

resident described how major infrastructure projects, such as HS2, have contributed to worsening air quality and a decline in accessible green spaces:

“ *[Air pollution affects my daily life] there is a lot of construction going on near my house (because of HS2). There are no trees and no green spaces. This is Somers Town and West Euston.*”

- Focus group discussion at Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods

Another resident highlighted how certain parts of Camden, such as Camden High Street, lack greenery and feel particularly polluted:

“ *I am adversely affected [by air pollution in Camden] by living and walking around Camden. Polluted roads, lack of trees in Camden High Street. Heavily polluted.*”

- Focus group discussion at Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods

For some, air pollution shapes the way they navigate the borough. A resident explained that they make a conscious effort to avoid certain areas with heavy traffic:

“ *Yes - [I] walk rather than use public transport whenever possible, so really try to avoid roads with lots of traffic.*”

- 71, Female, Focus group discussion with Adult Social Care co-production group

Meanwhile, others noted the unintended consequences of traffic management measures, such as road narrowing, which they felt had led to increased pollution near council housing:

“ *I try to avoid the busy roads and I’m aware that the narrowing of some major roads has increased the pollution for many council residents.*”

- 81, Female, Focus group discussion with Adult Social Care co-production group

Air quality continues to improve, although pollution is still above the WHO guidelines

Two types of air pollutants are significant and measured in Camden: nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate matter (PM). In recent years, measured concentrations of these pollutants have been declining throughout the borough.

Measured concentrations of NO₂ in particular have declined considerably over the past 20 years, primarily driven by improved emissions standards for road vehicles and construction machinery. The largest reductions have been observed at roadside monitoring sites (Euston Road and Swiss Cottage) with smaller reductions measured at the Bloomsbury background site where emissions from building heating systems contribute a greater proportion of measured NO₂. Building NO₂ emissions have not declined at the same rate as emissions from vehicles.

There was a noticeable dip in the annual mean NO₂ concentrations measured at Euston Road and Swiss Cottage for 2020 compared to preceding years, and this was due to the significant reduction in road traffic during Covid lockdowns. The ‘rebound’ in traffic into 2021 and 2022 led to a small increase in annual mean NO₂ compared to 2020.

Particulate matter PM2.5 concentrations have also declined in Camden over the past 10 years; however, the relative change is weaker than has been observed for NO₂. In any given year, a significant portion of the PM2.5 measured in the air in Camden will originate from activities and sources outside of London or the United Kingdom.

These include emissions from agriculture, industrial activities, buildings and vehicles in other cities, towns and rural areas, shipping and transport, and some natural and semi-natural sources like desert sands and smoke from forest fires. This is referred to as ‘transboundary’ air pollution because it can be transported vast distances and affect air quality and public health far from the source of the pollution.



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This component of PM2.5 air pollution in Camden depends on weather conditions, and this is largely why the year-on-year change in annual mean PM2.5 has not been consistent despite the gradual long-term reduction. Local sources of PM2.5 include building emissions from commercial kitchens, heating and standby power systems, as well as construction activities, road and rail transport.

Figure 6.7: Annual average concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO2), 2002-2022

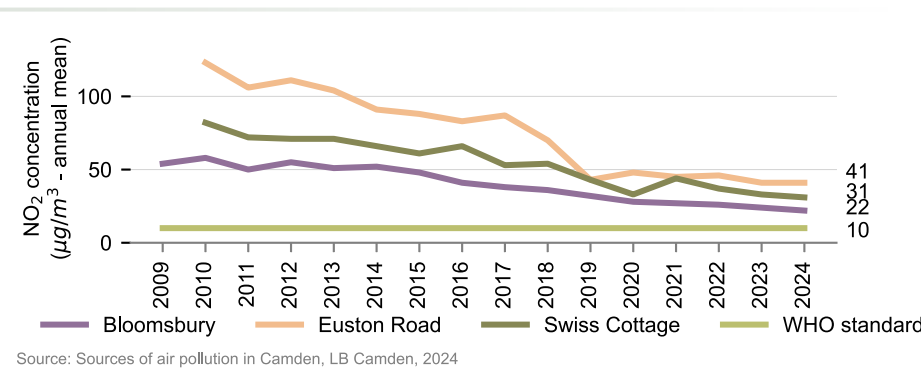
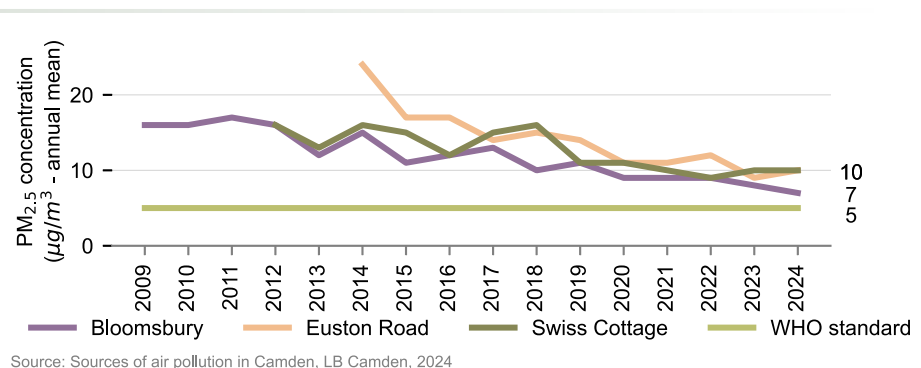


Figure 6.8: Annual average concentration of fine particulate matter (PM2.5), 2002-2022



Good Life Camden

GLC: Cleanliness and waste

Cleanliness and maintenance emerged as key concerns among residents, with issues of litter, fly-tipping, and general upkeep frequently mentioned. Some residents noted disparities in cleanliness between different areas of Camden, with certain neighbourhoods appearing to receive better maintenance than others:

“The amount of rubbish and fly-tipping across the Camden Town area is disgusting. Streets are not left as dirty in other Camden borough postcodes such as West Hampstead and Primrose Hill.”
- SOTB parents and carers survey

Concerns extended beyond streets to parks and public spaces, where some residents found poor maintenance impacted their ability to enjoy green spaces:

“I do go to the park, but they are always covered in dog faeces [...] I need the green spaces and to rest on the bench as I have a disability [...] the picnic benches are filthy dirty.”
- 65+, Disability, Focus group discussion with Adult Social Care co-production group

Beyond the impact on residents, the state of Camden’s streets was also seen as affecting the borough’s image, with some expressing disappointment about how it reflects on both the local community and visitors:

“The dirtiness of the streets is a shame for both residents and tourists. Cleaner streets would make a massive difference.”
- SOTB parents and carers survey

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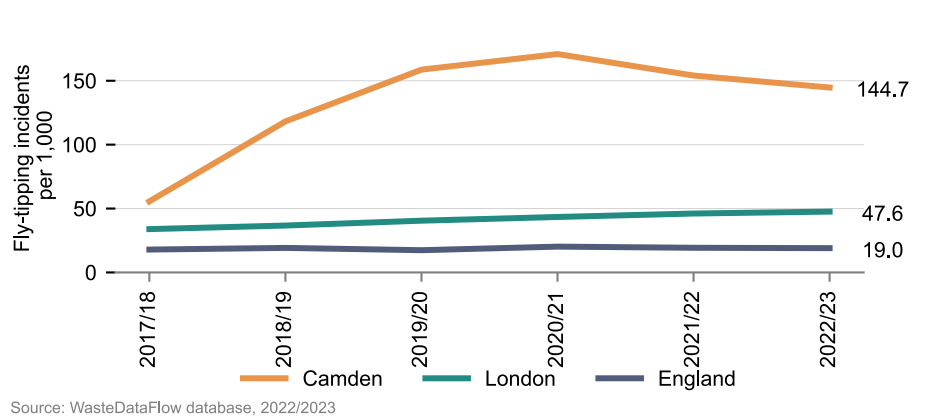
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In Camden, graffiti and fly-posting are more prevalent than in London, but litter and detritus less so, and fly-tipping incidents are among the highest in London

Keep Britain Tidy undertake annual surveys on the levels of cleanliness in Camden which can be compared to the London benchmark. The survey measures the percentage of relevant land that is assessed as having deposits of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting.

In 2023/24, Camden has better scores for litter and detritus compared to the London benchmark, and similar scores to the inner London benchmark, but worse scores for fly-posting and graffiti.

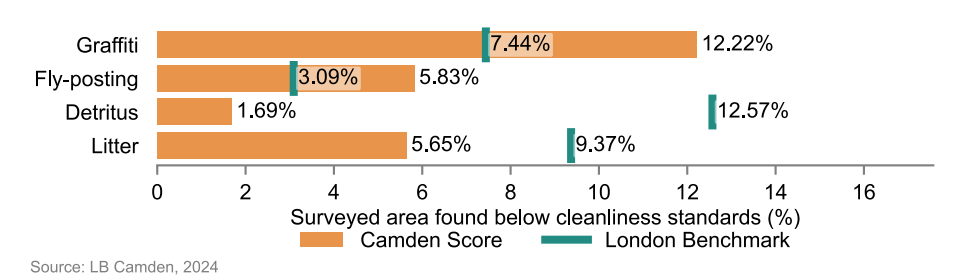
Figure 6.9: Fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people, 2017/18-2022/23



Fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in Camden were among the highest in London in recent years, with an average of 133.7 incidents per year since 2017/18, compared to 41.37 in London and 18.83 in England. However, there was a decrease in Camden in 2022/23, with a decline of 6.10%, whereas in London there has been a steady increase over the years, with the latest annual increase of 3.25%. However, it should be noted that the reported number of fly tips is affected by the method

of reporting that is available to residents. In 2017, Camden introduced the Love Clean Streets app, making it easier to report fly-tipping, which contributed to an increase in recorded incidents.

Figure 6.10: Percentage of surveyed area which was found to be below cleanliness standards, Camden 2023/24



In 2022/23, 93,390 tonnes of waste were collected in Camden, and households on average produced 355 kg of waste annually, with 28% of that recycled, reused or composted

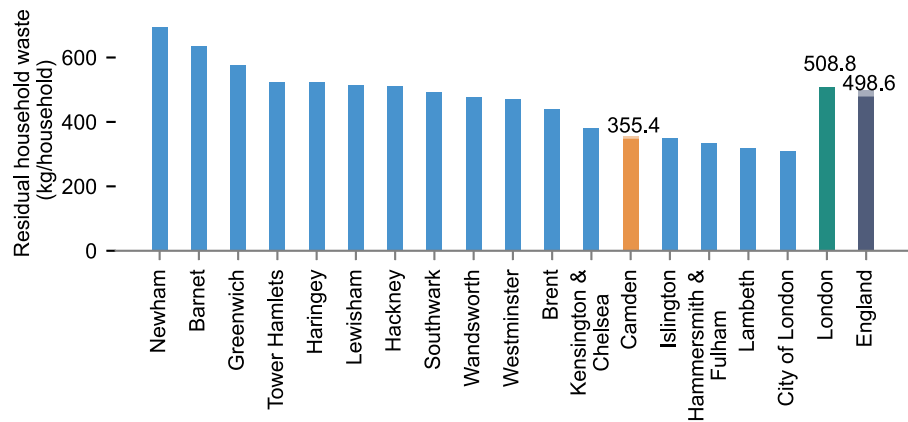
The waste produced by households was 355kg in 2022/23, which is a reduction from the previous year's 405kg per household.² Overall, there was a decline from 2015/16 which has stabilised around 350-400kg over the past few years. The most notable decrease occurred between 2015/16 and 2018/19, while the lowest waste production was recorded in 2020/21. Compared to London (509kg) and England (499kg), household waste in Camden was lower in 2022/23, and also when compared to other London boroughs – it was almost half of Newham's household waste (695kg).

The share of household waste that was sent for reuse, recycling or composting in Camden was 27.7% in 2022/23, with 2023/24 projected to be 29%. This rate was lower than London (32.7%) and England (41.7%), but comparable to the inner London average (26%).

