Women's Safety Audit

July 2026

About this session

As part of The Croydon Project's ongoing programme of community engagement, Publica led a Women, Girls and Non-Binary People's Safety Audit to better understand how future regeneration can support a safer, more inclusive and sustainable town centre for everyone. Participants explored their experiences of Croydon during the day and after dark, highlighting that feelings of safety are influenced not only by design and security measures, but also by cleanliness, stewardship, community activity and care.



Photography by Publica

Exploring public spaces

The workshop started with participants using a street-tagging exercise to explore how Croydon town centre feels during the day and after dark. They walked the area, highlighted features of the public realm that felt positive or negative using green or red dots.

To regroup and discuss the ratings given to different spaces, participants then took part in a workshop to discuss why they rated spaces the way they did and how they could be improved.

More welcoming public spaces

Participants said the presence of people was not automatically negative: welcoming activity and social gatherings could feel reassuring. Inclusive seating, events and places to eat and drink during the day and evening could encourage women and a wider range of people to meet, play and spend time comfortably, making the town centre feel safer and more welcoming.

"Women like to gather in groups to chat, they sometimes have lots of bags and we like to sit in the round"

"Glad to see people playing but wish there was somewhere I felt comfortable to play too"



Visibility and routes

Clear sightlines, good lighting and visible routes were important to how safe places felt. Participants said they often changed the routes they took to avoid poorly lit streets and alleyways.

"I'd only take a route if I knew it was safe on the other end"



Greenery, landscape and heritage

Participants supported more greenery and planting to improve comfort, biodiversity and the quality of public spaces. They also felt that future regeneration should draw on Croydon's heritage, recognising the contribution that historic buildings and local character make to the town centre's identity.

"Develop on what is here, Croydon has beautiful buildings"

Looking after the town centre

Poor maintenance, litter and disrepair made places feel neglected and less safe. Participants felt that visible signs of neglect were affecting confidence, pride and perceptions of safety.

"We're looking for some happiness around here! Somewhere that looks loved, looks clean, looks happy!"

"Lack of care fuels lack of care"



Active, welcoming spaces

Active ground-floor uses and visible activity helped places feel safer. Blank frontages and empty units were often seen as places people would avoid, especially after dark. Participants also wanted more places to sit, meet and spend time without needing to buy something.

"There's nowhere to chat, except for Costa, which shuts at 6pm"

"There is nowhere to find safety – like ducking into a shop or a pub"

Key themes and next steps

The workshop highlighted a number of themes about how Croydon town centre feels during the day and after dark. Participants' feedback showed how these everyday details shape people's experience of the town centre.

What we heard

Clear routes, consistent lighting and strong visibility help people navigate the town centre with confidence and influence how safe and comfortable spaces feel

Maintenance, cleanliness and investment influence perceptions of safety and contribute to a wider sense of pride and confidence in the town centre. Participants felt that visible signs of care can positively shape how places are experienced and used

Active frontages, greenery, places to sit and welcoming activities that encourage women and a diverse range of people to gather all contribute to a safer-feeling, more inclusive and vibrant town centre

Looking ahead

These conversations provide valuable insight into how Croydon town centre is experienced by the people who use it most. The findings will help inform the continued development of The Croydon Project, ensuring that the Masterplan responds to local priorities, lived experiences and aspirations. They also provide a shared evidence base for Croydon's wider stakeholders, helping to align investment, public realm improvements, stewardship initiatives and community programmes around a common understanding of what makes a safer, more welcoming and successful town centre.



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