Have your Say on the new delivery model for Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT)

For many years, Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT) has helped thousands of residents improve their English, gain qualifications, develop skills and build confidence. We are proud of that legacy and remain committed to ensuring adult learning continues to support residents throughout their lives.

To make sure that CALAT continues to deliver high-quality learning that meets local needs and delivers good value for public money we are planning to deliver it in a different way, commissioning to specialist providers rather than the Council delivering it directly. This consultation seeks the view residents, leaners, staff and partners about how we should design the new delivery model.

This consultation closes at 11.59pm, Tuesday 24th November 2026.

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About the Project

Adult learning plays an important role in helping adults of all ages and backgrounds develop new skills, build confidence, and improve their opportunities.

However, a recent independent review identified significant challenges within the current delivery model in Croydon. The service is facing increasing operating costs, it is not responsive enough to employer, labour market needs and job outcomes; and achievement and progression rates remain below the London average.

The new delivery model will address these challenges by moving from a direct delivery towards a commissioned model, where adult learning provision would be delivered specialist training and skills organisations under Council oversight.

This is not a proposal to cut adult learning funding, which is grant funded through the GLA. It is about changing the way services are provided to achieve better outcomes for residents and businesses.

What will change?

Under the new delivery model, the Council will no longer directly deliver adult learning and training. Instead, we will commission adult learning services through specialist providers, like further education colleges, private training providers or voluntary and community sector organisations, who are far better placed to secure the outcomes residents and businesses need.

The Council will, however, develop a new contract management function to ensure providers are delivering a high-quality service that remains sustainable, accessible and responsive to the changing needs of residents, communities and employers.

The new delivery model will enable:

- Access to specialist providers with expertise in delivering qualifications that lead to specific career and job pathways.
- Stronger focus on progression into employment and further learning
- Alignment with local labour market and employer need
- Better strategic alignment for adult learning delivery across the borough

In practice, the new model will deliver a more responsive focus on vocational learning and qualifications that lead to jobs in sectors where there is local demand.

What Would Stay the Same

The Council remains committed to:

- Maintaining adult learning opportunities for Croydon residents.
- Delivering high-quality provision funded through the GLA's Adult Skills Fund.
- Supporting learners furthest from education and employment.
- Ensuring education remains accessible and inclusive.

Many of the current courses and activities will remain core to the new provision - in particular ESOL, English, maths, digital and employability.

Ways to have your say.

We want to hear directly from those who use, support and deliver adult learning services in Croydon to we can understand issues we need to consider in shaping the design of the new delivery model.

This consultation is open from Tuesday 3rd November until 11.59pm, Tuesday 24th November 2026.

The best way to give your views is through the Online Survey

Paper copies of the survey will be available from CALAT Centres. Once completed, they can be returned to the CALAT Centre, or to: Employment Skills and Economic Development Team, 3rd floor, Zone B, Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA.

If you have any questions, need the survey in a different format, or would like to speak to a member of the team about the consultation, please email CALATconsultation@croydon.gov.uk

Our Commitment

At the end of the consultation period, all feedback will be reviewed and analysed. A consultation findings report will be produced summarising what we heard and how the feedback has informed recommendations.

For Staff

We recognise that this proposal may create uncertainty and concern for staff.

The knowledge, expertise and commitment of CALAT employees has helped thousands of residents improve their skills and life opportunities over many years.

As we progress with these changes the council will seek to protect as many jobs as possible. The majority of staff will transfer to the new providers or be retained in the new core contract management function within the council.

Staff views are particularly important, and dedicated drop in sessions will be held during the consultation period. However, this is a public consultation exercise aimed at gathering information that will inform the future adult learning delivery model, it is not a formal staff consultation

For Learners

The Council is keen to hear from learners about how the new delivery model could best serve them.

Moving from a from a direct delivery to a fully commissioned model, with external providers delivering the learning will:

- bring access to new in different locations across the borough - where would be important for you?
- provide a new vocational qualifications and career pathways - what job sectors are of interest to you?
- offer more flexible support for learners - what support would help you?

For Businesses, Employers, Partners

We are seeking views from community organisations, businesses and employers.

Croydon's future adult learning offer should be shaped by the organisations and communities that use and support it. The consultation will help ensure any future model reflects local skills needs and employment opportunities.

- What are your skills and workforce needs
- What sectors are growing in Croydon?
- What employability/workplace behaviours (e.g. communication, teamwork, reliability) are you seeking in candidates

Case Study 1: Better Support for ESOL Learners

Marek is an ESOL learner who wants to improve her English and move into employment. She currently attends a general ESOL course but also needs careers advice and sector-specific language support.

The Council commissions ESOL via a provider that also delivers employment support and construction training organisation. Marek receives contextual ESOL focussing on language used in the construction sector, employability support and job brokerage through organisations with specialist expertise.

Through the provider Marek is able gain is Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) identity card which permits him to begin work on a building site in Croydon's Growth Zone.

Case study 2 from Community Learning to a Professional Career

Sarah is a 42-year-old Croydon resident who had been out of employment for several years while caring for family members. She lacked confidence, had no recent qualifications and was uncertain about returning to work.

Sarah first enrolled on a Croydon commissioned confidence-building and digital skills course at a local community venue. Through the support of her tutor, she improved her digital skills, gained confidence and was encouraged to explore career opportunities within the health and care sector.

Sarah is referred on to a specialist in health and social care training which is provided via the same provider. This offers a clear progression pathway beyond community learning. The provider is also able to draw on funding sources beyond the Adult Skills Fund, including employer-funded training, apprenticeships and sector-based work academy programmes.

After successfully completing her Level 3 qualification, Sarah secures employment with a local care provider and begins a Level 4 apprenticeship, funded through the Apprenticeship Levy rather than adult education funding.

Case Study 3: Connecting Residents to Opportunities in Croydon's Creative and Cultural Sector

Croydon's creative and cultural sector is growing, with opportunities in theatre production, digital media, film, events, creative technology and the wider creative industries.

A number of local creative organisations identify a need for people with skills in areas such as production support, digital content creation, lighting and sound, event

management and film production. However, many residents are unaware of these opportunities or lack access to specialist training.

Sophie, aged 27, has an interest in media and film but is working in a part-time retail role with limited progression opportunities. Through the future adult learning service, she receives careers advice and the specialist commissioned provider has expertise in the creative industries.

The provider works closely with local creative and cultural organisations to deliver industry-relevant training, employer masterclasses and practical project-based learning. Sophie develops skills in digital media production, builds a portfolio of work and gains experience through industry connections established by the provider.

Following the programme, Sophie progresses into a higher-level media production course and secures freelance work supporting local film and event projects, putting her on a pathway towards a sustainable career in the creative sector.