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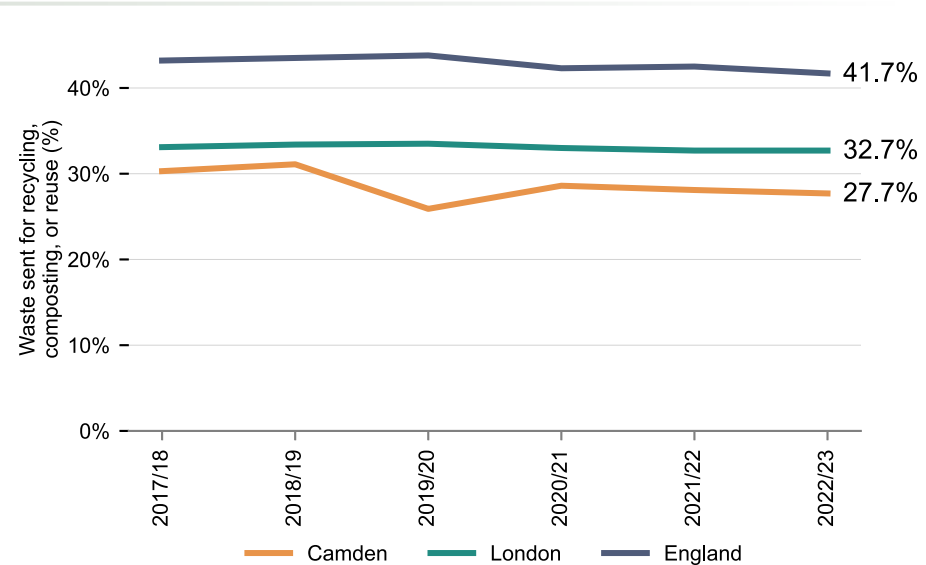
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Figure 6.11: Residual household waste (kg per household), 2022/23



Source: WasteDataFlow database, 2022/2023

Figure 6.12: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting, 2015/2016 - 2022/2023

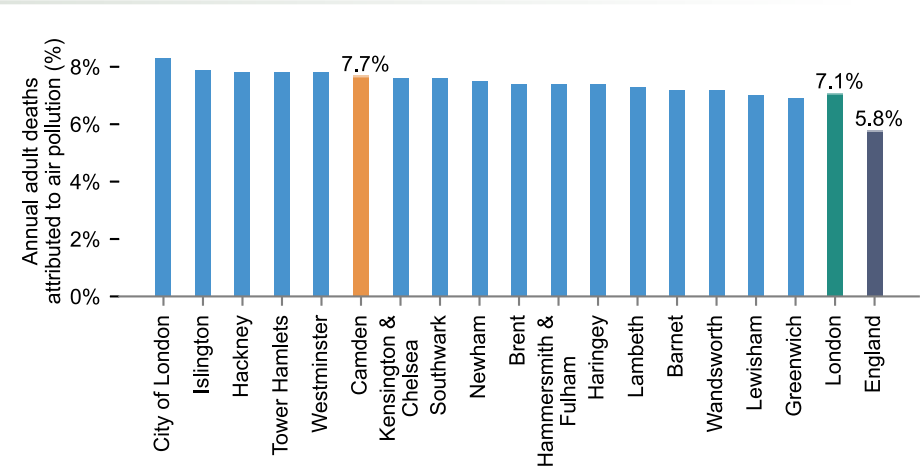


Source: WasteDataFlow database, 2022/2023

In Camden, an estimated 7.7% of deaths are attributable to particulate air pollution

Air pollution is a major health concern and is linked to heart disease, stroke, respiratory issues, and cancer. In the UK, it has been associated with 28,000 to 36,000 deaths annually. Exposure to higher levels of air pollution, such as in dense urban areas, presents greater risks, exacerbating health inequalities. The annual average metric, accounting for population exposure, focuses on fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5), although other pollutants and indoor air quality are crucial considerations.

Figure 6.13: Share of adult mortality attributable to particulate air pollution, 2022



Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2022

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Public Health England estimates that 7.7% of adult deaths are related to the impact of local ambient air pollution in 2022.³ This is higher than the London and England averages (7.1% and 5.8% respectively). The estimates are based on the modelled annual average concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in the local authority that originate from human activities.

The percentage of attributable mortality has been in decline over the past few years but in 2022 there has been a rise for both Camden, London and England. Camden has one of the highest levels of attributable mortality in London, with only Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and City of London with a higher rate.

Good Life Camden

GLC: Camden becomes net zero

Greenhouse gas emissions in Camden continue to decline compared to 2005

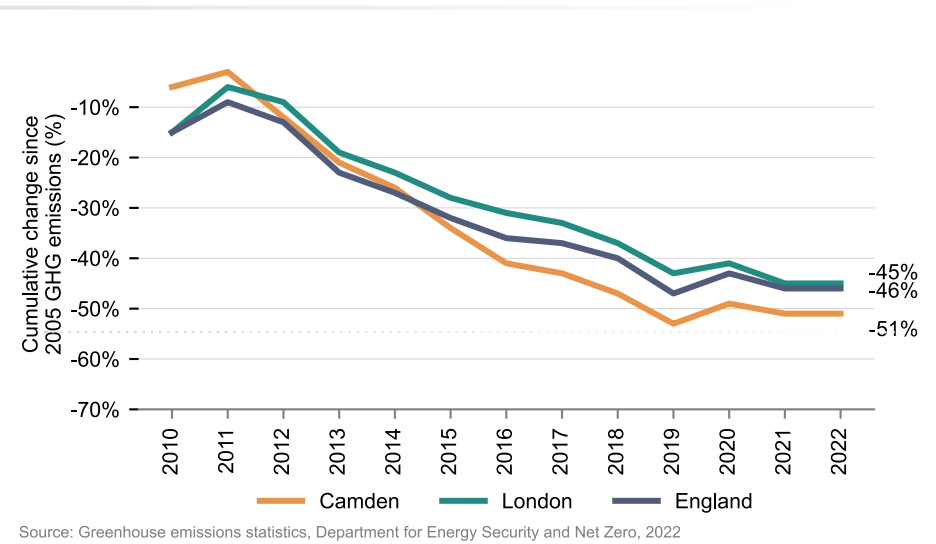
Greenhouse gases are those that cause the ‘greenhouse’ effect on the Earth, causing it to warm and the climate to change. Measures of Greenhouse gas emissions tell us about the impact we have on the climate, and emissions are measured in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e).

In the UK, greenhouse gas emissions have been declining since 2005. In England, emissions decreased from 656,038 Kt of CO2e in 2005, to 375,929 in 2022, a 43% decline. In London, emissions decreased from 53,386 in 2005 to 28,563 in 2022, a 46% decline, and the change from 2021 to 2022 of -6.6%. Camden saw a decline from 1,926 in 2005 to 995 in 2022, a 48% decline, and the latest annual change of -4.5%. Across all the comparator group boroughs, there was a decline in emissions from 2021 to 2022.

Camden Council measures the carbon footprint of its estates and operations (excluding its Council housing estates). The latest annual report⁴ shows that carbon emissions have reduced to 11,873 tonnes of CO2e which represents a 3.9% reduction compared to the previous year.

Emissions from our own estate and operations are now 64.5% below 2010 levels (our baseline year for CO2e reporting for our own estate).

Figure 6.14: Cumulative percentage change in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 to 2022, Camden, London and England



Good Life Camden

GLC: Camden’s green spaces and parks serve the needs of its diverse communities

Parks and green spaces have a positive impact on people’s physical and mental wellbeing. They offer a connection to nature, places

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for recreation, and social connections. These places also improve our environment by increasing air quality and biodiversity, capturing greenhouse gases and temperature regulation.

Many residents appreciate the accessibility of green spaces throughout the borough. One parent noted how well-distributed Camden’s parks are, offering much-needed respite in an urban setting:

“*I’m happy with the green spaces because every 200 metres there is a park for people to rest and relax, for their kids to go. Even though it’s a city, there are parks everywhere.*”

- Focus group discussion with parents at Regent’s Park Children’s Centre

However, not all residents feel that green spaces in Camden are thriving. Some expressed concerns about the loss of open spaces due to ongoing development. One resident remarked:

“*We are losing a lot of green spaces due to high density development. It is not always sustainable.*”

- Focus group discussion at Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods

Other residents pointed to issues with cleanliness and maintenance, particularly in smaller parks near housing areas:

“*Next to our house there is a small park. The environment is not good—there are mice, rats, and insects. It is dirty and not clean. A lot of drunk people are there, and they throw their wine bottles.*”

- Focus group discussion with parents at Regent’s Park Children’s Centre

Furthermore, access to green spaces for recreational activities was also highlighted. While some residents enjoy parks for exercise, others noted that restrictions—particularly on cycling—can make it difficult to use these spaces fully:

“*I live close to Grange Park in Kilburn. I like to walk around and play table tennis. One big problem is the various restrictions on cycling in both Hampstead Heath and Regent’s Park.*”

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

| Camden Parks Survey

In early 2025, Camden ran a Camden Parks Survey to understand the experience and perspective of park users. 426 people responded to the survey, aged 16 and over, to report on their experiences with local green spaces - excluding major parks like Regent’s Park, Primrose Hill, and Hampstead Heath.

Overall, 56% of respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with Camden’s green spaces, and those living within a five-minute walk of a park showing notably higher satisfaction and more frequent use. Proximity emerged as a key factor in shaping positive experiences. 41% were satisfied with accessibility for people with additional needs. Safety emerged as a concern, particularly after dark. The survey highlighted a participation imbalance: while residents aged 55 and over accounted for more than half of respondents, only 1% were aged 16–24, despite this group representing 18% of Camden’s adult population.

Feedback on maintenance and engagement was mixed. Just 35% were satisfied with park cleanliness, and 42% approved of the upkeep of greenery, such as flower beds and trees. Views on play areas (39% neutral) and informal exercise facilities (38% neutral) suggest low awareness or limited engagement. While many respondents praised the role of green spaces in supporting wellbeing and providing regular access to nature, others called for more seating, improved safety, and better promotion of events. Overall, the findings reflect strong public appreciation for Camden’s green spaces, alongside clear opportunities for targeted improvements to accessibility, safety, and community engagement.



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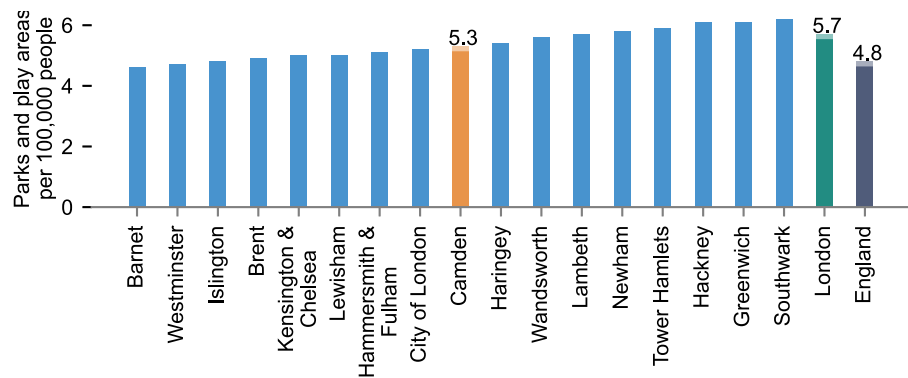
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In Camden there are 69 parks or play areas per 100,000 people, and around 3 in 4 people said they were satisfied with green and natural spaces in the local area

According to the Ordnance Survey database in July 2024, there are approximately 69 parks or play areas for every 100,000 people in Camden.⁵ These include: play areas, playing fields, public parks or gardens, and recreation grounds. Across the borough comparator group, Camden has relatively more parks and play areas per person, but Southwark, Islington, and Lambeth have notably more. However, this has a direct link with the levels of population density in the area and should be considered when interpreting the data.

Figure 6.15: Parks and Play areas Area per 100,000 people



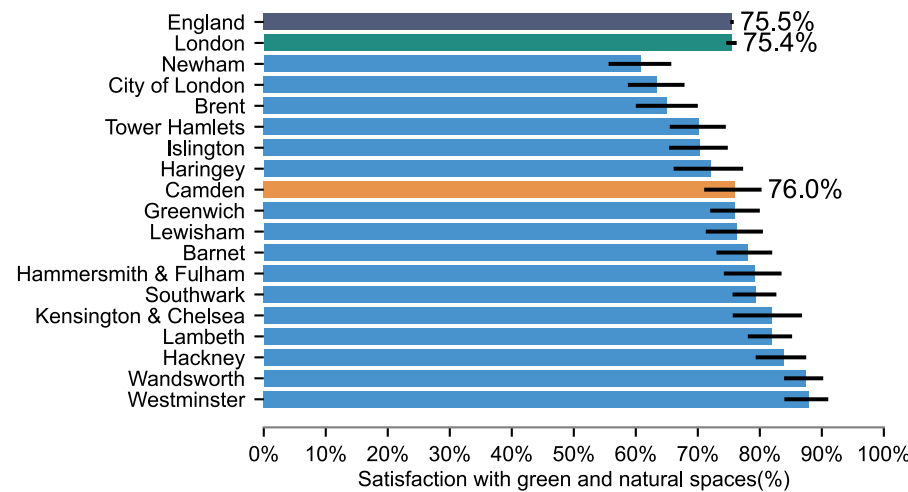
Source: Number of Parks and Play areas in local areas, ONS, 2024

Around 3 in 4 Camden residents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the green and natural spaces in the local area in the Community Life Survey in 2023.⁶ This was in line with the findings nationally. Satisfaction increased with age in the national findings, and people living in rural areas were more likely to feel satisfied with the green and natural spaces in their local areas than people in urban areas. People

said that they were satisfied because of ease of walking to the green spaces and for the mental health and wellbeing benefits more than any other reasons, and dissatisfaction was explained by a lack of spaces in the local area, rubbish and litter and poor maintenance.

Camden’s parks services have documented an increase in anti-social behaviour in parks in recent years, which is also evident in the rise in crime recorded.

