

# Croydon older people's Personal Independence Coordinator service to be enhanced in response to user feedback

Press release: 2 March 2022

- Healthwatch Croydon interviewed 64 service users of the Personal Independence Coordinator service run by Age UK Croydon.
- A majority saw long term impact including improvements in physical health, help with financial issues, reduced loneliness and increased confidence.
- Around 1 in 5 needed extra support and contact, and 1 in 6 saw no improvement at all. Recommendations suggest exploring why it did not work for some and providing extra support and information when the programme ends.

Since 2018, the One Croydon Alliance has commissioned Age UK Croydon to deliver the Personal Independence Coordinator (PICs) programme. The clients were previously regular attendees at GPs or hospital services. The aim of this service to help clients become more independent.

Healthwatch Croydon were commissioned by Age UK Croydon to provide independent insight of service user experience of the service as part of a wider evaluation. The report *Client experience of Croydon's Personal Independence Coordinator Programme* shows the insight from 64 telephone interviews with service users between August and October 2021 who had completed the programme six months prior to the interview.

Healthwatch Croydon asked about what they had support with, what long term impact it made and whether their confidence increased as a result. This helped One Croydon

Alliance and Age UK Croydon evaluate the success of the programme and consider improvements for the future development of the programme.

### These are our findings:

- **Physical and mental health issues and managing finance were key issues for clients:** Signposting, support, and advice were two of the top areas where people needed help. Issues such as improving homes with facilities to make it easier for clients wanted to live were important, as well as financial issues.
- **Once clients had finished the programme, most found that financial issues had improved, and they had support over the physical health issues.** Clients also had reduced loneliness and increased confidence as well as reduce stress. However, nearly one in six (15.3%) said they had no improvement.
- **Over three quarters saw long term-impact:** 78% of those asked had felt some significant long-term impact of PICS some months after the programme finished.
- **Nearly a third wanted extra support or contact:** 55% said they could not suggest improvements. Of those who did, most wanted extra support (19%) or contact (12%).
- **Increase in confidence for some:** 42% said their confidence had increased; 20% said they had seen no change.

### These are our recommendations:

- **Look at those it did not work for and understand why:** While it expected that it would not work for all, an analysis of why it did not work for one in six would be useful to ensure this service works as well as it could for all.
- **Extra support once the programme ends:** Some clients feel they needs more time with their PIC. Could the initial assessment of complexity underestimate the time needed to help them? It may also be that they need more encouragement to be more independent and further post PIC interventions are needed to support this.
- **Information and communication:** Some were confused why they could not go back to Age UK Croydon for further support. A clearer explanation that this is a referred service from GPs would help manage expectations.

You can view the report here:

[www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PICS-Evaluation-2021-March-2022-Healthwatch-Croydon-final.pdf](http://www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PICS-Evaluation-2021-March-2022-Healthwatch-Croydon-final.pdf)

**Gordon Kay, Healthwatch Croydon Manager, said:**

“The Personal Independence Coordinator service has one of the earliest community programmes of the One Croydon Alliance of health and social care providers, beginning in 2017. Within a year of its initiation, Healthwatch Croydon were asked as to undertake a service user survey on behalf of Age UK Croydon to help its development. Four years later, we were pleased to be asked again to provide interviews service users to support a wider evaluation of a much larger programme. Our insight illustrates that there had been a significant impact for a majority of those who have used the service. However, some finish the scheme still needing extra support and information. We are glad that Age UK Croydon will be including our recommendations into their post evaluation planning for the service. This will ensure more benefit for service users who lead to more independent lives when using health and social care services.”

**Sanjay Gulati, Chief Executive Age UK Croydon said:**

“This Healthwatch survey achieved the objective of gaining the views of clients on the impact of having a PIC and what could be improved as it moved forward. It has enabled the voice of the older person to come through very clearly alongside the detailed evaluation. It helpfully reinforces the detailed recommendations of the independent evaluation.

“We are working with SWL CCG on the PIC development plan to take forward all recommendations from the independent evaluation and the Healthwatch Survey and Report over the next few months. This includes analysing our data to understand the different outcomes and impact for older people engaging in the service, we have introduced a new outcomes tool to support this analysis and we are developing the volunteer support for a more structured termination of the PIC engagement to provide

person centred continued support as appropriate for the PIC person. We will report on the progress against our development plan later in 2022.”

---

### **Editor's notes**

**Healthwatch Croydon** is here to improve the experience that Croydon people have when they need to use health and social care services. We believe that the best way to do this is by listening to patients and service users.

There is a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

Our role is to make sure that that local health and social care services, and the local decision makers, put the experiences of people at the heart of their care.

We are a statutory body - this means that we have a legal status to exist within the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This means decision-makers should listen to us when we give them feedback and make suggestions.

For more information, please contact: Gordon Kay, Healthwatch Croydon Manager  
[gordon.kay@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk](mailto:gordon.kay@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk)