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# CROYDON

## THE FACTS

# ABOUT CROYDON

## Where is Croydon?

Croydon is a thriving retail and commercial hub at the very heart of south London

It is one of the capital's two strategic office centres outside of the city. Linking central London with the Surrey countryside and the south coast, Croydon provides the lifestyle benefits of the country while being only 15 minutes from town and the same from London's Gatwick International Airport.



\* Refers to travel by car - all other times relate to travel by train.



With a multi-billion pound regeneration underway, the best connections in south east England and one of the biggest retail centres outside central London, Croydon is the capital's third city in everything but name.

London's most populated borough, with more than 340,000 residents - it is a vibrant, bustling area with a strong business community which contributes more to the regional economy than any other outer London borough. Three million people live within a 10-mile radius.

For getting around, Croydon is unrivalled. Its public transport system, which includes the south's only major tram network, is one of the best in London and the south east. You can live and work just a few miles from the rolling countryside of Surrey, but still be in London Bridge in just 12 minutes from East Croydon station, one of the UK's busiest interchanges. On top of that, office space here costs half the average in Victoria - just 16 minutes by train. More than 200 businesses relocated to Croydon during 2010.

Croydon also offers a wealth of leisure options. More than £1 billion is spent in Croydon's shops every year, with 28 of the UK's top 30 brands having outlets here, and it has more green spaces than any other London borough.

After years of carrying a reputation for being a concrete jungle, the face of the borough is changing rapidly. Seven major regeneration sites are underway, introducing an exciting mix of residential, commercial and leisure developments, and more are planned in the next few years. Thousands of new homes are also being built.

Families also prosper in Croydon with GCSE pass rates well above the national average, while Croydon offers more childcare places per child than any other London borough.

Croydon College, where more than 13,000 people choose to study every year, is now known as University Centre Croydon, building on its partnership with the University of Sussex - one of the UK's top 10 universities.

South London's largest entertainment venue, Fairfield Halls, is about to undergo a major facelift and refurbishment while you will find Michelin-rated restaurants in South End, the town's restaurant quarter.



# BUSINESS & ENTERPRISE

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With lower office space costs than central London, Croydon is one of the capital's most attractive office locations. A number of high-profile brands, government departments and multi-national companies are among the 9,000 businesses which have chosen Croydon as their home.

- One of London's most important office hubs, Croydon is home to 24 blue chip and government organisations. In particular, Croydon has a large number of leading multi-national companies in the finance, insurance and engineering sectors.
- Major companies and organisations based in Croydon include Mott MacDonald, Sir Robert McAlpine, Carillion, Network Rail, Barclays Financial and Insurance Services, and the UK Border Agency.
- Croydon is the biggest commercial hub for the south coast and London region, which stretches from Hampshire to Kent.
- Top office rent is half the central London average at £23 per square foot, yet central London is as little as 12 minutes away by train.
- Croydon has nearly eight million square feet of office space, the largest area of office floor space in London outside the core of the West End, City and Canary Wharf.
- Planning consent has been given for a further 1.4 million square feet of office space in the borough.
- The London Borough of Croydon has an energised and focused inward investment management team dedicated to making Croydon an enterprising zone by removing potential barriers to improvement, including a stream-lined planning process with fast turnaround times.
- The Mayor of London has designated Croydon as an Opportunity Area: he believes Croydon has the necessary infrastructure and transport links to accommodate substantial numbers of new jobs and homes and has announced a £23 million regeneration fund for Croydon.
- And there's funding available to investors too - £5 million of the regeneration fund is earmarked for Croydon's new business support package which will offer funding for office refurbishment and business rate relief within the Croydon New Town.
- Croydon is part of the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which enables it to capitalise on the major business centres of Gatwick, Brighton and Croydon - an area with a business community of 79,000 firms and some 721,000 jobs.



# ARTS & CULTURE

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Croydon's diverse arts and cultural activities are housed in a range of historic buildings, attractive open spaces, and bespoke venues, two of which (Fairfield Halls and the Warehouse Theatre) will play a major role in the town's regeneration. More than ever, Croydon is a place where people choose to live, work, study and socialise – a place that is visually attractive and with a new wave of landmark buildings contributing to the town's unique identity.

