 th July 2024	14.00-15.30	Early Support for parents and families
Wednesday 18 th September 2024	14.00-15.30	Mental health and support
Wednesday 16 th October 2024	14.00-15.30	SEND and the law
Wednesday 20 th November 2024	14.00-15.30	SEND Youth Voice/Participation

Important REMINDERS

EXTENDED Speech and Language Therapy Mini-tender – Allen Speech & Language Ltd.

A short-term service

We wanted to let you know that we have extended the speech and language service that was previously commissioned on a 6-month contract to provide extra capacity to meet the needs of children and young people.

The provider is called Allen Speech & Language Ltd. and they currently provide speech and language therapists to deliver some interventions for children where Croydon Health Services (CHS) speech and language service are unable to provide due to capacity.

Issues of concern raised by parent/carers and some colleagues.

This note sets out to acknowledge the disappointment that some families and schools may have that their child/ren are not benefitting from this service. The aim of this commission is to increase capacity in the short term and see how the model of a new private provider works to meet need.

Reason this short-term service is being provided

All the stakeholders understand there are long term plans to commission a major new contract for therapies in relation to SEND. This short-term arrangement is a trial using a new provider and increases capacity whilst the replacement contract is prepared.

The Local Authority will use a rigorous procedure to ensure that all pupils who have identified speech and language requirements because of an education, health, and care needs assessment (EHCNA) receive access to Speech and language services. When a student is identified, a letter is issued to families and educational settings informing them that Allen SALT will contact them to discuss and implement the programme if required.

We are working on cases that were heard at Statutory Assessment Group (SAG) and have had their EHCNA completed beginning of January 2023 and onwards.

Applying for School Places and Transitions

School Admissions process and advice

If your child turned four years old between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020 you will need to apply for a reception school place to begin in September 2024.

Please find information below on what you need to do and when.



School Admissions
Advice for Parents

Moving to secondary schools – Timeline of key activities for transfer of children with EHC plans

The LA SEND Service manage the secondary transfer process for children with EHC plans. Parents do not have to complete the general online secondary school application form.

Please find further information on what you need to do and when.



Moving to Secondary
School Timeline



Secondary School
Prospectus 2024-25

SEND Journey – Celebrating Success!

We want to send a special thank you to all the children and young people that have been involved in key events throughout this year.

Your contributions towards improving the services across the children, young people and education directorate has been invaluable.

By developing the SEND Local Area Strategy, building a SEND youth Voice and supporting key initiatives across the borough, we now have a platform to continue with all the great work moving forward.



Get in Touch

SEND Local Offer

Services, advice, information and what's on in and around Croydon.

<https://localoffer.croydon.gov.uk/>

Croydon SEND Transformation

sendtransformation@croydon.gov.uk

