North East notes Autumn Winter 2024 Sept 25th

Dear friends and colleagues of the North East,

Welcome back after the summer for the first of the autumn, winter Local Community Partnership meetings. Thank you for those who regularly attend and it was fantastic to see some new faces and hear some new local voices. Thank you to our venue, Stanley Arts, for hosting us; what an incredible space and community asset on our doorstep. For more information on Stanley arts and their streams of activity[, here](file:///C:\Users\ChloeSmith\OneDrive%20-%20Croydon%20Voluntary%20Action\Documents\Custom%20Office%20Templates).

Our meeting focused on the community plans and the successful partnership working that has held a focus on young people, their safety and wellbeing. For those who are new to these meetings, here is a brief recap of this way of working, ‘The Why’, behind this approach to change.

**Local Community Partnerships – The Journey So Far**

The work of ‘Healthy Communities Together’, part of One Croydon Alliance, is about devolving power and resources to people and communities. Local Community Partnerships started in 2020 to provide a structure to integrate/join up with social care, primary care, wellbeing services, mental health, hospitals and all stakeholders. Local Community Partnerships are how we collectively work on our local priorities and create our Community Plan.

One Croydon created six geographical areas to provide wrap around support for people close to home with prevention and self-management a key part of the plan. Using Asset Based Community Development our partnership is focused on ‘*what’s strong instead of what’s wrong’*, we start with the gifts and talents we have, inviting people to co-create local solutions. For more on ABCD click [here.](https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/)

**How do I find out what’s going on in my area?**

*Simply Connect Croydon* is the Google of up-to-date activities. You simply search by keywords the activity you are looking for. Organisations and groups can have their own profile where their organisation will be listed and details of their services/activities. Groups/orgs can sign up to Simply Connect Croydon directly by using the link [here](https://croydon.simplyconnect.uk/auth/register/provider) which will provide them with the opportunity to take referrals to their services. Alternatively, to have the information listed on simply connect you can complete a registration form [here.](https://croydon.simplyconnect.uk/auth/register/provider) For trouble shooting concerning Simply Connect or 1-2-1 training sessions please email Karen/Mary. [Karen.chillman@cvalive.org.uk](mailto:Karen.chillman@cvalive.org.uk)  or [mary.lawrence@cvalive.org.uk](mailto:mary.lawrence@cvalive.org.uk)

Our Partnership update- Reaching Higher and His Grace.

Reaching Higher are one of our key partners in working with young people across the borough supporting 360 wrap around care at home, school and in the community. The funding from our partnership has developed their work and furthered their reach.

On Mondays, The Youth Café, in partnership with South Norwood Community Kitchen, has created space for young people to chill, eat, and develop their skills in cooking. Tuesdays their forerunners and Lit programmes focus on employability and training. Weekly basketball has been growing in strength and the Thursday Youth Hub is where there has been great support and challenge. The staff of Reaching Higher were able to grow their training and skills to be able to support the young people. The challenge of having a mix of young people attending The Hub has called for The Hub to change the way it operates to best serve the young people. They have recognised the need for more of a group mentoring approach and are adopting that.

This summer 35 young people were given paid work experience. Caspar from Clear Community Web took some young people to work with him at the digital drop in’s which provided an intergenerational opportunity. The young people enjoyed it and the common learning among them was that they learnt patience.

Alecia, shared with us an anonymised change story of a young person who had been engaged through detached outreach work, as they were loitering on the streets. They were invited to attend forerunners and lit of which they did in time. Through this engagement, this young person learnt employability skills, has an improved relationship with the police and is representing Youth Voice at The Childhood Trust and other organisations where young people’s voices need to be heard. They have changed things around and this is one of many experiences they hold working with young people. More on the good works of reaching higher [here.](https://www.reachinghigher.org.uk/)