- Croydon is home to Crystal Palace Football Club and Croydon Sports Arena, as well as having Crystal Palace National Sports Centre on its doorstep. Meanwhile, Whitgift School hosts A-list cricket matches between Surrey and other counties, entertaining crowds of up to 5,000.
- Croydon is within easy reach of the major London Olympics venues including the Olympic Stadium at Stratford and the tennis at Wimbledon.
- Croydon Airport Visitor Centre pays tribute to the pioneering days of air travel and was the world's first international airport.
- Fairfield Halls is south London's largest entertainment venue with a 1,794-capacity concert hall, a 750-seater theatre and an area for gigs with standing space for 400. It is set to undergo a £20 million refurbishment.
- Modelled on the Royal Festival Hall and opened by the Queen Mother in 1962, Fairfield Halls has some of the best concert acoustics in the UK and is home to the London Mozart Players.
- Croydon also hosts jazz, food, fashion and Christmas festivals every year, attracting tens of thousands of visitors.
- The critically-acclaimed Warehouse Theatre produces many of its own shows and hosts an annual international playwright festival. Situated in the heart of a major regeneration site, it will shortly be replaced by a brand new facility.
- The world famous BRIT School is Britain's only free performing arts and technology school. Many of its students go on to take jobs in the entertainment industry.
- Green space covers one-third of Croydon and it has no fewer than 127 parks and open spaces leading it to be named 'the UK's greenest large city'.



# REGENERATION

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Croydon is undergoing massive change. Construction work is already underway on a number of projects which together will deliver one of the biggest and most ambitious programmes of regeneration and development in the UK.

- Seven sites are currently under construction in the metropolitan centre, a further 13 have planning approval while 12 more are in pre-application discussion. Over 5m sq ft of development is proposed including thousands of new homes.
- The Mayor of London has announced a £23 million regeneration fund for Croydon, £18 million of which is earmarked to transform the public realm in and around the town centre.
- A £20 million upgrade of East Croydon station will see a new entrance and pedestrian bridge open in 2013, enhancing east-west links and connecting key development sites.
- Next to East Croydon station, Stanhope and Schrodgers' Ruskin Square will provide a new nine-acre city quarter comprising five grade A office buildings, 550 apartments, shops, restaurants and the new Warehouse Theatre.
- Berkeley is building an iconic 45-storey tower near West Croydon station. Its Saffron Square development includes a new one-acre public space which will house shops, cafes, restaurants, a gym and offices, together with 755 residential units.
- Barratt Homes is creating a modern urban village of 923 homes at New South Quarter, alongside Wandle Park, set up around courtyards and landscaped gardens and with the River Wandle running through its heart.
- Bernard Weatherill House, a public service delivery hub, housing the council offices and other public agencies, is being delivered by the Croydon Council Urban Regeneration Vehicle (CCURV), a joint venture between John Laing plc and the London Borough of Croydon. It is scheduled for completion by spring 2013.
- On the Cherry Orchard Road site of East Croydon station, Menta is to develop a £250 million scheme including a landmark 55-storey residential tower, offices, a boutique hotel, community amenities and significant public realm improvements.
- One Lansdowne Road, to be developed by Guildhouse Rosepride LLP, with a strikingly curved design by architect Piers Gough, will feature a 55-storey tower containing grade A office space, nearly 400 apartments and a 200 bedroom four star hotel.



# CONNECTIVITY

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Croydon is the most connected urban centre in the south east. Fast and frequent transport links connect Croydon to the capital, the coast, the countryside and the airports.

- Rail links between East Croydon and Central London are fast - London Bridge 12 minutes, London Victoria 16 minutes, London Waterloo 20 minutes.
- 14 minutes by train to Gatwick Airport, the UK's second busiest international airport.
- The East London Line has put Croydon on the Tube map, linking to Highbury and Islington via London Overground.
- Croydon Tramlink is the UK's biggest tram network. It is used by 28 million passengers a year. The first of six new trams is due to enter service this spring to cope with rising passenger numbers as the service prepares to enter a new phase of expansion.
- Direct rail services to Brighton, Kings Cross St Pancras and Luton Airport. There are more than 10 direct trains an hour between East Croydon and London Victoria, London Kings Cross and London Bridge. There are eight trains every hour to Gatwick Airport and Brighton.
- Stratford, home of the London Olympics 2012, is just 37 minutes from West Croydon station.
- East Croydon is the second busiest station in the country outside central London and is used by 27 million passengers a year. A £20 million refurbishment, due for completion in 2013, will accommodate ever-rising demand.
- Croydon is only 8.5 miles from junction seven of the M25 motorway, linked directly by the A23 London to Brighton road. It is just 23 miles from London Heathrow, the UK's busiest international airport.
- There are 17 overground stations and 43 bus routes in the borough.
- Croydon is ideally placed between a choice of airports - London City, London Gatwick and London Heathrow. Heathrow and Gatwick Airports can be reached by road in about 50 and 30 minutes respectively. In addition, London Biggin Hill Airport is less than 25 minutes drive from central Croydon and offers a fast-growing executive and commercial service within the UK and to mainland Europe.



# RETAIL

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Croydon is London's biggest shopping experience outside the West End. The vibrant and modern town centre, with 2.5 million square feet of retail space, generates more than £1 billion in spend every year.

