



London Borough of Croydon Case Study

Reed Learning was asked to be a strategic partner to London Borough of Croydon to help deliver its ambitious five-year transformation plan. The first stage was to work with human-centred leadership experts Passe-Partout to roll out an intensive management development programme to all middle managers with the aim of improving leadership and ultimately providing better services to residents.



The challenge

Croydon is undertaking a major transformation programme to become a more cost effective and cost efficient council that puts its residents first. The election of Croydon's first Mayor, Jason Perry, led to the Future Croydon Transformation Plan, a five-year programme which builds on the foundations of improvements already carried out, and aims to radically change the way the council works and delivers services.

While the borough is moving forward and improvements have been made, challenges remain for the current administration, including a mandate to make savings of just under £100m.

To change the way that services are provided, the council must change culturally as well as financially. The transformation plan has a heavy emphasis on improving leadership and management throughout the organisation in a more systematic way.



The solution

Reed Learning, part of the Reed Group, provides tailored solutions to deliver high quality training and professional development for businesses and individuals. We were appointed as Croydon's strategic partner in September 2023 to help deliver key objectives of the transformation plan.

Our initial brief was to deliver an intensive management development programme to train the 430 middle managers across the Council, a group who are feeling over-faced by their responsibilities for delivering 'business as usual' alongside service transformation.

For this work Reed Learning chose to partner with Passe-Partout, a learning business of 26 years' standing and specialists in helping organisations build high engagement and performance through human-centred leadership and culture development.

Working with the Chief People Officer, Dean Shoesmith, and with input from the Local Government Association, Reed Learning and Passe-Partout have created a programme called Invest. Launched in September 2024 and due to be completed before April 2025, Invest is equipping these managers with the knowledge and skills to manage their teams more effectively and ultimately deliver better services to Croydon residents.

The programme includes ten one-day in-person training events, led by expert, compassionate, human-centred facilitators, covering a wide range of essential topics from budget management to building personal resilience. The training is all highly bespoke and draws on input from a range of internal and external subject matter experts. One such session, 'Working in a political environment', is hosted by The Local Government Association, with a serving Councillor in attendance.

Invest: management development programme modules



Building personal resilience

During this module we'll give an overview of the Invest programme before diving into the topics of resilience and emotional intelligence. We'll look at what resilience means today, what helps build resilience, and how we can build resilience within teams.



Budget management, commissioning and procurement

This module will help expand your awareness of the way that finances are managed within the organisation, and your responsibilities within this.



Working in a political environment

This module brings in political expertise to help you understand political structures and explore the interfaces between politicians and managers, dealing with Ward members, the interface with residents and councillors.



Managing diverse teams

High performing teams don't form by accident. This module will provide you with tools to bring out the best in everyone in your team, even when things get tough.



Managing conflict

This practical module will enable you to understand workplace conflict causes and dynamics, balance compassion with challenge, and overcome the barriers to straight talking.



Developing cultural competence

We'll look at the challenge of standing up for equality, diversity and inclusion, understanding and addressing our own biases and explore the characteristics of inclusive leaders.



Managing change

For Croydon to achieve all that it aspires to will require managers and leaders who understand how to navigate change, and support their teams through it. This module will explore the psychology of change and introduce you to various change planning tools.



Managing service performance

During this session you'll spend time considering the contexts, needs and expectations of service users and stakeholders.



Managing health and wellbeing

A team's wellbeing starts with the leader, so this module will explore ways to understand and manage your own wellbeing, while recognising the vital signs across your team.



Managing individual and team performance

Our final module sets you up for success, giving you some (possibly unexpected) tools for motivating and developing your team.

Key features of Invest

Being part of a learning community

Managers are in cohorts of up to 20, with a mix of people from across Croydon. They tell us that networking and learning from those in very different roles has been rewarding.

Expert trainers

Excellent and experienced facilitators from Passe-Partout, who are all coaches, use behavioural psychology techniques to turn around any passive or active resisters. Participants report they are learning a lot from their rich array of relevant experience gained in public and private sector organisations. They are joined in many of the sessions by subject matter experts from within the Council, who bring the training to life with real examples. The involvement of the Local Government Association and a serving Councillor has given learners further contextual relevance.