His Grace-

We heard a wonderful song ‘I’ve got the power in me’ from the young people, that was written as an anti-bullying song. We celebrate the gifts and talents of those in community with this way of working. We then heard from Alleyiah who runs the ‘Chillzone’ every Saturday from 11-1 pm. Alleyiah herself has been involved with his grace for over 10 years and is best place to lead on this Hub. She spoke of how this is a vital place for checking in with young people, mentoring them, expanding their perspectives on things for growth and development. This is a safe space for down time, to eat healthy food, to work on character development, speak about bullying, career mapping and mental health. The stats from His Grace below speak to the success of their presence in community

* October 2023- now 5920 young people have passed through his grace and 3020 have stayed and engaged.
* 320 have engaged in a safe space for mental health and talk therapy through a close relationship with mind in Croydon.
* His grace food bank has been able to provide work experience for young people not in education or training.
* 1620 people have come through the community hub
* 5000 people overall have been supported in a variety of ways, GP referrals, housing support, PIP forms, pre-loved laptops and digital support along with school uniform provisions.

For a wider look at the good work of his grace [here.](https://www.hisgrace-evangelicaloutreach.co.uk/)

Community Plans- Why They Matter?

As part of this work through resident voice and local engagement, we have been able to feedback to the council and those who develop strategy, that governs the health and wellbeing for the borough for the next 5 years, what issues are of central importance to us locally. For this locality we have defined the following issues :

**Youth**, young people their wellbeing and safety.

**Community Hubs**, places for connection socially and to be supported in ways that improve physical and mental wellbeing, addressing practical needs where necessary.

**Mental Health**, safe places to be, to talk and connect, a need for activities to engage with.

**Later Life**, how are we supporting the elderly in the community to be well connected and have a good quality of life, remaining independent for as long as possible.

**Heating and Eating,** are we able to ensure through the knowledge, skills and initiatives between us that every household is adequately warm and fed.

Too further define these areas of importance and to reshape and review our community plans we broke into groups to discuss how we can develop this into actionable work. Some of the points fed back from discussions are captured below, the full scope of that feedback is attached .

**Youth-**

We heard the need for more promotion and communication of youth provisions in ways that they engage with. More work experience opportunities and more intergenerational work has been called for.

**Community Hubs-** We heard the need for community hubs to be inclusive of all community and free to attend. We heard how private spaces could potentially gift time to host a hub as part of giving back to the community. The need for connectivity being able to connect other statutory and community groups into hubs and out of hubs to the activities that are held by those groups in community.

**Mental Health and wellbeing**- We heard the need to identify safe spaces that are community focused such as ‘ little mouse’ cheese shop, ‘Communi-tea’ and ‘Barbers’ being places that these safe spaces can be established/ developed. The potential reinstating of the Sainsburys café and better use of notice boards in community/ supermarkets that advertises local offers.

**Heating and Eating**- We heard the need for greater education on your energy bills, to see if you could be paying less. Companies like Octopus and Utlitity Warehouse but also community energy advisors like ‘ Croydon Healthy Homes’ and the ‘BME Forum’, as well as Croydon Climate Action to better educate residents on energy usage. We spoke about the need for retrofitting houses to insulate them better as well as the job opportunities for young people in the green industry. We heard the need for localised knowledge on foodbanks and other food offers such as the South Norwood Community Kitchen, Sikh temples and churches, who also provide clothes and toy swaps.

These solutions speak to the collective power and resources we have among us to create actionable change that directly impacts those most affected. If you have a passion to further the good work on any of the above themes please do contact your Co-chairs Nicole and Magdalene. [workingtogether@noothinking.co.uk-](mailto:workingtogether@noothinking.co.uk-) Nicole

[magdalene@music-relief.org](mailto:magdalene@music-relief.org) – Magdalene.

Thank you for attending a very full and productive meeting, we look forward to seeing you at the next one on the 4th December 10-12 pm at the Lakes Café, Waterside pavilion. [Here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/local-community-partnerships-croydon-north-east-tickets-946106097807) to book your free place.

Warm wishes, Sarah, Andrew, Nicole and Magdalene.