Figure 6.16: Satisfaction with green and natural spaces in the local area, 2023



Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black



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1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-provisional-results-2023/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-provisional-results-2023>

2 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Waste and recycling statistics, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/waste-and-recycling-statistics>

3 <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/air%20pollution#page/4/gid/1/pat/159/par/K02000001/ati/15/are/E92000001/iid/93861/age/230/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1>

4 Camden Council, Our carbon reduction programme, <https://www.camden.gov.uk/carbon-reduction-programme>

5 Office for National Statistics, Number of parks and play areas in local areas, England and Wales <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/numberofparksandplayareasinlocalareasenglandandwales>

6 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Community Life Survey 2023/24 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication/community-life-survey-202324-neighbourhood-and-community#satisfaction-with-green-and-natural-spaces-in-local-area>

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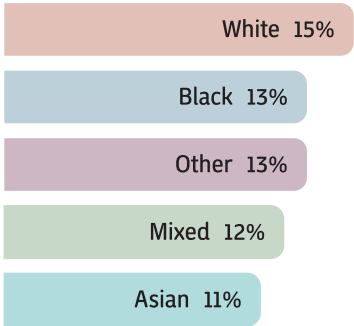
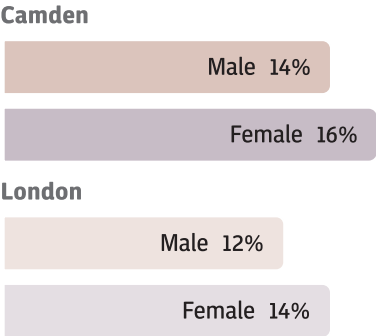
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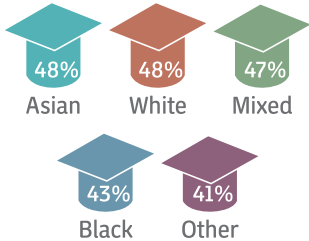
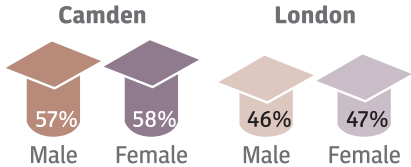
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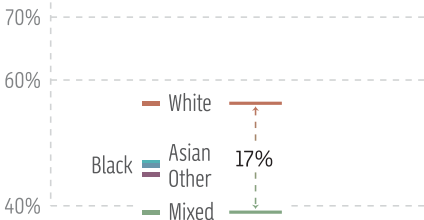
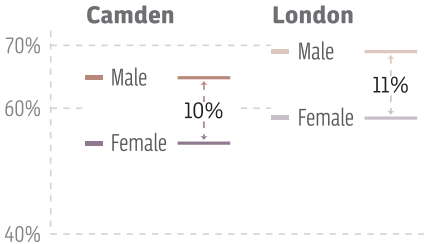
% disabled *
(under the Equality Act 2010; if impairment has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ effect on daily activities)



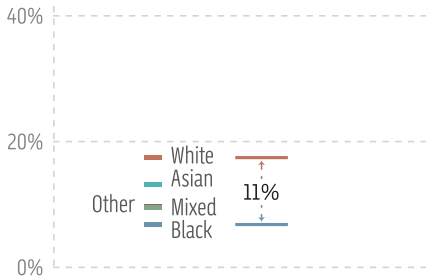
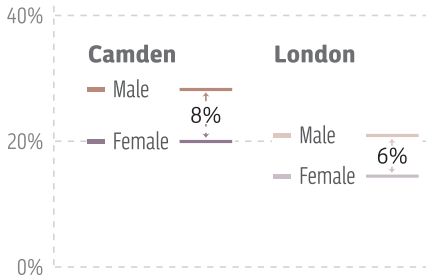
% with advanced qualifications
(level 4 or above)



% economically active
(aged 16+; employed or actively seeking employment)



% working professionals
(in higher managerial, administrative, and professional occupations)



* % of the group, e.g. 14% of all males in Camden are disabled

...across Camden and London, by gender

...between Camden residents, by ethnicity

The previous chapters focus on outcomes experienced by people in Camden, and where possible data on inequality of outcomes for different groups are presented (such as the attainment gap between students based on socio-economic circumstances, or the life expectancy health gap). In this chapter, we look at the 2021 Census data from an inequalities perspective, with a focus on two aspects: sex (male and female) and ethnicity (using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) five high-level groupings: Asian, Black, Mixed, Other, White). These were chosen as there is substantial data available at a local level, and also, the disparities between groups in these aspects are well known nationally.

Differences by sex in health, disability and employment – Camden and London

In both Camden and London, poor health is more common among females compared to males, but in Camden rates are higher for both. A similar pattern can be seen with disability, with females having a 2.5% higher rate of disability than males in both Camden and London, although in Camden both females and males have a higher rate compared to their London peers. The differences in alcohol-related mortality are striking, with a rate 3 times higher for males in Camden than for females.¹

Economic participation, meaning being in employment or actively looking for a job, is another area of gender inequality. Camden has lower overall economic activity rates compared to London (as described in chapter 2), with 65% of males and 54% of females either in employment or actively looking for work, compared to 69% and 58% in London, respectively. However, Camden residents who are employed tend to occupy higher level positions (such as Lawyers, Architects, Medical doctors, Chief executives, Economists), with nearly 20% of women and 28% of men working in higher managerial and professional roles—substantially above London averages.

Camden residents also have higher educational attainment compared to London and England (Higher education degrees or equivalents), with nearly 58% of females holding advanced qualifications² compared to 47% across London, and 57% for males in Camden compared to 46% in London. Working from home is also more prevalent in Camden compared to London, which is related to the higher levels of education, and types of employment in Camden – interestingly, males in Camden work from home more than females (29% vs 27%) whereas in London differences are marginal (around 21% for both males and females).

Differences by ethnicity in health, disability and employment – Camden and London

Looking across ethnicity groups allows us to observe the difference in experience for each of these groups. We have used the five main ethnic groupings that the ONS uses, and while these are broad groupings, with many different ethnicities within each group, it helps us to see the differences at a high level. The analysis shows that there are significant disparities in key social and demographic indicators. In Camden, the largest group is White (60%), then Asian (18%), Black (9%), Mixed (7%) and Other (7%).³

The most striking finding is the variation in UK residency patterns, with the Mixed ethnic group showing the highest percentage (69%) of individuals born in the UK, then White (61%), while only 33% of the Other ethnicity group were born here. This data also shows the pattern of recent immigration, with Asian populations reporting the highest percentage of residents who have been in the country for less than two years (15%), compared to Black communities at just 3%. This highlights the varied migration histories of different ethnic communities.

Educational attainment presents another layer of nuanced differences. While the White, Mixed and Other ethnic groups had higher levels of education (62% for White, 53.5% for both Mixed and Other of qualifications level 4 and above⁴), the Black ethnic group had lower

rates at 41.03%. These were notably different to what is observed in London, where all ethnic groups have lower rates of level 4 qualifications (between 41% to 48%) except Black, who have a higher level of qualifications in London (43%) compared to Camden (41%).

Health disparities are also notable, with the Other and Black ethnicity groups experiencing the highest levels of poor health (18%) and disability (17%), whereas the Asian group in Camden had 16% in poor health and 13% disabled, and the Mixed group had 11% poor health and 14% disabled. This differs from the picture across London as a whole, where the highest level of poor health was in the White group (14.5%) and most disabled in the Other group (17%).

Economic opportunity in Camden tells an equally complex story. White residents have higher rates of professional occupations compared to the city’s average (25% compared to 17% in London). The rate of professional occupations in Camden is higher than London for all ethnic groups except for Black (which is almost the same at 6.5% compared to 6.8%). A similar pattern is visible for working from home, which more Camden workers do across all ethnic groups except for Black workers (12% in Camden and 13% in London – whereas 34% in Camden vs 25.5% in London for White, 20% vs 17% for Asian, 21% vs 17% for Mixed, and 22% vs 13.5% for Other).



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- 1 Potential years of life lost due to alcohol-related conditions – 292 for females and 939 for males in Camden. Data for London was unavailable for the latest year.
- 2 NVQ4 and above.
- 3 The Other ethnicity group includes Arabs – which make up 45% of that group in Camden.
- 4 NVQ Level 4 and above are qualifications that demonstrate advanced skills and knowledge, comparable to what is learned in university degrees, ranging from a first-year degree to a PhD.



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We Make Camden Missions

In March 2022, we published We Make Camden – our refreshed vision for the future of Camden. It was developed following conversations with residents, partners and community leaders and it highlights what we want to achieve together as a community, alongside practical ways we can make change together in the short, medium and long term.

Camden’s Missions are long-term goals for the future of our borough that evolved from the work of Camden’s Renewal Commission and were developed in collaboration with people across Camden. We Make Camden identified four “Missions”:



By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community – and the next generation is ready to follow.



By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food.



By 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure.



By 2030, Camden’s estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity.

| What is the State of the Missions?

This report is the product of an annual learning and reflection process across all our missions. It is a public account of the progress we can see across the missions, what we have learnt and what we need to know and do to continue to move towards these ambitious goals.



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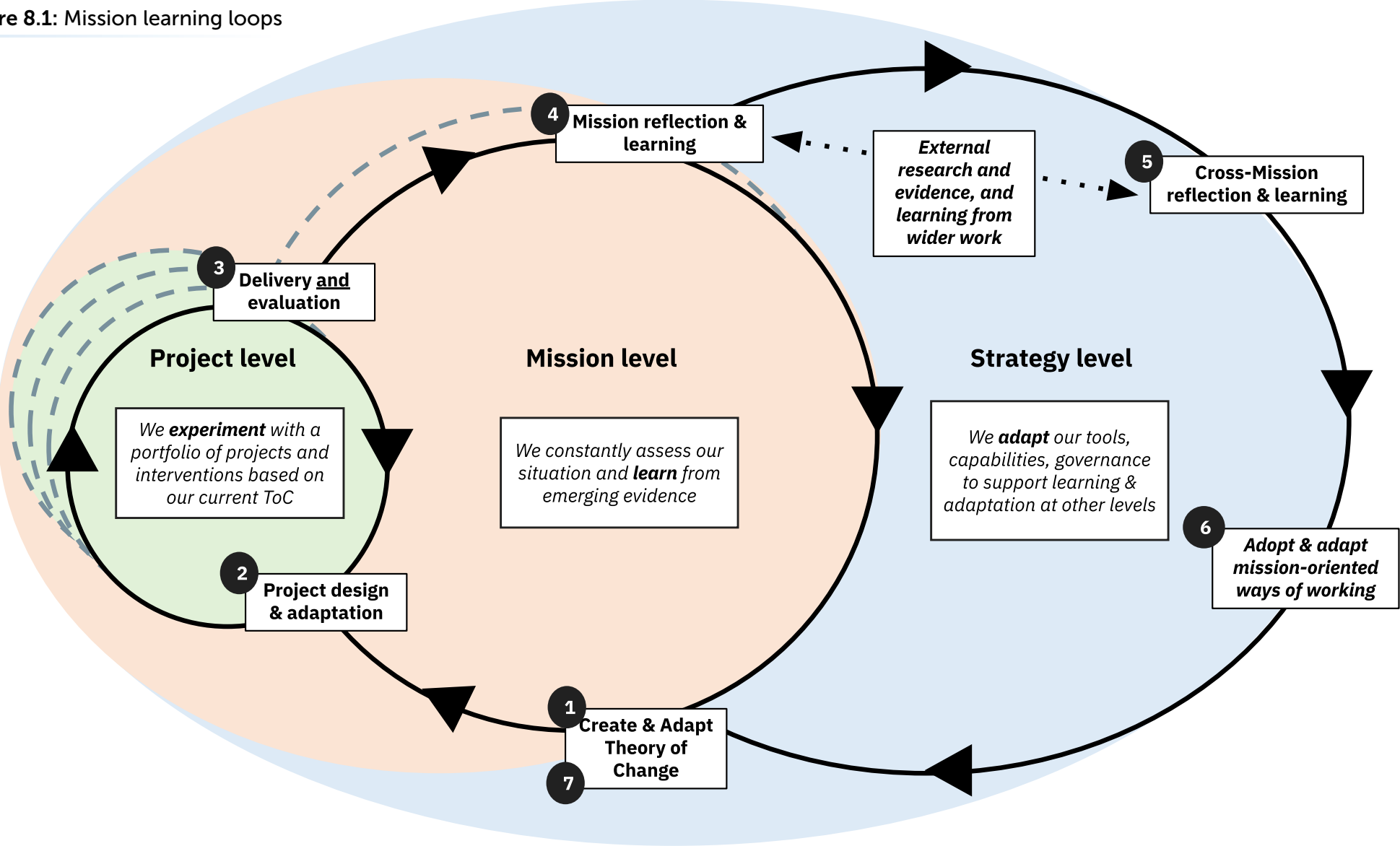
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Our approach to learning

Figure 8.1: Mission learning loops



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Missions are an attempt to tackle complex social challenges that we do not yet know how to solve. We start by trying to break down the big, long-term change we are trying to achieve into smaller, more immediate changes we believe take us in the right direction. This is our “theory of change” – or if you want to think about it as a journey, **our mission map** – which helps us identify and prioritise projects that we think will help us understand the problem better and take us further along the path towards achieving the mission.

Because we don’t know if we’re on the right path, we must learn and adapt at all stages of the journey. Our “learning loops” (see fig 8.1 above) illustrate how individual projects should inform our missions, and how learning in our missions should inform our strategy as a whole:

Individual projects – A mission project is any intervention or activity in the borough that contributes towards our mission goals. Each of these projects is about delivering outcomes but also serves as an experiment to test our assumptions about the mission.

Mission – Each mission comprises a portfolio of projects, which collectively contribute towards the change we want to see. At a mission level, we try to bring together the learning from individual projects and from other data sources to update the mission map, helping us make good choices about where to prioritise resources next.

Strategy – Across the whole strategy, we want to continually improve our missions’ way of working, through reflection on our own missions and by learning from other mission-oriented organisations and external evidence of what works.

The mission map is central to our approach and anchors our missions towards a test-and-learn approach. The narrative of each mission in the following sections is rooted in their respective mission maps.

In each mission section, we have relied on quantitative data from secondary sources, qualitative insights from our primary data collection, and learning from our partners in the borough. The tapestry of insights shared in this section has been shaped by the coverage of these data sources. However, given the cross-sectoral and emerging nature of missions, we often do not have data or recognised indicators for the outcomes pertinent to our missions. These data gaps limit our ability to share a true state of the missions and, in the day-to-day, to navigate towards reaching the missions. Throughout these sections, we have identified the data and insight gaps we want to fill to improve our understanding of our missions.



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Our Youth Mission

By 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure



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| Why is this a Mission?

Camden is a borough of significant opportunity, supported by strong public services, a dynamic business ecosystem, and a robust network of community organisations. However, deep-rooted disparities continue to prevent equitable access to these opportunities for all young people. Camden’s Youth Mission was established to address this inequity, in recognition of the pandemic’s profound impact on young people’s education and concern about how this would limit their future economic opportunities.

Since 2021, we’ve worked within the context of continued pandemic aftershocks, the cost-of-living crisis, and over a decade of national decisions that have reduced funding for local authority education systems and youth services. Addressing these complex challenges demands a long-term, mission-driven approach that unites stakeholders across sectors - public services, businesses, and communities - in a strategic, coordinated effort to deliver sustained and meaningful change.

