

Borough Report 2022
Croydon



Introduction

Welcome to our Better Working Futures Borough Report 2022 for Croydon.

We are pleased to present the latest information on delivery of our employment support to job-seeking residents in the borough.

This year we have seen the programme continue to make a difference in the community. Against performance targets for helping people into employment, we have seen some of our best ever results over recent months.

This performance is set against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions lifting and our team continuing to adjust our support to reflect an ever-changing labour market.

Given many people's experiences of the past two years, the need for joined-up support that addresses employment and health priorities has never been more important.

Across the UK there are now **one million more disabled people in work than five years ago** (ONS, May 2022).

The employment disability gap – the difference in employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people – has narrowed. It is currently 28.2%, down from 33.8% in 2017.

Funding for programmes like Better Working Futures was provided to achieve results like these.

There is clearly still more to do to make work accessible for everybody.

The agility and dedication our team at Reed in Partnership has displayed since I joined as Programme Director for the programme last year means we are well placed to continue playing an important role.

I have also been inspired by so many of the other local support services and community partners in Croydon that integrate with what we do here to support local residents.

I hope that this report provides a good overview of the work and impact I believe we are having.

As always, we are very happy to hear from you. If you are ever interested in dropping in to see our programme in action, or have your questions answered, please do feel free to contact me at chris.paterson@reed.com

Best wishes



Chris Paterson
Programme Director



Programme overview

Better Working Futures service, our name for the Work and Health Programme, launched in March 2018.

The programme is commissioned by South London Partnership and co-funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and the European Social Fund. It is delivered across the five boroughs of the South London Partnership: Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton.

Better Working Futures provides support to help people find and keep a job. It is available, on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities, and to various groups of vulnerable people who have early entrant access.

It also provides support to those who have been unemployed for over two years. For this group, the programme is compulsory.

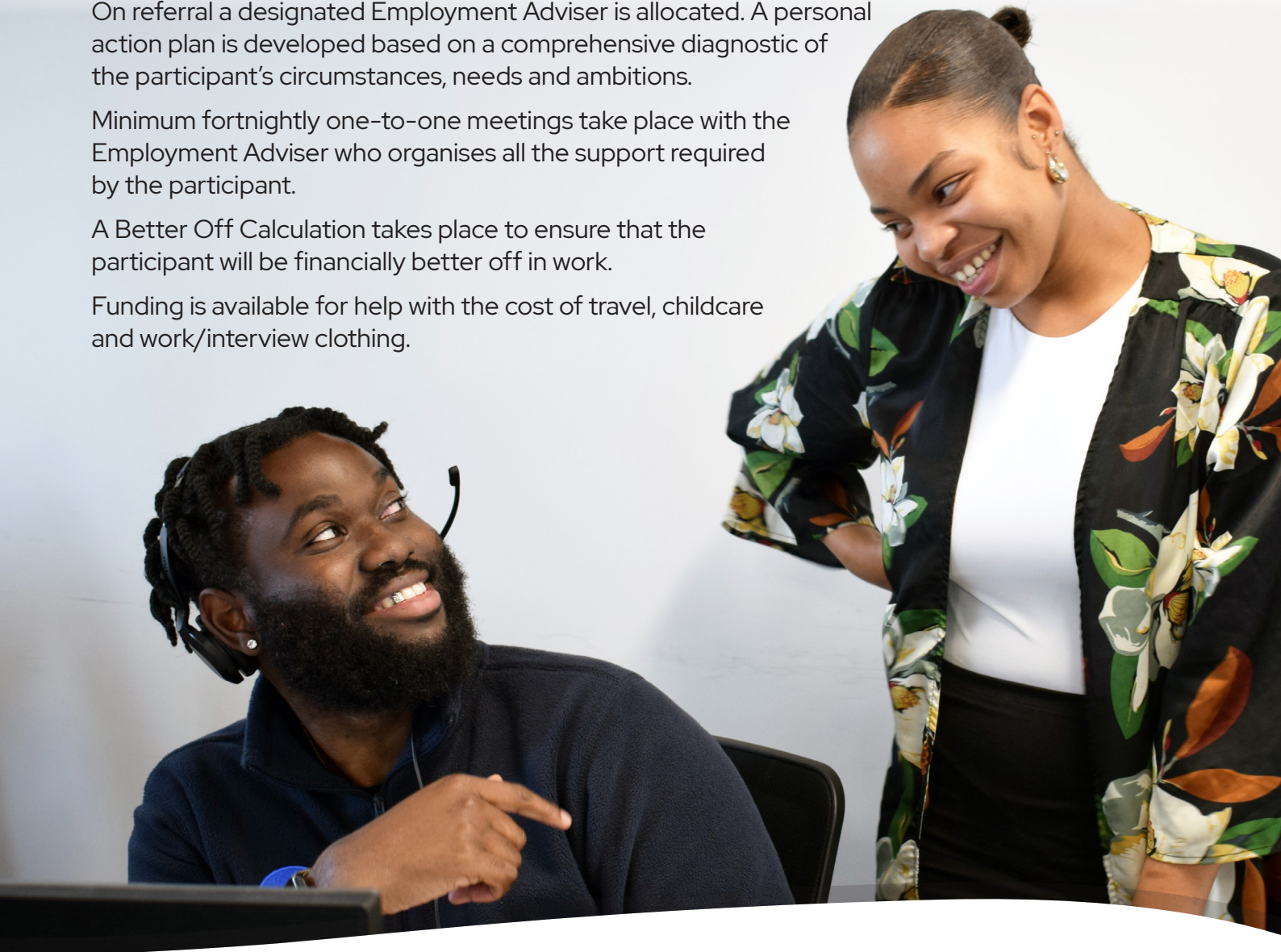
Participants have been identified by their Jobcentre Plus Work Coach as needing more intensive support to overcome their barriers to employment and are therefore referred to Better Working Futures.