- 28 of the UK's top 30 retailers are in Croydon, with major outlets of John Lewis at Home, Debenhams, House of Fraser, Marks & Spencer, IKEA and Miss Selfridge as well as a host of fashion shops from River Island and Republic to LK Bennett and La Senza.
- Croydon's shopping centre has 2.5 million square feet of retail space.
- £1.2 billion a year is spent in town centre shops. In London that is second only to the West End and the fourth largest spend in south east England.
- Croydon's total catchment spend of £5.4 billion is one of the highest in the UK.
- Purley Way is London's eighth largest retail area, with a high concentration of trade counter and retail warehouse units including IKEA, Homebase, Sainsbury's and PC World superstores.
- In the first part of 2011 footfall in the town centre increased to 2.4 million per month - up 6.3% against a national 3.5% decline.
- The Whitgift and Centrale shopping centres offer some 200 stores between them.
- Surrey Street Market, Croydon's flourishing fruit and veg market, has existed by Royal Charter since 1276 and still trades six days a week.
- Croydon Business Improvement District (BID) represents nearly 600 companies committed to enhancing the town centre. The second largest business-led initiative in the country, its £1 million annual budget is raised through a levy on participating businesses.
- Croydon is a top-20 UK shopper destination, presently ranked at number 16.
- The last remaining Allders department store can be found in North End. Built in 1862, it is the fourth largest department store in the UK.



# HOSPITALITY & LEISURE

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A mixture of vibrant nightlife and open spaces makes Croydon perfect for families. An exceptional range of hotels, Michelin-rated restaurants, south London's biggest entertainment venue, a thriving music scene and the world famous Brit School sit alongside some of the most beautiful open spaces London has to offer.

- Croydon boasts London's highest concentration of hotel rooms outside the West End.
- Hotels include the Hallmark Aerodrome Hotel, Croydon Park Hotel, Hilton Croydon, Holiday Inn Express, Jurys Inn, Premier Travel Inns (West and South), Selsdon Park Hotel and Golf Club, Addington Palace Hotel, Swallow Coulsdon Manor Hotel, Travelodge Central Croydon and the Lansdowne Hotel.
- A 120-room Hampton by Hilton is under development and a boutique hotel is planned for Cherry Orchard Road.
- Croydon's restaurants, cafes, bars and nine nightclubs entertain more than 20,000 people every weekend.
- There are numerous facilities for those wishing to participate in football, rugby, hockey, fitness, tennis, bowls, fitness and much more. For those wishing to play golf, there are no fewer than seven quality courses around Croydon.
- Croydon Business Improvement District (BID) is leading Destination Croydon, a consortium of leading hotels and venues looking to establish the town as a centre for conferences.
- Croydon BID hosts regular BIG Get-Together events featuring street theatre, music and retail promotions.
- The busy Visitor Centre near East Croydon station welcomes thousands of people to the borough every year.
- An impressive 800 dining venues can be found in Croydon which has a growing culinary reputation for quality as well as quantity, with two Michelin-rated restaurants in its restaurant quarter, South End, where a diverse range of cuisine exists to suit every taste.





# EDUCATION

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Croydon is a hotbed of creativity and achievement. Croydon also boasts year-on-year improvement at GCSE in its schools and academies and it also has many of the UK's top independent schools, including Whitgift, Trinity and Old Palace of John Whitgift.

- Croydon College is already known as University Centre Croydon, building on its partnership with the University of Sussex to allow students to gain top-quality higher level qualifications.
- More than 13,000 people, including more than 1,000 undergraduates, study at Croydon College, which has undergone extensive refurbishment and now hosts new industry-standard facilities and a new library and conference centre.
- The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 has risen year-on-year from below the national average in 2008 to 74% (1% above the national average) in 2010.
- The Brit School for Performing Arts and Technology is the first of its kind in the country and is sponsored by Sony Music, Virgin Group and Warner Music.
- There are 12 academies operating in Croydon including six in the primary sector operating under educational trusts. The Quest Academy showed the UK's second highest level of improvement at GCSE in 2011 - up 18% on the previous year.
- Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT), with more than 50 years experience, is the sixth largest adult education service in the country, offering more than 1,500 courses.
- In 2011, nearly 61% of pupils in Croydon achieved five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and Maths, the eighth consecutive year of improvement.
- In July 2011, 65% of schools were judged good or better by OFSTED compared to 59% in July 2010.
- The rate of Croydon childminders judged good or outstanding by OFSTED is 13% higher than the national average.
- Croydon boasts a number of top independent schools including Whitgift, Trinity and Old Palace of John Whitgift, all run by the Whitgift Foundation formed in 1596.