We recognised the urgency of this mission, not just as a response to current challenges but as a generational commitment. That’s why we set an interim deadline of 2025 to drive measurable impact and progress, alongside our broader ambition of achieving the Mission’s goals by 2030.

| What are the youth mission’s key aims?

Camden is striving to be a place where every young person, regardless of background, can access opportunities that promote their safety, security, and long-term success. At the heart of this is a partnership built on the belief that meaningful change requires collective action. This approach goes beyond collaboration—it’s about co-production, where young people, businesses, educational institutions, public services, and voluntary sector organisations work together as equal partners across three broad Mission outcomes:

- Camden should be a place where young people can easily find good jobs and training opportunities.
- Young people should have a say in creating opportunities in the borough.
- Camden should have welcoming spaces where young people can get support, find information, or feel inspired.

We recognise there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach. Beyond our universal offer, we need to take a more targeted approach that focuses on young people who, for a range of reasons, are furthest away from the job market. Learning from our work so far has pointed us toward five priority groups with more complex barriers to training, skills and employment:

- **Care-experienced young people**
- **Young people in the Youth Justice System**
- **Young people with an Educational Health Care Plan**
- **School non-attenders**
- **Disabled young people**

We face much uncertainty, such as a changing labour market, changes in government policies and funding allocations, and the evolving expectations and ambitions of young people. To address this the mission will remain flexible and responsive, testing and learning through interventions designed to support these priority cohorts to find long-term solutions.

Good Life Camden – measuring progress

The table below sets out the mission’s current thinking about relevant outcome measures to track progress in achieving the mission over the longer term. These reflect both where data is already available and our ambition to develop new measures to better understand mission progress.

We have aligned the outcome measures to our Good Life Camden wellbeing framework. Good Life Camden sets out a range of themes and signals to enable us to understand what it means to live a good life in the borough.

This data will help us understand change at a system level, but we recognise that Camden is only one actor within this system. The change we hope to see – and which the mission can contribute to – will be dependent on national policy, private and third sector partners, economic circumstances, and more.

These outcomes cannot tell the whole story and will need to be complemented with qualitative data and project level learning over the life of the mission.

Outcome	Indicator	GLC Theme
Young people’s talents and ambitions translate into secure work or entrepreneurialism. Camden is a place with a range of good work and training opportunities which young people can access easily	Youth Employment Rate (16-24 years) Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Annual Population Survey	Education and Lifelong Learning
	NEET Rate (16-24 years)– Not in Education, Employment, or Training, Department for Education (DfE) – NEET and Participation Statistics	Education and Lifelong Learning
	Business start-ups by Young People (16-24)	Income and Affordability
	Number of young people securing apprenticeships, traineeships, or supported internships.	Empowered Citizenship
Young people exercise their agency to shape opportunities in the borough	Young people feel their voice is heard.	Empowered Citizenship
	Young people take part in civic engagement.	Empowered Citizenship
Camden is a place where there are welcoming spaces for young to access support and information or simply be inspired	Young people’s perception of safety and accessibility public spaces.	Safety
	Access to informal learning opportunities and creative spaces for youth.	Education and Lifelong Learning

| Our Universal Offer

In Camden, we believe every young person deserves access to the support, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive no matter their background or starting point. That’s why our Universal Offer connects young people across the borough to a rich network of experiences, services, and pathways into education, employment, and beyond.

From guaranteed work experience and personalised careers guidance through the Camden Young Talent Guarantee to hands-on industry placements and mentoring via Camden STEAM, we are investing in the future of our young people. Initiatives like the Google London AI Campus and our partnership with over 60 employers open doors to fast-growing sectors, while services like Connexions ensure tailored, one-to-one support is always available. Together, these opportunities are designed to build skills, confidence, and resilience to help Camden’s young people shape their futures and succeed on their own terms.

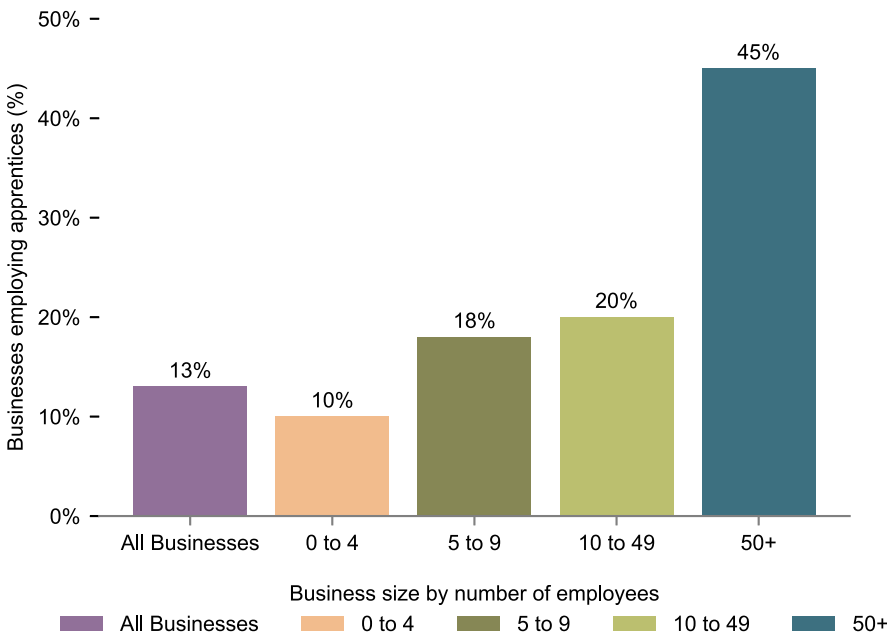
The **Camden Young Talent Guarantee** is our innovative investment to connect every 16- to 24-year-old in Camden with meaningful employment opportunities. This initiative ensures that young people have access to the support, skills, and experiences they need to achieve long-term success:

- Every young person is offered work experience during post-16 education to build real-world skills and industry insights. In 2023/24, this support helped 100 young people secure work, training, or self-employment.
- One-to-one careers guidance is available through local advisors, providing tailored advice and guidance on navigating long-term employment options.
- So far in 2024/25, 132 young people have started apprenticeships, including four care-experienced young people and three who reported a disability. Data from the 2022 business survey carried out

by Camden Council showed that only 13% of businesses employ apprentices, with a higher percentage of larger businesses (with more than 50 employees) doing so.

- 75 young people are currently undergoing construction training at the Euston Skills Centre, equipping them for careers in the growing infrastructure sector.
- Young people can access benefits, mental health services, housing advice, and financial support when needed.

Figure 9.1: Percentage of Camden businesses employing apprentices, by overall number of employees



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023



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One recommendation from Camden Community Researchers is to embed apprenticeships more widely into the economic fabric of Camden. Camden Giving & Brap (2024) noted:

“As part of the planning permission granted by Camden Council, businesses should need to set themselves quotas for numbers of local people taking part in paid internships and they will publish how well they do on these quotas.”

Camden STEAM collaborates with over 65 employers across science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) to provide meaningful opportunities for young people. During the STEAM Work Experience Week in 2024, 443 students in Camden undertook work experience with 32 employers, gaining hands-on insights into potential career pathways. In the 2023/24 academic year, 6,883 young people participated in STEAM-brokered employer activities, further expanding their horizons and future opportunities. In the 2024/25 academic year so far, the STEAM Partnership has brokered 11,461 student encounters – demonstrating our commitment to growing our impact and reaching every child, every year. This includes 33 students recruited to undertake T-Level industry placements within 17 companies.

From the experience of [Camden STEAM Work Experience week](#), we understand that the early exposure to work experience promotes leadership skills and confidence among young people, as reported by 83% and 77% of participating students respectively. One student noted the impact that the STEAM program had on them:

“I gained a plethora of skills and knowledge. My favourite would be learning all the different journeys everyone goes through, whether it’s an investor or a founder. Hearing the ups and downs and how journeys are never smooth and perfect inspires me and shows that resilient people have so much potential to do more than they think.”

– Student participant, Camden STEAM programme

Additionally, 200 ambassadors—employee volunteers—have been recruited to engage with and mentor Camden’s young people. Our STEAM partners include industry giants like Google, Lendlease, the Francis Crick Institute, UCL, and Central Saint Martins, alongside a range of small and medium-sized businesses and start-ups.

The **Connexions** service plays a vital role in supporting Camden’s young people to navigate education, training, and employment pathways. Through personalised guidance and targeted outreach, the service ensures that young people can access the opportunities they need to succeed.

In 2024, the Connexions community team worked with **545 young people**, providing **2,834 individual contacts**, while the schools team supported approximately **1,100 young people** across the borough. Through this targeted, person-centred approach, the Connexions Service continues to empower Camden’s young people, ensuring they can confidently pursue their aspirations and contribute to a thriving community:

- The **September Guarantee**—which ensures that every 16- and 17-year-old has an offer of education, training, or employment—stood at **98.7%** in 2024, up from **98.4%** in 2023.
- In 2024, 3,161 young people aged 16-17 in Camden (96.9%) were in education, employment, or training (EET), outperforming the London average (96.6%) and England average (94.6%). Just 1.9% were not in education, employment or training, with 1.2% recorded as unknown.

Google, Camden Council, and Camden Learning have partnered to launch the **London AI Campus**, a pioneering initiative equipping Camden’s young people with essential digital skills for the future. Located in Somers Town, the Campus delivers a two-year education pilot, offering sixth-form students access to cutting-edge AI resources, real-world projects, and mentorship from Google DeepMind. The initial cohort of **32 students**, reflecting Camden’s diverse post-16

student body. From mid-2025, the Campus will expand its reach as an *Opportunity Centre*, providing out-of-school learning, digital skills workshops, and foundational AI education for the wider student community.

Through the *Experience AI* programme, co-developed by the Raspberry Pi Foundation and Google DeepMind, the Campus is also upskilling teachers to deliver AI education. With £865,000 in new funding from Google.org, this initiative will reach over 250,000 additional students across the UK by 2026 ensuring equitable access to the opportunities AI presents.

Figure 9.2: Sir Keir Starmer, Member of Parliament for Holborn and St Pancras and Prime Minister at the launch of the Google AI Campus with a group of students



Access to youth provision is an important part of many young people’s development. Youth provision, such as community centres, provide young people with a sense of community and safety, and can help develop the skills needed to rise to leadership positions Many young people surveyed at Camden’s youth assembly cited youth centres as places that made them feel safe and part of the community. One youth assembly attendee stated,

“ *Places I feel safe are my community centre.*”

– 13, Female, Youth Assembly, 2024

Another Camden resident stated,

“ *[We need] youth development, investing in youth programs: support programs and activities that provide opportunities for youth development, education and mentorship.*”

According to Camden Giving & Brap (2024),

“ *Kilburn needs to see investment from the local authority and funders to address the lack of youth provisions...across Camden, youth provisions should be accessible, appealing and safe spaces for young people to prosper, thrive and engage in meaningful activities.*”

| **Care experienced young people**

Care experienced young people are young people who have experience of being in the care of the local authority (sometimes referred to as care leavers). There are 331 young people in Camden who are care experienced. We know from historic data and national research that this cohort have poorer outcomes in adult life. Our own work with young people in Camden has helped us understand that issues with how the benefits system works, the quality of advice and skills training available, and having secure accommodation are key issues that we can aim to address through the mission for this cohort.



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In 2024, as part of the Youth Mission, Camden agreed that care experience would be considered a protected characteristic for the Council – as part of this Camden announced that all Camden young people leaving care will receive support to access free Wi-Fi until the age of 25 recognising the importance of internet access for training, skills and employment.

We are educating staff across the council on their corporate parenting responsibilities which will increase awareness of care experience as they discharge their corporate duties. For example, we have now included care experienced as a protected characteristic within our equality impact assessments to ensure that service delivery does not disadvantage this community.

Camden offers a care-leaver internship programme which provides care experienced young people with 18-month placements, career support, and training. The first cohort finishes in March 2025. So far two interns have secured permanent positions, and others are actively applying for roles. The second cohort of 8 starts in April 2025, offering a £1,500 living cost top-up, a travel card, and optional apprenticeships. Candidates are supported by the Drive Forward Foundation with applications and workplace skills training. To enhance career progression, suitable apprenticeship roles are now ring-fenced for graduating interns.

“

‘In May 2024, I successfully completed my apprenticeship and earned a Level 2 Business Administration qualification something I never imagined achieving. More importantly, I secured a permanent role. One of the most rewarding moments since completing my apprenticeship was being asked to sit on the interview panel to help select a new apprentice. Not long ago, I was on the other side of that process, and now I had the chance to help someone else start their journey. It felt amazing to support and guide someone who, like me, was taking their first steps into a new career.’

– Care experienced intern

”

| **Young people with Education, Health and Care Plans**

In line with national trends, Camden has seen an increase in the number of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Between January 2024 and January 2025, the number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) rose from 1,532 to 1,609, while those receiving Exceptional Needs Grants (ENG) increased from 200 to 288. These additional needs put growing pressure on services and schools.

Camden has a long-standing commitment to proactive planning and collaboration with schools and settings to promote inclusion. The ENG pathway, developed in partnership with settings, provides an alternative to the EHCP route—ensuring that funding reaches mainstream settings more quickly and delivering ‘the right provision at the right time’, reducing reliance on statutory services.