On referral a designated Employment Adviser is allocated. A personal action plan is developed based on a comprehensive diagnostic of the participant's circumstances, needs and ambitions.

Minimum fortnightly one-to-one meetings take place with the Employment Adviser who organises all the support required by the participant.

A Better Off Calculation takes place to ensure that the participant will be financially better off in work.

Funding is available for help with the cost of travel, childcare and work/interview clothing.



Seven areas of support



1. Mindset

We help participants to get motivated and start thinking positively about employment and their own abilities.



2. Employability

Practical skills development for job searching, CV writing and interview skills. Self-employment support is also available.



3. Skills and qualifications

Work specific skills development that match local employer needs. Access and funding is provided for accredited training and qualifications. Sector taster sessions are available.



4. Personal circumstances

An extensive range of support, confidential advice and advocacy to overcome personal barriers, including housing issues, caring responsibilities, financial issues and previous convictions.





5. Health and disability

Our delivery was developed in partnership with Disability Rights, the UK charity run by and for people with lived experience of a disability or health condition. Health and Wellbeing Advisers provide one-to-one and group support to help participants manage a health condition, in and outside of the workplace.



6. Employment options

We have links with employers across South London. We work with employers of all sizes and types to source a wide range of appropriate vacancies that match the ambitions of our participants. We support employers to develop their understanding of health conditions and make reasonable adjustments through our role as a Disability Confident Leader.



7. In-work support

An In-Work Plan is produced that provides ongoing support once the participant starts employment. A progression review is offered to help increase the participant's salary, hours or review trading for self-employed participants.

Additionally, a wide range of support through external provision is available. Our Route Planner Tool contains details of local Croydon services that can provide coordinated support with specialist interventions for health and lifestyle factors and training options.

Programme data

March 2018 - August 2022

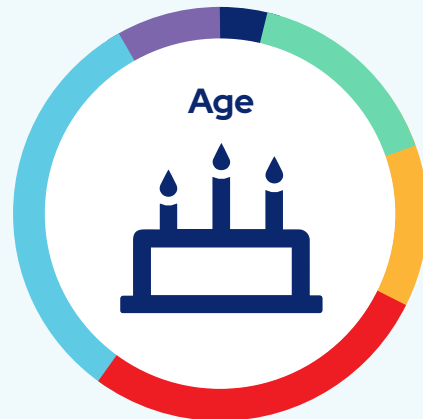
Location

Broad Green Ward	8%
Fairfield Ward	8%
Thornton Heath Ward	8%
Selhurst Ward	7%
Woodside Ward	7%
South Norwood Ward	6%
West Thornton Ward	6%
Waddon Ward	6%
Bensham Manor Ward	5%
Fieldway Ward	5%
Addiscombe Ward	5%
New Addington Ward	4%
Purley Ward	4%
Croham Ward	3%
Shirley Ward	3%
Ashburton Ward	3%
Kenley Ward	2%
Heathfield Ward	2%
Coulsdon East Ward	2%
Upper Norwood Ward	2%
Sanderstead Ward	1%
Coulsdon West Ward	1%
Selsdon & Ballards Ward	1%
Norbury Ward	1%

4%
18-24

17%
25-34

12%
35-44



9%
65+

32%
55-64

26%
45-54



83% (53% male, 47% female)

Disability / Health Condition (Voluntary)

10% (64% male, 36% female)