# HERITAGE

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Croydon's history stretches back more than 1,000 years and the town has been the summer residence of numerous Archbishops of Canterbury, as well as entertaining the kings and queens of England.

- The area covered by the present London Borough of Croydon is made up of four ancient parishes: Croydon, Addington, Coulsdon and Sanderstead.
- A market has been held in the Surrey Street area since 1276.
- Many Archbishops of Canterbury used the estate at Croydon (Old) Palace as a summer residence and manorial court. They played hosts to many kings and queens of England including Henry VIII, Queen Mary and Elizabeth I. Once the old palace was vacated in 1707, they later acquired Addington Palace.
- 11 Archbishops of Canterbury are buried in the borough, five in the 1,000 year old St Mary's Church in Addington and six in Croydon Minster.
- Dating back from to 960, the Parish Church of Croydon was substantially rebuilt following a fire in 1867 and became London's only Minster in 2011.
- In 1809, the Croydon Canal opened, linking the town with London, making Croydon the first town in the country with both a railway and a canal. The course of the canal was later included in the new railways.
- During the Middle Ages, Croydon expanded as a market town, becoming a centre for charcoal production, leather tanning and brewing.
- The Whitgift almshouses in North End were founded by Archbishop John Whitgift in 1596 and still fulfil their original function today.
- Croydon was recorded in the Domesday Book as being the manor of Archbishop Lafrance, a hamlet of 365 people with a church and a mill.



# PEOPLE AND LIFESTYLE

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If Croydon were a city, it would be the UK's 10th largest by population, excluding Greater London. With reasonable property prices, a wide range of housing and excellent schools, it is expected to continue out-performing the national average in terms of both population growth and household income.

- Croydon's population is young and dynamic with education and skills levels that are above the national average.
- Three million people live within 10 miles of the town.
- With 341,800 residents, Croydon is south London's biggest borough by population – and that figure is expected to grow by 16% over the next 20 years.
- 81% of the working-age population is economically active, compared to the London average of 75.5%.
- Croydon is vibrant and diverse – almost 40% of the population has a non-British background and more than 100 languages are spoken.
- 47.1% of the working population is employed in managerial, professional and associated professional occupations, compared to the UK average of 42.9%.
- Croydon Business Improvement District has already invested £7.5m on a series of improvements and projects in the Town Centre.
- The average house price is around £245,000, making the borough an affordable option for homebuyers. Croydon offers vibrant, urban living to the north and tranquil, affluent districts in the south.
- Croydon people are proud of where they live. A recent survey put Croydon well above the national average for its populace's pride in the community and scale of amenities.



# FAMOUS CONNECTIONS

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Croydon has long been a centre for innovation and a place where talent has been nurtured. Famous living Croydonians include illusionist Derren Brown, businessman Sir Philip Green and artist and film-maker Sam Taylor-Wood.

- The world's first diesel-powered small vans were manufactured in Croydon at the factory that was also responsible for Lambretta Scooters, Heinkel bubble cars and the original McLaren racing cars.
- Between the wars, Croydon Airport was the start and finish of many heroic long-distance flights. Amy Johnson flew from Croydon to Australia in 1930, the first woman to do so, and later returned to Croydon to a rapturous welcome.
- The 150-year-old Spurgeon's College, which teaches theology to PHD level, is referred to as the 'Vatican of the Baptist Church'.
- Croydon is the setting of two poems by Sir John Betjeman, the British Poet Laureate, entitled "Croydon" and "Love in a Valley".
- Croydon locations have been used in a number of TV and film productions including: Da Vinci Code; Made in Dagenham; Brazil; Peep Show; Batman - Dark Knight Rising and Werewolves and Vampires.
- Sodium street lighting was first used on the Purley Way, Croydon, in 1932. Ironically, the UK's first car-related fatalities, both as a pedestrian and a driver, also occurred in the borough.
- Fairfield Halls is built on the site (the Fair Field) of a large and infamous public fair that was held for more than 500 years.
- The current town hall is Croydon's third. It was opened in May 1896 by the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King Edward VII).
- 2012 marks the centenary of the death of the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, who grew up in Croydon. There is an impressive grave with a touching poem at Bandon Hill Cemetery.
- In 1950, the Croydon branch of Sainsbury's was the first in the country to move from counter sales to self-service, launching a retail revolution.
- Some of the famous faces associated with Croydon include: Cicely Mary Barker, creator of the Flower Fairies, the poet Lord Byron, the singer Adele, comedian Ronnie Corbett, cellist Jacqueline du Pre, athlete Donna Fraser, and writers Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Raymond Chandler.

Pictured left to right are: Amy Johnson (main image), Sir John Betjeman, Lord Byron, Jacqueline du Pre, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Cicely Mary Barker and the Heinkel bubble car.

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