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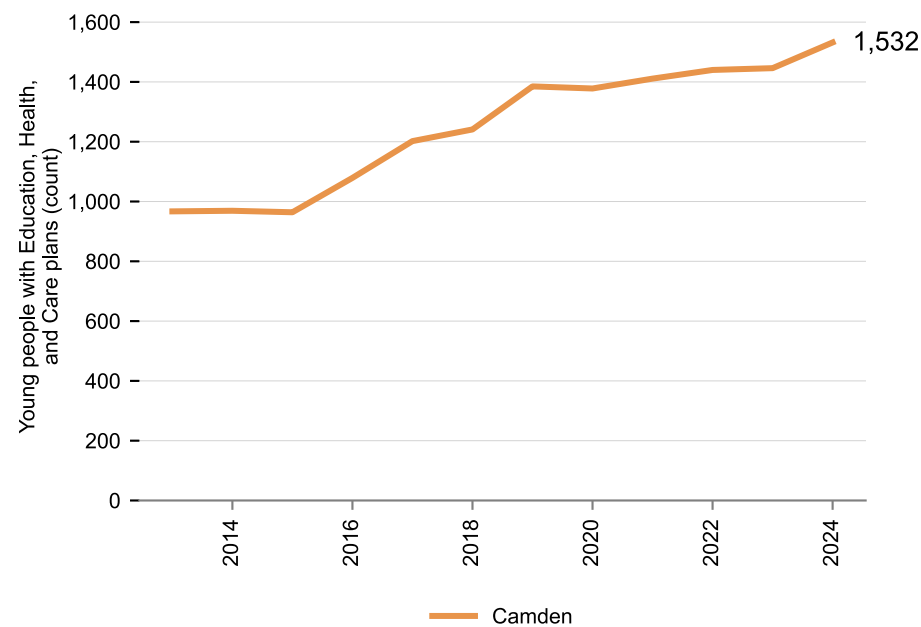
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Figure 9.3: Growth in the prevalence of EHCPs in Camden from January 2019-2024, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024



Supported Internship

Supported internships provide young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) the opportunity to gain workplace experience and develop employability skills in a structured, supportive environment. These programs play a vital role in ensuring young people can transition successfully into sustained employment and play a key part in Camden’s strategy to create inclusive, high-quality employment pathways for young people with SEND.

In 2024/2025 academic year Camden has seen a 31% increase in supported internship enrolment, with 21 young people participating in these structured programs. This marks a steady growth from previous

years, with 19 young people enrolled in 2022/2023, 16 in 2023/2024. This positive trend highlights the increasing accessibility and uptake of supported internships within the borough.

“ Before the internship, X was isolated at home, he didn’t leave his room, socialise with others, and couldn’t travel without support. Since joining the programme, his confidence has grown tenfold. He travels to work every day independently, speaks to patients from all different backgrounds, and loves his job. It’s just amazing! I recommend this programme and Ambitious College to anyone!”

– Parent feedback from an Ambitious About Autism Supported Internship

School non-attenders

There are around 4,000 persistently absent school children in Camden, approximately 22% of primary and 26% of secondary school children, and 57% of special school children. In line with national trends, the size of this cohort has doubled since the pandemic. It is well established that low school attendance is related to poor educational attainment outcomes.

Conversations with schools and families, along with data analysis, show that mental health challenges, changing parental attitudes, financial hardship, and temporary accommodation are making regular attendance more difficult. Quality pastoral care in secondary schools plays a crucial role in addressing this, but we must continue exploring a range of interventions through the mission.

Using school census and other data sources we conducted a multivariate analysis examining the different factors influencing attendance, supplementing this with a policy analysis of relevant statutory policy to better understand Camden’s requirements related

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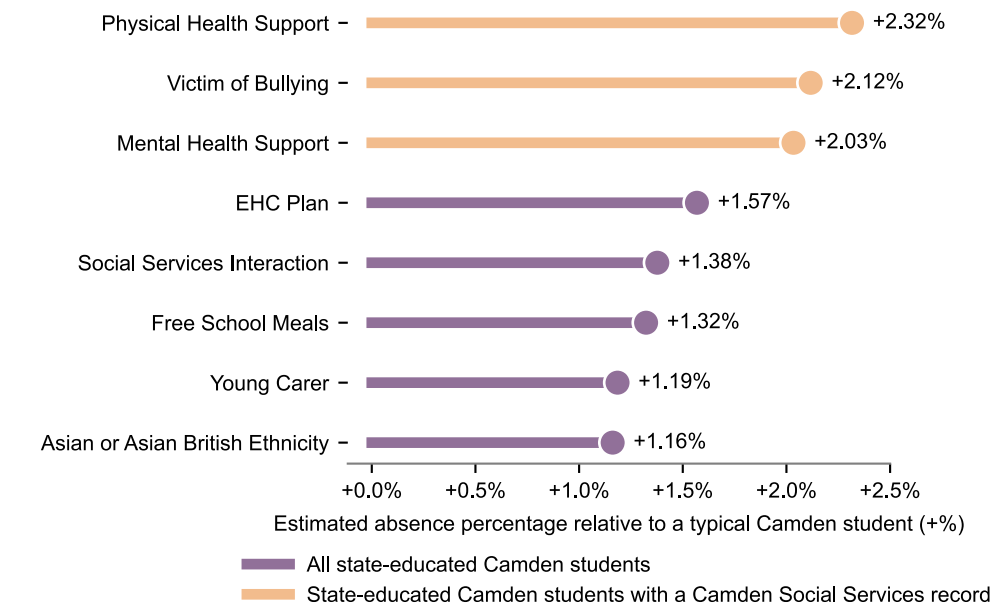
to school attendance. To understand how to enable better system collaboration we ran a workshop with services across Camden to identify where service provision could be connected to better support priority children and young people. The data analysis and research activities identified seven main priority cohorts of children and young people who currently have high rates of persistent absence alongside potential secondary cohorts.

Through this exercise, seven main priority cohorts of children and young people (CYP) have been identified. They are:

- Children in the school census with an Educational Health Care Plan
- Children that known to social care, have a record on MOSAIC,
- Children that are eligible for free school meals as a proxy for deprivation
- Children that provide support as young carers
- Children suffering from bullying
- Children with physical health or mental health issues
- Children from Asian communities

Following this, two tests and learn pilots are being developed relating to targeted text message in parents/carers and the development of a Team Around the School model relating to locality-based family support.

Figure 9.4: Factors predicting overall absence in the school census.



Source: School Census, Mosaic (Social Services), OFSTED reports, Postcode deprivation, Street level crime data, 2018-2023



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Fitzrovia Youth In Action – School Attendance Peer Mentoring Project

The Fitzrovia Youth in Action (FYA) School Attendance Peer Mentoring programme was designed to address school non-attendance by engaging young people in a peer-mentoring initiative, which aimed to:

- Foster a sense of belonging and support among students struggling with attendance
- Empower young people to take an active role in encouraging school engagement
- Strengthen partnerships with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, bringing them closer to Youth Mission delivery

Key Learning

- Reaching students who were persistently absent required targeted outreach and collaboration with schools.
- By training young mentors, the project established sustainable peer support networks that continued to reinforce the positive impact of school attendance beyond its duration.
- Collaboration between schools, community groups, and the local authority proved essential in addressing school non-attendance holistically.

There was a risk that the programme would be a one-off intervention. To mitigate this, Camden Council and FYA worked closely with Camden Learning to embed findings into ongoing school attendance work and to share best practice with schools and partners. Moving forward, expanding the peer mentoring programme, strengthening integration within schools, and creating sustainable pathways for youth leadership will be key priorities.

| Disabled Young People

Young people with disabilities often face greater barriers to securing meaningful employment. To address this, Mencap, Camden Council, and the Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre have collaborated to create a sustainable partnership model for supported internships and paid employment. This initiative will extend opportunities to pupils with complex needs in mainstream education.

The Children and Young People with Disabilities Service (CYPDS) supports 550 disabled children and young people (aged 0-25).

- From age 14, all young people in CYPDS receive a Preparing for Adulthood assessment to plan for their future care, support, and employment needs.
- CYPDS works closely with Camden’s social care services and community partners to ensure that young people with moderate disabilities can access social care support through Camden’s universal and targeted services.

Alongside this, Camden’s Disability Job Hub provides one-to-one support for disabled residents, helping them find employment, training, and workplace skills development. The hub also works with employers to improve disability awareness and inclusive hiring practices. Since April 2023:

- 75+ residents have been onboarded into the hub
- 8 residents have been supported into paid employment
- 7 residents have secured paid work experience placements
- 10 residents have been supported into education & training



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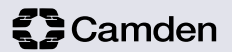
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Rebuilding Bridges

The Rebuilding Bridges Project, funded through the DfE Short Breaks Innovation Fund since June 2022 and now in the third and final year of project delivery, tests innovative approaches to integrated delivery of short breaks to improve health, education and well-being outcomes. The overarching aim of the project is to enable CYP needs to be met more effectively in mainstream education and universal services, and to reduce the risk of placement breakdown or moves to costly out-of-borough provision for those already in specialist settings. The outcomes from the Year 2 evaluation include:

- 50% of CYP who were persistently absent at referral showed improved school attendance.
- 84% achieved positive outcomes in relation to personalised goals
- 90% had reduced behaviours of concern.
- 58% of service users reported improved emotional wellbeing
- 48% of parents reported being better equipped to meet their child’s needs
- 41% stepped down CP threshold categories

The project’s three strands—intensive therapeutic and mentoring support, personalised access to youth provision, and independent living skills development—have provided holistic, impactful interventions. As funding concludes in March 2025, efforts now focus on embedding these successful approaches into long-term service delivery.

“ We have seen a positive change (school attendance, well-being and improvements in academic attainment) in some of the students who are receiving PACE/RBB mentoring. One of our EBSA (Emotional School Based Avoidance) students who has less than 20% attendance in Y7 is now at 55%. This has been achieved by the support of Rebuilding Bridges.”

– Secondary School Education Welfare Officer, survey, 2024

Young People in the Youth Justice System

Camden’s Youth Justice Service (YJS) works to prevent offending and reoffending among children by providing targeted support, early intervention, and opportunities for positive development. The service takes a child-first approach, prioritising rehabilitation, education, and inclusion. Through strong partnerships with schools, community organisations, and support services, Camden YJS helps children build brighter futures while ensuring their voices shape the services that support them.

Youth Pathways Finder

The Youth Pathways Finder project provides learning, enterprise and employment opportunities for young people aged 19-25 who are involved in the criminal justice system or at risk of becoming so. The project funds paid work placement opportunities with a range of employers designed around the individual’s strengths and aspirations. In the current cohort, 24 young people known to the criminal justice system have been supported by the programme. Camden Council has provided some of these paid opportunities, but we have also worked with a range of external employers including Camden People’s Theatre, Fitzrovia Youth in Action, Green and Fortune and Phoenix Arts Club, to name just a few.

The project has also supported candidates into training and education. Those in work placements are encouraged to gain as much training and experience as they can while there which has also been supported by the project. Over the last 3 years we have supported 43 with IAG (information guidance and advice).



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Honest Grind Coffee (HGC)

Honest Grind Coffee (HGC) is a programme offering children and young people aged 16–18 a pathway to employment through coffee production, sales, and service. Launched in March 2023, the programme provides structured, paid training that equips participants with valuable vocational and soft skills, helping them build brighter futures. Training takes place at two locations in Camden where one is a customer-facing site where low-risk participants gain hands-on barista experience alongside a programme manager, working towards industry qualifications. The second site is a supportive, non-customer-facing environment for those who need additional safeguarding. Here, participants focus on training, production, and online order processing.

The programme has seen success, with zero participants reoffending while engaged with HGC. Since March 2024, 22 industry-standard qualifications in barista skills, food hygiene, and customer service have been awarded, with five more participants currently progressing towards certification. With continued support, HGC will not only help more children and young people gain skills and confidence but also strengthen community safety by providing legitimate career pathways for vulnerable children and young people.

Learning from: [Khadys Dream](#), a We Make Camden Kit grantee

“When we did our 1st ever workshop, we asked 40 young people, aged between 13 to 21 “Would you go to prison for 2 years or more for a thousand pounds?” 37 of them said, yes.”, shared Kevin. This was shocking for Kevin despite his lived experiences. We Make Camden Kit provided the seed funding to start Khadys Dream – registering as a CIC and delivering first workshops. It is now creating an impact beyond just Camden.

Khadys Dream is an initiative focused on providing an ecosystem of support services to young people at risk of offending, aiming to address the root causes of youth crime through education, empowerment, and community collaboration. It aims to address the gap in understanding about justice system and the ripple effects in other aspects of life such as mental health and builds on that to introduce young people to alternative pathways.

They have devised a program of workshops for young people across the age range of 11 to 25, delivered in collaboration with a range of community organisations. The reported success rate for workshop attendees is 85% i.e. every young person that goes through the program is 85% less likely to re-offend. The change in life pathway contributes to good life for them and their loved ones and leads to a safer community. As Kevin puts it, “Khadys Dreams were made by the community for the community.”

Now in its 3rd year, Khadys Dream is gathering immense learnings to improve outcomes for our young people and avoid entering the youth justice system altogether.

- “*Something that both parents and young people need*” - Like most work centred around young people, Khadys Dream was started with the aim of working directly with young people. However, parents have expressed unpredictable interest in being a participant too!
- “*It’s never too late, It’s never too young.*” – While Khadys Dream starts with young people at the age of 11/12, the feedback from parents has been to start awareness building at a younger age to minimize crime as an option altogether.
- “*They didn’t quite understand what education and the criminal justice system connected.*” – The approach of building an ecosystem around young people has meant sensitizing schools, youth clubs and community organisations on the potential of education and awareness to change attitudes.



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| Our priorities for the coming year

The Youth Mission is committed to expanding opportunities for young people through targeted initiatives, partnerships, and innovative projects. The focus over the coming year will be on continuous learning, monitoring progress, and adapting strategies to ensure the council drives meaningful change for Camden’s young people, and that young people remain central to influencing change in the borough.

Key priorities include:

- The Community Wealth Fund launched in 2024 with an initial £1 million investment, the fund will begin trialling youth-led investment decisions in 2025. A Youth Panel of 15 young people (aged 16–25, or up to 30 for priority groups) will co-design and decide how the funding is invested in local businesses dedicated to creating inclusive economic opportunities for young people traditionally locked out of investment and employment pathways.
- Strengthening universal offer of programmes such as Good Work Camden and STEAM to connect more young people to meaningful employment and career pathways.
- Using evidence and data to identify the barriers faced by priority cohorts and design interventions that meet their specific needs.
- Championing internships for all with a focus on the priority cohorts through anchor institutions and council-led initiatives.
- Testing innovative approaches, such as the Team Around the School pilot on school attendance and multidisciplinary school teams, to improve attendance and engagement.
- The Euston Skills Centre and AI Campus opening in 2025 to create new out-of-school opportunities for skills development and future-focused learning.