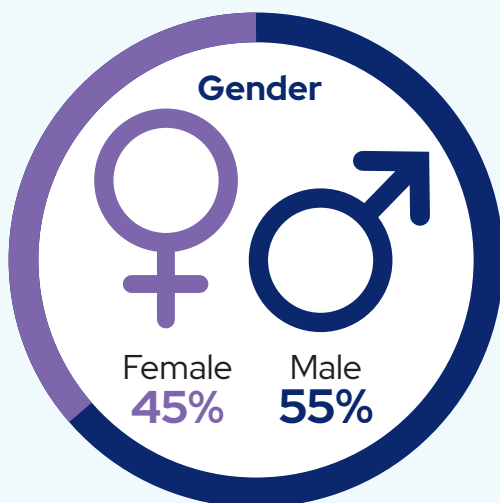
Vulnerable Early Entrant Access (Voluntary)

Includes people who are: a carer or former carer homeless; a former member of the armed forces or a reservist; the partner of a current or former member of the armed forces; a care leaver; a young person in a gang; a refugee; a victim of domestic violence; have or have had a dependency on drugs or alcohol; an ex-offender

7% (65% male, 35% female)

Long-Term Unemployed (Mandatory)

People who have been unemployed for 24 months or longer



Gender

Female
45%

Male
55%



84% Disability / Health Condition

11% Vulnerable Early Entrant Access

5% Long-Term Unemployed

White (British) **57%**
Black (African / Caribbean / British) **21%**
Mixed / Multiple / Other **10%**
Asian (Bangladeshi / Chinese / Indian / Pakistani / British) **11%**



Most common health barriers to work

- 1** Mental health issues
- 2** General poor health and lifestyle
- 3** Learning difficulties

Most common barriers to work

- 1** Not knowing how to customise a CV
- 2** Poor interview skills
- 3** No suitable interview clothing

Most common job goals



Service performance

Participant starts to date	2,534
Job starts to date	865
Job sustainments to date	369

Sustainments are achieved when the participant has reached a specified level of earnings from employment or has reached 6 months of being in self-employment.

Benefitting Croydon

Local job starts

5,727 South London unemployed residents – **2,534** of them in Croydon – have had the opportunity to access the programme and make a plan to find employment since it launched in March 2018.

865 participants from Croydon have started working with our help. **59%** of those using the programme in Croydon come from jobless households, where inter-generational

unemployment often increases the number and severity of barriers to finding work.

Breaking this cycle is important to the prospects of all household members.



865
Croydon
residents
helped into
work

Generating income

The average hourly wage for jobs started by residents in Croydon is **£9.96** and the most common contracted hours are **40 hours** per week. We can see from our data that **369** of participants supported into work have sustained until they have earned **£3,000** in income from their job so far, with many more approaching this figure soon. This shows that the roles participants are supported to access are meaningful, secure work.

However, only 16% of participants start work earning above the London Living Wage. With the current cost of living issues facing people, we are helping participants by working with our key partners such as **Citizens Advice Bureau, Shelter** and **Beam**.

We are also running Cost of Living events for our participants where they can discuss their challenges and concerns with Croydon-based representatives from local Housing Authorities, financial wellbeing organisations, foodbanks and the Citizens Advice Bureau.



Partnerships that break down barriers

In Croydon, the top three most common health barriers participants report are mental health issues, general poor health and lifestyle and learning difficulties.

Our Health and Wellbeing Advisers provide a range of in-house personal and group support that address these key barriers, including managing anxiety, stress awareness, sleeping well, mindfulness, being more physically active, understanding nutrition and mood management.

We also work in partnership with local health support organisations to complete our programme. This includes **IAPT, Croydon Talking Therapies, Chiltern Clinic** and **Living Well CIC** – who provide our participants with a six-week programme if they have a long-term health condition, such as diabetes, arthritis, chronic pain, depression, HIV or long Covid. The programme helps participants learn new skills to manage their condition with a healthcare professional, meet others and share experiences and use their new skills and knowledge to improve their quality of life.

Participants also benefit from our local partnership with **The Nehemiah Project**, an independent charity with five houses in South London where male participants with a history of substance misuse can access a therapeutic programme with keywork meetings, counselling, psychotherapy, Family Support Service, and supported attendance at AA meetings.

The other most common, non-health related barriers to work among Croydon participants are not knowing how to customise a CV, poor interview skills and not having any suitable interview clothing.

We help participants overcome these issues through dedicated support from their Employment Adviser, access to funding for clothing and integration with community services. This includes **South Thames College Group** and **Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT)**, who complement our programme with additional bespoke CV support, digital skills training and ESOL skills. They also offer specific courses for Croydon adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Participants in Croydon are most likely to want to work in administration, retail or customer service.