Learning design

All modules are designed using neuroscience so that learning is assimilated well and becomes easier to put into practice.

The relevance of topics covered

This programme is completely bespoke to Croydon Council, covering ten topics that were highlighted as critical to future success. Every module has been prepared with useful input from managers, leaders and front line staff from across the organisation. Each session has real practical examples from within the borough so learning has direct application to the managers' work.

Bespoke learning portal

Learning journeys are hosted on a bespoke portal called Promote providing opportunities for shared learning, stretch modules, a social element and access to data to track progress.

Strong senior internal sponsorship

There is a real commitment from Croydon's Executive Team to invest in the training of people to become great leaders. This is a great way to change and embed a culture of performance.

Early results

We knew we had our work cut out to launch such a large programme in such a short period of time, and as expected our biggest challenge was to win the buy-in and trust of the managers. Across parts of the management population there was an initial reluctance to engage with Invest, with low turnout in some of the earlier sessions. As the quality and value of the learning became established the word got out, and we are now seeing some sessions over-subscribed.

It's too early to say what the overall impact of the programme will be, but having delivered over 100 sessions already the results are very encouraging:



**Average score for
session facilitation**

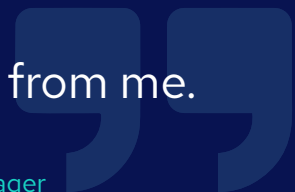


**Average score for
session value**



A huge thumbs up from me.

– **Barbara Grant**,
Transformation Programme Manager



Feedback

Imelda grabbed my attention from the beginning with relatable insights, exercises and scenarios. Imelda was relatable and understanding of our shared concerns. After the workshop I felt truly inspired.

– **Linda Knox**, Senior Digital Systems Officer

The session was perfect, the facilitator was well informed with a wealth of experience and knowledge of the course delivered.

– **Yvonne Green**, Branch Secretary / Corporate Staff
Side Lead and Unison Regional Convenor

I thoroughly enjoyed the session and am already thinking about what positive changes I can make in my role.

– **Claudette Douglas**, Advice and early help lead

Excellent! and not what I expected. Very entertaining in places which helped with the subject matter.

– **Lisa Davis**, Quality Assurance and Monitoring Officer



We are tracking progress against key organisational outcomes, including:

- Improved efficiency and resource management
- Higher morale and engagement
- Enhanced quality of services
- Increased trust in leadership

Feedback



"We selected Reed Learning as our strategic partner in 2023 to support Croydon's transformation due to their expertise in workforce development, and their alignment with our values.

Like many large public sector organisations, we need to focus on improving our leadership and management capabilities to provide the best possible services to our residents. To do this, we have co-created the 'Invest' programme with Reed Learning and our 430 front line and middle managers. We have drawn on input from across the organisation and we are offering managers development beyond anything previously available. It is completely bespoke to Croydon's context, is grounded in organisational priorities, with highly practical learning.

The initial feedback from our managers completing the programme is it adds fantastic value, and we are looking at how we offer a similar experience to aspiring managers."

– **Dean Shoesmith**, Chief People Officer



"Our ultimate aim is for Croydon to be able to demonstrate how Invest is having a positive and lasting impact on residents. We believe this will come as the managers put into practice the knowledge and skills they develop through the programme. The feedback the managers have given so far is very positive, and reflects the hard work put in by a great number of people across Croydon, Passe-Partout, the LGA and Reed Learning"

– **Roger Mason**,
Reed Learning Director of Consulting



"It's great to see the dial starting to turn, with improving attendance and great feedback about the learner experience. Clearly there is still a way to go, but we can already see the confidence and connectedness growing in Croydon's leadership community."

– **Alex Taskin**,
Managing Director of Passe-Partout

Built for your organisation

The content, duration and methods of delivery of the Invest programme can be customised, giving you a programme which reflects the requirements and resources of your organisation.

Next steps

Invest is part of a package of measures to help transform how Croydon Council works. Looking beyond April 2025, we are preparing to work in partnership to:



Establish future cohorts from April 2025



Support and develop aspiring managers and specialists in the organisation



Further develop managers to deepen and embed their new knowledge and skills

Find out more

If you are facing similar challenges in your organisation and wish to find out more, please submit an enquiry via our website.

Submit enquiry



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Reed Learning's director of consulting



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