- Partnering with Autonomy to explore the potential of a basic income pilot for care-experienced young people.
- Launching a Primary Careers Fair in 2025 to connect younger children with relatable role models, directly responding to youth feedback.
- Developing key relationships with mission ambassadors to expand opportunities for young people.
- Delivering the government’s Youth Trailblazer Guarantee programme, which in central London will focus on care experienced young people.

Our Estates Mission

By 2030, Camden's estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity



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Why is this a Mission?

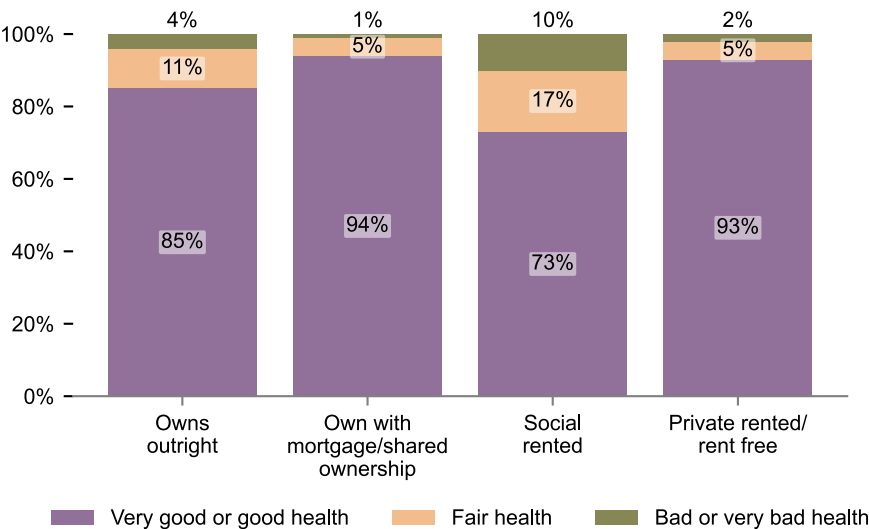
Where we live has a big impact on our health and wellbeing. We know that there is a big difference in health between our neighbourhoods, and residents on our estates are particularly likely to have worse health outcomes than others. We want to reduce that gap, so that by 2030, residents on our estates have the same levels of health and wellbeing as others in the borough.

We have chosen to focus on the health and wellbeing of estates residents because of the urgent nature of the problems associated with poor health. As well as being bad in itself, poor health makes it harder to work, travel, raise a family or participate in community life.

One-third of Camden’s residents live in social rented housing, and they are much more likely to report worse health than those in other tenure types. Only 73% of residents of social rented houses reported being in very good or good health – 20% points below those who own with a mortgage or rent privately, and over 10% points below those who own outright (who tend to be older). Camden is in line with the national trend – 10% of social renters report being in bad or very bad health here, compared to 11% across the UK.

Additionally, 15% of Camden residents living in social rented homes reported having a long-term health condition or disability that limits their daily activities in some way, compared to 2% in private rented and 1% who own their properties. (ONS, 2021).

Figure 10.1: Health outcomes by tenure, 2021



Source: ONS - Census, 2021

Health services need to be accessible and relevant to all residents. We know that some communities face greater barriers to accessing the care they are entitled to, and as a result engage less with those services. We want to work with partners to overcome those barriers, which might mean changing where appointments are held or the kinds of services which are delivered.

But good health is about more than just medicine and health services. The Commission on Social Determinants of Health by the World Health Organisation concluded that people’s day-to-day conditions cause inequalities. This emphasises the importance of addressing the systemic and structural causes of ill health, which often act to limit people’s ability to change their behaviours.



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| What are the Estates Mission’s key aims?

Our main goal is that by 2030, residents on our estates have the same levels of health and wellbeing as others in the borough. The three main goals of the Estates Mission are:

People who live on our estates feel a sense of belonging and connection.

- Camden is one of the loneliest boroughs in the UK, and we know that if people feel isolated their health suffers. We want to bring people together on our estates by creating opportunities for people to interact with others – through sports, culture, food, and other community activities – which can build social connections and address isolation, and make sure that our estates feel welcoming for the people that live there.

Our estates are healthy environments

- The homes, buildings, estates and spaces that people live in can support or impair health. We want our estates to feel safe and comfortable. But we also want them to inspire joy, with great public space and access to nature.
- Houses that are cold, damp and mouldy can contribute to respiratory conditions, and is a particular concern for the health of young and elderly residents. We’re working to improve the energy efficiency and heating systems of our estates, so that everyone can be energy secure and reduce the risk of mould and damp.
- Overcrowding can have a big impact on children’s development – especially those who are neurodiverse and need home to be a calm space. As well as building more homes, we’re activating vacant spaces on our estates and neighbourhood spaces on nearby high streets, so that everyone has space they can use as they need.

Our residents have the power to shape their local environment

- Communities with a greater sense of agency are likely to have higher levels of wellbeing. Residents need the power and agency

to make decisions about what will support and improve their health and wellbeing. We want to give residents more say in how budgets are spent, how services are designed, and how spaces in their community are used.

- We know there is a real energy to make change at the grassroots level. We’ve been testing different approaches to enable our residents to influence decisions that impact on their lives.

Camden Council can’t achieve the Estates Mission alone, due to the nature and complexity of the challenge. Over the past year, officers have held conversations with community partners and anchor institutions about how we can work together toward shared goals. There are many examples of good work being delivered by partners such as NW5, Think and Do, and The Winch, amongst others.

A whole system approach at place level, which involves health services, local government and community organisations, can contribute to healthier neighbourhoods for residents across all of the domains which impact their health and wellbeing. Taking this neighbourhoods approach may lead to more sustainable outcomes as the time is taken to work with residents on long-term solutions. Evidence from Camden’s Public Health report 2024 and Public Health England’s Spatial Planning for Health framework supports this.

We are excited to be working more closely over the next year with four of our partners as Mission Ambassadors: ZSL London Zoo, Arsenal in the Community, Caversham GP, and Old Diorama Arts Centre. They will act as enablers and innovators, sharing their expertise and supporting a culture of innovation through a test-and-learn approach.

We also know how important it is for this work to be led by residents – so the projects we have worked on test how localised approaches on estates can shift power. Each project was designed and adapted to actively gain residents’ participation and to establish meaningful dialogue.



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Good Life Camden – measuring progress

The table below sets out the mission’s current thinking about relevant outcome measures to track progress in achieving the mission over the longer term. These reflect both where data is already available and our ambition to develop new measures to better understand mission progress.

We have aligned the outcome measures to our Good Life Camden wellbeing framework. Good Life Camden sets out a range of themes and signals to enable us to understand what it means to live a good life in the borough.

This data will help us understand change at a system level, but we recognise that Camden is only one actor within this system. The change we hope to see – and which the mission can contribute to – will be dependent on national policy, private and third sector partners, economic circumstances, and more.

These outcomes cannot tell the whole story and will need to be complemented with qualitative data and project level learning over the life of the mission.

Table 10.1: Estate mission outcomes mapped to the Good Life Camden themes and measures

Mission Outcome	Key measure	GLC theme
People who live on our estates feel a sense of belonging and connection	- Percentage of adults who feel lonely often or always or some of the time - Percentage people feel they belong to their neighbourhood	Social connections
Our estates are healthy environments	- Overcrowding Ethnic Groups - Damp and mould - Air quality - Hospital admissions for asthma (under 19 years)	Inequality Housing Health
Our residents have the power to shape their local environment	- Extent of agreement that you can personally influence decisions affecting the local area - Involvement in social action in the last 12 months	Empowered citizenship

People who live on our estates feel a sense of belonging and connection

Loneliness is one of the biggest drivers of poor mental health in the UK. It can increase the risk of developing dementia, suffering a stroke or cardiovascular diseases, and even early death (WHO, 2023). The proportion of people saying they feel lonely often or always has increased from 5% in 2013/14 to 7% in 2023/24 (ONS, 2024). Camden has a higher-than-average number of people reporting they are lonely, with 9% reporting frequent loneliness. Conversely, the people in Camden report a lower sense of belonging (57%) than the average in England (61%) (Community Life Survey, 2024)

Variations amongst different groups have been observed around social connectedness, although the picture is complex. There is evidence that social care users are particularly likely to experience social isolation – only 35% of adult social care users in Camden) said they have as much social contact as they would like (41% across London).¹ Whilst writing this report, we consulted a carers’ subgroup and there was a strong sense of isolation and loneliness. One participant stated,

“As a carer I felt disconnected from the world, from people working or having fun.”

But loneliness is not confined to elderly or those in care - those aged 16-24 years actually reported more indirect loneliness than all other age groups (at 12%), while those between 65-74 reported the lowest levels of indirect loneliness (at 6%) ² (Community Life Survey, 2024).

Learning from: Regent’s Roots

Old Diorama Arts Centre and Fitzrovia Youth in Action, alongside residents from Young Guardians and Community Champions, curated a cultural festival called Regent’s Roots in summer 2024. This event was based in Regent’s Park estate to bring people together in celebration of the talent and contributions of local people. People were able to participate in creative workshops and activities led by multiple local organisations. 75% of attendees stated they met someone that they didn’t know before. There was strong agreement that the festival made the area feel safer and more social, and that they felt more connected in the community.

Vacant Spaces pilot

The Vacant Spaces programme aims to transform unloved and underused vacant spaces on our estates into places for community connection and social value activities. This project focused on:

- Addressing barriers to resident engagement, communication gaps between services, and the relationship challenges between the council and residents
- Strengthening community relationships
- Empowering residents to become more involved in decision-making and activities in their community, and ensure they felt they had real power to act alongside the Council

Over the last year, we ran a pilot project at Hilgrove Estate, focusing on an underused garage to bring it back into community use. This has involved working closely with the Tenant and Residents Association and local residents to influence the design and use of the space.

The Winch and Public Works were commissioned to carry out an engagement and viability study and funds were also spent on making the site safe and welcoming to residents. They organised drop-in sessions to hear resident ideas for the use of the site and organised a visit to the London School of Mosaic to inspire people on the Hilgrove site’s potential use.

Figure 10.2: Hilgrove estate garage



We took a test-and-learn approach. Residents were invited to hear about plans and to participate in a two-week trial programme of activities in the space, some of which were led directly by residents. The most popular activities were ones for children and young people where adults could also participate. Following this we held a vision workshop to provide feedback to residents on the viability study.

Figure 10.3: Community play day



What we learned

Many of the lessons from this project echo other projects, including the value of a local partner, the need for honesty about constraints, and the value of a single point of contact to build trust. Additional lessons include:

- **Governance is interesting.** Residents wanted to be involved in the governance of the space when setting up and in the running of the space alongside the council
- **Take concerns seriously.** Time was needed to listen to the concerns of some people, but this paid off by bringing them on board, and ensuring that the project didn’t face resistance later on

- **Be open about potential.** Soft market testing has shown that there is interest from organisations to use the space, but for the sites that will be in commercial use it has been important to learn from the market what their potential is

Next steps

We will now work with the Hilgrove Design Panel to decide how the space should be run, what the exterior should look like, and what it should be made from. Later this year we will be asking potential operators of the site to submit Expressions of Interest and we will select an operator in early 2026. Beyond Hilgrove, the Vacant Spaces programme will be soft market testing a prospectus of 10 more sites to understand commercial interest, stakeholder priorities, and the level of support needed.

| Our estates are healthy environments

Damp and mould is well recognised as a contributor to respiratory problems. Awaab’s Law – introduced after mould caused the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak – will put new obligations on social landlords to fix dangerous damp and mould in set time periods. Across the UK, around 3% of households have damp in at least one room, but this is not equally distributed. Some ethnic groups are more likely to be living in a house with damp – in particular, Bangladeshi (10%), Black African (9%), and Pakistani (8%) households ([DLUHC, 2020](#))

In Camden between November 2023 and October 2024, there were 4,585 damp and mould inspections and 3,295 mould washes ([Camden open data, 2024](#)). There is a limitation on our data here – we are not currently able to provide detailed numbers on how many properties are confirmed with mould, as our data records activity. There is ongoing work to improve our visibility in this space.

Overcrowding can have a range of negative effects on health. It can increase the risk of some infectious diseases spreading, such as respiratory diseases or diarrhoea ([WHO, 2018](#)). Overcrowding caused an increased risk of COVID-19 spreading during the pandemic ([Centre for Aging Better, 2020](#)). It can also contribute to poor mental health and affect family dynamics through increasing stress, anxiety and depression. The lack of space or privacy also restricts a child’s ability to play or study which can negatively impact their development.

Nationally, 4% of households live in overcrowded homes. Camden is above the national average, at 10%, but slightly below the London average of 11% ([ONS, 2024](#)). As with damp and mould, minority ethnic groups are more likely to live in overcrowded housing than others. Within Camden, 24% of Black households and 17% of Asian households are overcrowded compared to 5% of White households ([ONS, 2024](#)). By tenure, social renters are the most likely group to be in overcrowded accommodation – more than private renters or owner occupiers ([House of Commons, 2021](#)).

Air quality is an important factor in respiratory conditions, including asthma. In 2018, Camden became the first local authority to adopt the World Health Organisation guidelines as its long-term target. Our [Air Quality Action Plan 2023-26](#) sets out the actions we are taking to meet this. Historically, policy focus has been on external air quality. Whilst this remains central to Camden’s approach, we also know that there is significant potential to support residents to improve their indoor air quality. Although Local Authorities have relatively little control over indoor pollution, Camden Council is determined to work with partners and other stakeholders to explore opportunities and push for new standards and best practice in managing and reducing indoor air pollution and occupational pollution exposure.