To ensure suitable job vacancies and opportunities we have our own Recruitment Managers who are responsible for the Borough of Croydon. We also liaise with the local Employment & Skills Lead from the Borough as well as **Croydon Works**, the job and training hub specifically for Croydon residents.

“We are delighted to work with Better Working Futures. Both organisations are committed to working collaboratively and taking a person-centred approach in supporting our clients.”

Living Well

Employer relations



We have worked with Angard to place 15 people into work in entry-level mail sorting roles located in Croydon and other locations. In partnership with Angard, we have been able to support participants through the application journey and provide in-work support after they have been appointed to their new roles.

WH Smith

Following the success of a job fair that we held last year, we have continued to maintain a strong relationship with WHSmith, with over 17 participants now placed into their South London and Gatwick branches. Additionally, WHSmith has particularly encouraged applicants with disabilities and has been very flexible with our participants' barriers to work, including accommodating flexible working arrangements.

Hilton

We built a relationship with Hilton after attending their careers open days. Taking participants to these events resulted in on-the-spot interviews and an invitation to have our own Reed in Partnership stand at Hilton events. Roles available from Hilton can be anything from front of house, reception, housekeeping and more. We have had a total of 10 job offers to our participants with five of these already in post.



We approached Little Pumpkins Nursery in Croydon after noting that our caseload required part-time and full-time work during school hours. Since then, we have been working closely with the nursery, and have filled two vacancies with further job offers being made. Little Pumpkins has asked for support from our team to fill additional vacancies, after being so pleased with the service we have provided.



Croydon Commitment supports Croydon residents with employability, education, health & wellbeing, and more. After the John Lewis site in Croydon closed due to Covid-19, Croydon Commitment were awarded funding to help support Croydon residents back into work. Providing that the participant comes from Croydon, the service provides leads for live vacancies and has a partnership with Croydon Vision, a sight impairment support group. We have collaborated with Croydon Commitment to place four CSCS labourers into roles and an administrator into a role with Croydon Vision.

StriveTraining

Strive is a local training provider in Croydon whose services are often used by our participants. We have a great relationship - Strive attended the Jobs Fair at our Croydon office to provide participants with more information about their services. Strive also recently appointed a Better Working Futures participant as a Business Administrator at their Suffolk House office.

People's stories

Conal started using Better Working Futures after a period of unemployment due to poor mental health and also not knowing what employment path to take.

Conal met with his Employment Adviser, James, and they began to identify the sectors he was most interested in. Prior to his most recent job in the Gas and Oil industry, he also had previous experience in the hospitality sector. During his time on the programme, Conal also took part in our in-house 'Managing Anxiety', 'Self-confidence', and 'Identifying Job Goals' courses to assist him in becoming job ready.

Together, Conal and James started exploring hospitality as a strong option for finding employment and James arranged for Conal to attend an open day event with Hilton Hotels, an employer that our Recruitment Managers have a strong partnership with. This open day was a huge success for Conal and he was successful with the Hilton recruitment process, being offered a role as an Apprentice Chef.

Throughout his time on the programme, Conal went from strength to strength to overcome the problems he was facing when he started. He has been in his role for over two months now and is expected to pass his probation period.

Garry started the programme having been unemployed for nine months. He mentioned at the start that he suffered from physical health barriers with his back issues causing mobility limitations. He also told his Employment Adviser that he felt he might have autism, although he had never been formally diagnosed. His health issues and housing situation were causing Garry to have low mood.

Garry and his Employment Adviser agreed a SMART Action Plan which focused on improving his CV and interview techniques with our Employability & Skills Trainer. He subsequently achieved a temporary seasonal role as a Mail sorter with Royal Mail, sourced by our Recruitment Manager. Whilst this went well, unfortunately he was not retained after the Christmas period, which further dented his self-confidence.

Garry was reassigned to one of our Rapid Response Employment Advisers. They signposted him to our package of health and wellbeing sessions, which include our Managing Anxiety and Mood Management courses. We supplemented this support with further

employability courses which helped Garry to rebuild his confidence and appreciate how he could use his transferable skills.

Garry was formally diagnosed with autism which, combined with his housing situation, further affected his mental health. We continued to support Garry with our health and wellbeing sessions and by working with the local council Housing Department. To support with Garry's physical health, we signposted him to the Chiltern Clinic, who supported him with pain management for his back. Our Employment Support Officer accompanied him to his first appointment, and it was amazing to see Garry beginning to attend appointments with us without a walking stick.

Through regular supported job searching with his Employment Adviser, Garry successfully found employment with Pret A Manger. As this role was based in West London, we were able to support him with the cost of travel and work clothing to help him settle in, and six months later he is still working at Pret A Manger, which he thoroughly enjoys.