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Denyer House improvements

Residents have told us that they want to be involved in shaping the design and development of their estate. Our work at Denyer House aimed to test new participatory processes around capital and infrastructure work, so that improvements responded to the priorities of residents.

Working with a partner, Walls on Walls, we ran a series of creative engagement projects, including a map to enable residents to visualise the changes to the estate. Residents identified three main priorities for their estate. Those included:

- Security and safety with a defined entrance and access improvements
- Increasing greening through landscaping
- Creating a larger playground

The entrance upgrades included a new rain garden, with new estate signage and boundary demarcation. Changes to the terrace included enhanced seating and picnic areas and a barbeque area, and new planting and surfacing alongside an improved play area. This area has been enhanced with the refurbishment of the community space, which now includes toilets, a kitchen with laundry facilities and new access to enable residents to spill out to the open area outside when using the new community hall.

Before:



After:



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What we learned:

- **Mobilising resources can be challenging and can affect pace of progress.** Internal resources from Camden Council major repairs work were needed to develop this project.
- **Communities have strong connections to assets.** The engagement activities were essential to discovering what residents valued and what aspects were not up for negotiation.
- **Foster a sense of ownership from the start.** Provide residents with meaningful opportunities to actively collaborate with architects throughout the design process, ensuring their ideas, preferences, and needs are considered and integrated into the final plans.
- **Ward Councillors are key champions of residents’ needs.** Local councillors know their residents well and can advocate on behalf of the community to access funding such as CIL. Their influence can drive progress through working with services to facilitate collaboration and overcome issues that may arise.

Our residents have the power to shape their local environment

There is an increasing body of evidence that communities have the knowledge and assets to strengthen resilience ([New Local, 2021](#)). There are six main benefits that can flow from an increase in community power (ibid), the first two of which are directly relevant to the estates mission. They are:

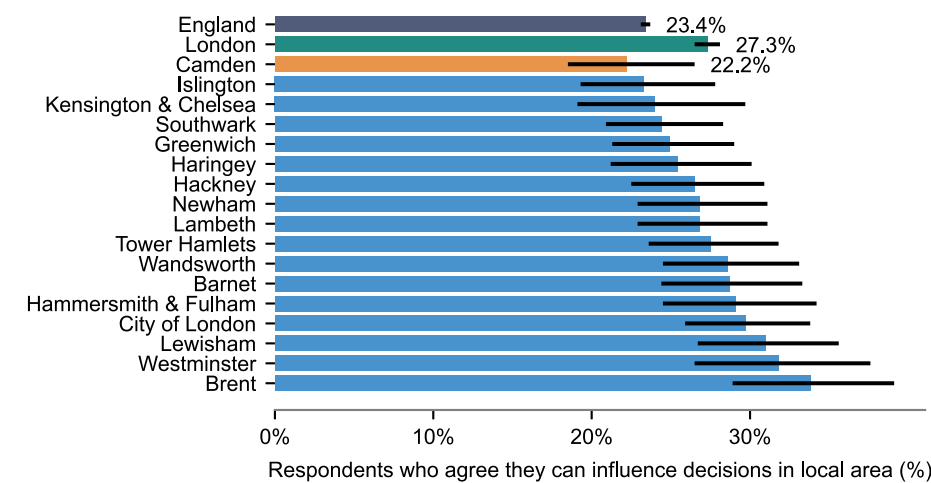
1. Better individual health and wellbeing.
2. Better community wellbeing and resilience.
3. Enhanced democratic participation and trust.
4. Better community cohesion.
5. Embedding prevention in public services.
6. Financial savings.

Community power is not any one thing – it is a range of approaches that share a common ethos. Approaches might include handing over power about particular decisions or budgets; deeper collaboration and engagement; or building capacity and capability within communities to act for themselves.

Compared to a set of similar London boroughs, Camden scores relatively poorly on the question of whether people feel like they can influence local area (Figure 1), and there is clear demand for more involvement (Figure 2).

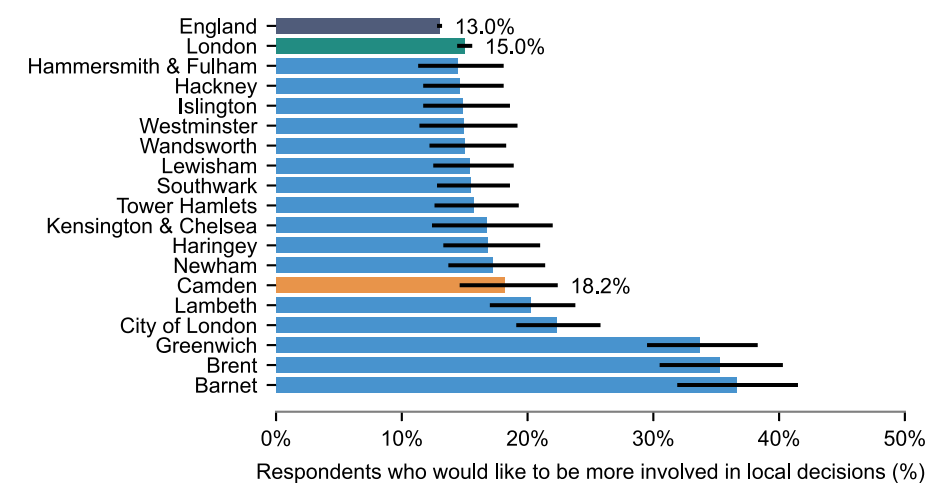
At the same time, Camden residents are amongst the most engaged in civic and social action (Figures 3 and 4, respectively).

Figure 10.4: Share of people who agree that you can personally influence decisions affecting the local area



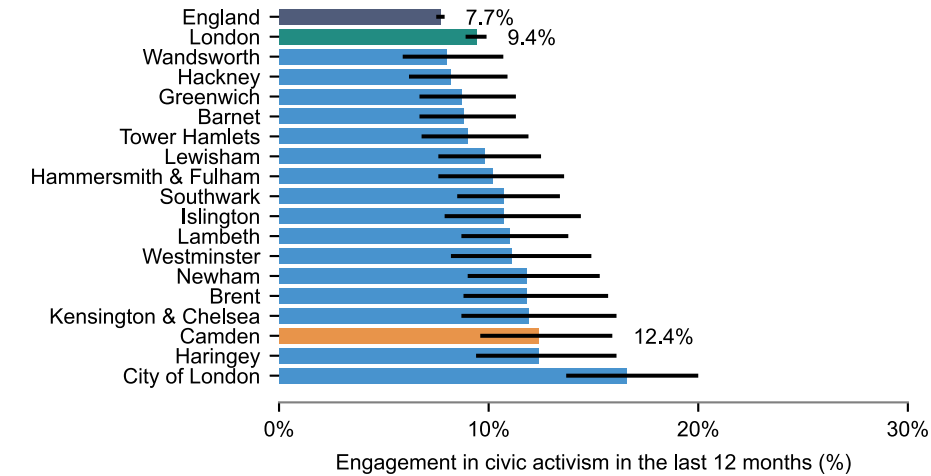
Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

Figure 10.5: Proportion of people who would like to be more involved in local decisions



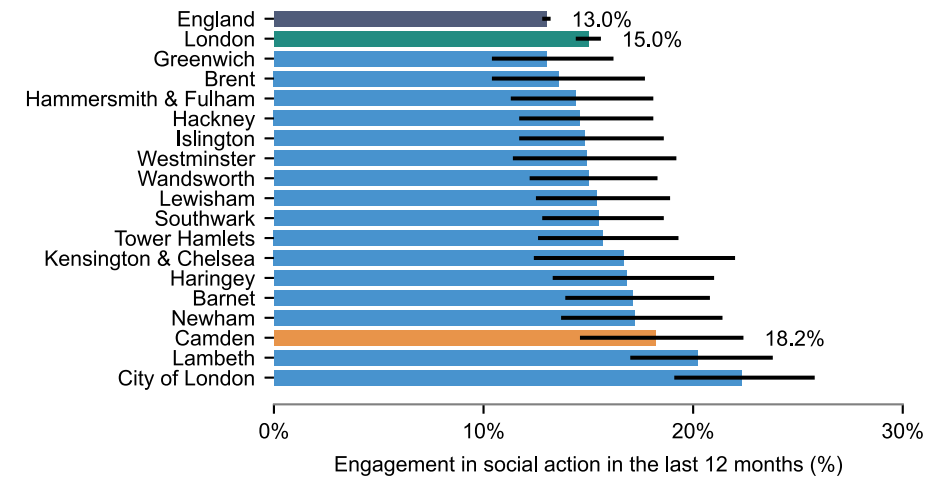
Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

Figure 10.6: Proportion of people engaged in civic activism in the last 12 months



Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

Figure 10.7: Proportion of people engaged in social action in the last 12 months.



Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black



Participatory Budgeting

We know that residents want more say in how their estate is managed and transparency in decision making, and that increased empowerment and control of our environment leads to improved mental health. Our Participatory Budgeting pilot on Hilgrove Estate aimed to test a system which gives residents the power, as a community, to shape the area they call home through decision making on how public money is spent in and around their estates. The key outcomes were that it would:

- Create decision-making opportunities for residents
- Build a more positive relationship between residents and the council

The council identified service budgets that would be possible to share power over. The budget was derived from a mix of caretaking, repairs and green spaces budgets to fund a spend of £100,000 per year over 2 years.

Working closely with The Winch, we recruited a co-ordinating group of 13 residents, and ran a series of workshops and community events to bring people into the conversation to generate ideas for how the money should be spent. The outcome was:

- For the council to try to recruit a resident caretaker
- To employ an apprentice caretaker on the estate
- To pay for a local service provider or individual to maintain the green space on the estate, rather than the centrally commissioned provider
- To install sensory play equipment, new bin storage, and bike storage

There has been good progress made on installing new equipment. However, the Council was unable to find an appropriate resident caretaker or alternative provider for green space maintenance.

What we learned

This project provided the council with deep insight into the trade-offs and difficulties of running a participatory budgeting process at a hyper local level. Key lessons included:

- **Engagement with purpose matters.** Residents appreciated the opportunity to engage with their community and connect with their neighbours within the context of a project with real funding attached.
- **Local partners are crucial.** Working in partnership with The Winch helped open up discussions about the new project and motivated residents to participate.
- **Flexible funding is preferable.** Services have very different operating practices and degrees of budget flexibility – in future, a model based on more flexible funding (such as local CIL) would be preferable
- **Trust is personal, not institutional.** The project lead – who visited the estate frequently and was involved in meetings - built strong relationships with residents, but that doesn’t necessarily translate to wider trust with the council as an institution.
- **Be honest about constraints.** Residents understand that there is a limit to what the Council can do or the power it can share. Clear parameters help avoid over-promising.
- **Over-engagement can be a problem.** There were two participatory activities happening on the same estate, which was confusing and asked too much of residents.

Next steps

Following the evaluation of the project, the council will investigate the options to scale participatory budgeting over the borough, the challenges brought up through the council’s first attempt will be taken into consideration. The learnings will also feed into future participation work with the tenants and development of action plans. The

implementation of the residents’ proposals will be monitored over the next two years and an assessment of the outcomes will also be made.

Community Champions

Community Champions is a four-year programme to deliver resident-led approaches to health and wellbeing. The project launched in March 2020 and is focused on housing estates in three areas in Camden (Regent’s Park, Kentish Town and Kilburn). Central to the programme is the idea that community-led approaches can enable individuals and communities to make change for themselves and in doing so, they may experience improved health outcomes and greater wellbeing.

Camden Public Health fund a Champion Coordinator, hosted by a community organisation, in each of the three areas. The co-ordinator role is focused on engaging with residents to understand their priorities to improve health and wellbeing, and to recruit and support a network of Champions to deliver activities and initiatives to address residents’ improvement priorities. The programme has a strong focus on learning how a localised approach based on resident-led neighbourhood priorities can help to support improved health and wellbeing.



The community organisations hosting the projects, and the estates on which they are working are Fitzrovia Youth in Action (FYA) (Regent’s Park estate), SHAK (Kilburn) and Elfrida Rathbone (Kentish Town).

Examples of activities within the programme included wellbeing walks, art activities, spring cleans, healthy eating sessions, community kitchens, gardening, coffee mornings, football sessions and women-only fitness classes.



What we learned:

- **Outreach is essential to bring out less represented voices.** Having the resource to invest time and personalise our approach to reach residents helps identify those that may not participate in traditional engagement activities
- **Maintain flexibility.** Each area had different needs which meant different approaches were tested. Flexibility in the use of the funding was given as well as the support provided by the coordinators, this led to empowered responses from residents.
- **Consistency and time is needed to make long lasting change.** Resident led health initiatives require more time and continuity to build sustainable networks for long lasting change, this is particularly true in areas with low social cohesion



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- **Sharing resources can strengthen networks.** Where possible, promote coordination between local organisations to maximise resources and encourage peer sharing opportunities
- **Evaluating the programme has surfaced opportunities** to work closer with health providers to affect more positive health benefits and to team up with specific council services for targeted outreach programmes.
- **The use of space on estates helped unlock new opportunities** for residents to self-lead activities for their neighbours, improving community cohesion.
- **Promoting community projects has contributed to local support networks.** All levels, from residents, coordinators to partner organisations were able to provide an enabling power by acting as equal partners for the successful delivery of projects.

Next steps

We have been evaluating projects to understand some of the underlying themes that link them. In the coming year, our focus will be on gaining deeper insights into the actions and challenges that have impacted project outcomes. This will help us collaborate more effectively with relevant services to foster greater partnership. For instance, several projects have highlighted the benefits of involving residents in the bid assessment process. Building on this, the Procurement team has recently begun training residents in preparation for the second round of the Community Champions Programme. Additionally, residents have shared that navigating the council to take forward initiatives can be challenging. To address this, we are developing clear and accessible “how-to” guides to support them.

Learning from: Patina People – a We Make Camden Kit Grantee



Patina People is a theatre company aimed at empowering older adults in Camden by providing them with performance opportunities. The company operates with a mission to shift perceptions of older adults through the arts, offering a platform for them to express themselves and tell their stories. Their model centres around providing free theatre



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workshops to older adults, creating a space where they can express their real-life stories or perform fictional narratives. As Lucy puts it,

“ Theatre has an extraordinary way to connect people because it uses real life stories. It might be fictional narratives, but it’s a way to kind of express yourself, unpick humankind and kind of figure out our inner workings.”

Patina People seeks to address the limited opportunities for older adults to engage in theatre, particularly in Camden. They focus on building connections between participants, fostering a sense of pride and belonging, and changing both their perceptions of themselves and how society views them. The founder emphasises the importance of focusing on the borough’s diversity,

“ Understanding what it’s like to live here, who we are living alongside, how we’re spending our time, what we like and love about Camden [...] [I] encourage people to focus [on] similarities and not our differences”. The project is a hyper-local initiative, as “it’s feeding off the ideas in the room, for the creative material is defined by the area too.”

The company has fostered cultural exchange among participants, providing opportunities to share local stories and experiences. One participant, for example, has been actively sharing information about a local shop he discovered,

“ It’s like sharing of our favourite part of the local area”

Their connections flourish beyond the designed sessions as volunteers observe,

“ People walking to the bus stop together, people staying in the space afterwards for however long, people bring in their daughter to meet everyone.”



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Our priorities for the coming year

We have big ambitions for this year. We will be developing our work to create more civic space for residents of our estates and building on our successful community champions programme, among many other projects. We'll also be focusing on building some of the infrastructure that sits beneath the Mission, such as improving our data to get a better picture of health needs across our estates so that we can respond to these.

- **Creating new civic spaces in our neighbourhoods.** ‘Third spaces’ – places for people to socialise and relax outside their home – are critically important for health and wellbeing, especially for families in overcrowded accommodation. Through our Neighbourhood Spaces programme, we are creating new, inclusive and joyful civic spaces for the community.
- **Extending and strengthening our community champions programme.** Evaluation we’ve done so far shows that community champions had made a real difference on their estates, but struggled to influence system partners (such as the NHS and Council). We are growing the programme, and exploring new ways to bring their voice into discussions with senior decision makers.
- **Bringing together our public health and urban design teams.** We know that planning – deciding how we use land in Camden – is a critical enabler of public health. Whilst our planning and health teams already collaborate on a range of projects, we can do more to support long term strategic collaboration.
- **Deepening our understanding of our priority estates.** Through the community champions programme, we have identified an initial set of priority estates. We are developing a snapshot ‘portrait’ of each estate, including hyperlocal data, feedback from resident engagement, and partner activity.

- **Connecting health and housing data.** Examples from elsewhere show the potential of connecting health and housing datasets. We will work with NHS colleagues to bring together relevant datasets to enable us to better understand health needs at the estate and household level.

Endnotes

- 1 Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey, October 2024
- 2 Indirect loneliness involves combining the responses to three indirect questions: How often do you feel that you lack companionship? How often do you feel left out? How often do you feel isolated from others? These questions were asked to address possible variations in a person’s interpretation of the word loneliness and the potential for the reluctance in answering the direct question.



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Our Diversity Mission

By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community – and the next generation is ready to follow



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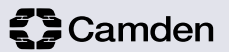
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| Why is this a Mission?

In Camden, we take pride in the diversity of our borough. However, we understand that the outcomes for good life are unequal for the diverse residents of Camden. The inequality is systemic and goes beyond just access to jobs or money. It’s also about power. Some people have more say than others, and that’s not right. We want to change that.

Our goal is to make sure everyone in Camden has a real opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. This means making sure the people in charge of local organisations, including Camden Council, reflect the diversity of our community. We want to see more people from diverse backgrounds taking up leadership roles and participating in decision-making forums.

We’re also focused on the future. We’re working with schools and other educational programs to give young people the skills and confidence they need to become leaders. We want to help them develop their talents and create opportunities for them to be a future leader. This includes supporting young entrepreneurs and helping them start their own businesses.

Ultimately, we want to build a Camden where everyone has a voice and a chance to lead, now and in the future.

| What are the Diversity Mission’s key aims?

In 2024, we worked to re-frame the diversity mission – which meant going back to review the core purpose of the mission and re-articulating what this really means to us in Camden right now.

Our commitment to the mission as an organisation was evident, and we have been undertaking a variety of work and projects that felt relevant to the broad ambition, but we felt that the mission was not outward focused and the way it was presented and described wasn’t helping us to engage the wider community of organisations and residents, therefore, we revisited the theory of change and created a new mission map, focussing in on 4 key outcomes:

- **Increasing leadership diversity in key institutions**
- **Opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices**
- **An education system that prepares young people for leadership**
- **A local economy that supports entrepreneurial diversity**

Good Life Camden – measuring progress

The table below sets out the mission’s current thinking about relevant outcome measures to track progress in achieving the mission over the longer term. These reflect both where data is already available and our ambition to develop new measures to better understand mission progress.

We have aligned the outcome measures to our Good Life Camden wellbeing framework. Good Life Camden sets out a range of themes and signals to enable us to understand what it means to live a good life in the borough.

This data will help us understand change at a system level, but we recognise that Camden is only one actor within this system. The change we hope to see – and which the mission can contribute to – will be dependent on national policy, private and third sector partners, economic circumstances, and more.

These outcomes cannot tell the whole story and will need to be complemented with qualitative data and project level learning over the life of the mission.

Mission Outcome	Key Measures	GLC theme
Increasing leadership diversity in key institutions	Percentage of key partners who publish their leadership diversity data (TBD)	Empowered citizenship / Equality
	Gap between borough population and leadership of key organisations across demographic characteristics (TBD)	Empowered citizenship / Equality
Opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices	Increasing percentage of residents who feel they have a say in decision-making	Empowered citizenship / Equality
An education system that prepares young people for leadership	Increased diversity of school leadership	Empowered citizenship / Equality
	Reduction in attainment gaps between different groups	Education and Lifelong Learning
A local economy that supports entrepreneurial diversity	Increasing diversity of SME business ownership	Empowered citizenship / Equality



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| Increasing leadership diversity in key institutions

When we talk about positions of power, the most intuitive image that one conjures up is that of leadership positions of existing institutions, whether that be executive positions in private and public organisations or that of elected leaders or board members. People holding these positions indeed have great influence in the organisations that they lead and as a result in the local ecosystem and physical space in which these organisations operate. Hence, diversifying these positions of power in existing institutions is the cornerstone ambition of our diversity mission. As one resident stated:

“I’m less likely to apply for a position of power if I don’t see people like me in these positions.”

– Somerstown Researcher, A Blueprint for Change Research by Camden Giving

We believe we would be able to achieve this goal by targeting the following key outcomes:

- Increased representation of diverse groups in senior roles across all sectors
- Council as an employer is as diverse as its community and employs in an equitable way
- Boards and decision-making forums across the Borough are diverse

In this section, we explore the current state of diversity in the leadership positions of some of the largest employers in the borough, including the council.

Public disclosure of leadership diversity data varies across Camden organisations

We commissioned research on the diversity in the workforce and leadership of partner organisations to Camden Council. We used publicly available reports of a select group of partners to understand the diversity in leadership and across the wider workforce. We looked at diversity for protected characteristics where available (gender, ethnicity and disability).

A key finding was that many organisations do not publish information relating to diversity of their workforce, or else do not publish information for leadership diversity, or for all characteristics. This has informed our prioritisation within the mission of building a wider coalition of organisations that share our commitment to inclusion and diversity and to encourage greater transparency on leadership diversity across organisations in the borough.

We believe increasing transparency and access to data is a short-term measure of improvement in this space as it will improve our ability to understand the scale and nature of the challenge. Over time, and on an annual basis, we want to be able to publish an index of leadership diversity – not for individual organisations but for broad groups of representative organisations - so we are able to track change over time.

For those organisations that did publish data, we can see that in general leadership positions are not representative of wider Camden borough diversity. It should be noted that some of the organisations included are national and international companies and do not yet isolate and publish data specific to Camden. This is another area we want to explore in partnership with local organisations.

Public availability of senior management data (2023)

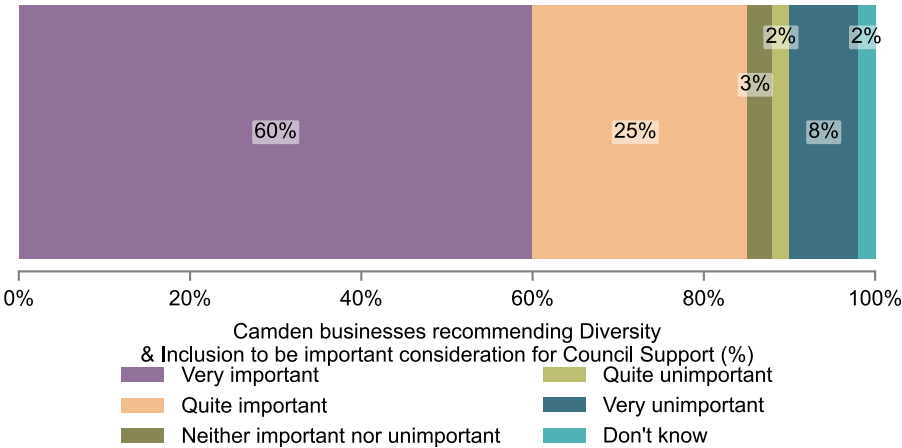
Organisation	Age	Disability	Ethnicity	Gender
Argent				
Arup				
AstraZeneca				
British Land				
Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust				
Camden Council				
Google				
Great Ormond Street Hospital				
GSK				
Landsec				
Meta				
Metropolitan Police				
MSD				
Royal Free Hospital				
The Francis Crick Institute				
UAL – Central Saint Martins				
University College London (UCL)				
University College London Hospitals NHS Trust				
Voluntary Action Camden				

● = data is publicly available

Camden businesses believe in diversity and inclusion to be a priority for workforce

The Diversity Mission aims to ensure that support available to start-up is equitably available to all the entrepreneurs in the borough. In offering support to businesses, 85% of the businesses, surveyed in Camden Business Survey 2022, believed that promoting diversity and inclusion should be a key consideration for the council.

Figure 11.1: Percentage of Camden Businesses recommending Diversity & Inclusion to be an important consideration for Council Support



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

Learning from: Veolia

In 2023, Veolia, one of Camden Council’s contractors, launched their inclusion strategy FIVE BY 2025. They have committed to conduct diversity audits and one of their measures of success is a year-on-year increase in diversity disclosure rates.

With an interest in diverse workforce in the borough, Veolia created a local baseline of diversity in workforce: 4.2% of their workforce in Camden identify as women and 62% of local workforce belongs to white ethnic groups, with a higher percentage of both women and white staff in managerial positions.

This baseline has informed a local diversity action plan for Veolia, which promotes inclusive physical space and provisions, encourages inclusion conversation among staff and policies to ensure equitable opportunities. This reinforces our belief in the willingness of our partners in the borough to take on this mission.

Camden council is on a journey to be an employer that represents the diversity of our community

The Camden Council wants to lead as an example in public disclosure of diversity data as well as striving to be more representative of the borough and the communities we serve.

The Council’s Annual Employment Profile offers an analysis of the workforce’s size, composition, and various recruitment and employment areas, including age, disability, ethnic background, gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation (where applicable data is accessible).

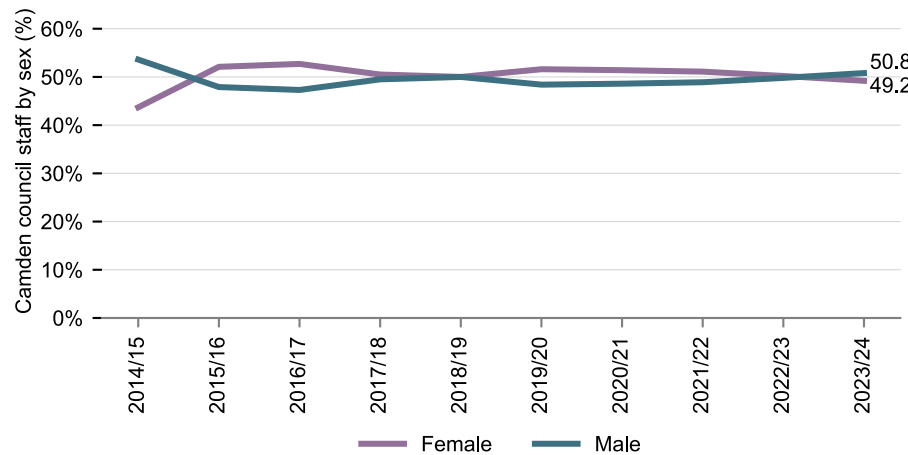
The Council is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is representative at all levels. To meet this objective, Camden’s employment profile is published, and the organisation has been voluntarily reporting its

gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gap since 2015. In 2022, Camden became the first local authority to publish its gender pension gap. Camden has implemented inclusive recruitment practices, such as “no all-white shortlists” for level 5 and above roles and hiring manager training.

Workforce figures provided in this report are taken from the most recent Annual Employment Profile and reflect the position as of 31 March 2024.

- Female staff constitute the majority (55.6%) of Camden’s workforce. Historically, local government tends to employ more women due to flexible work opportunities. Camden has the eighth-lowest proportion of female staff compared to other London Councils. As of 2024, 49.8% of the Council’s highest 5% earners are women, a slight decrease from previous years and the first time this has dropped below 50% since 2015.

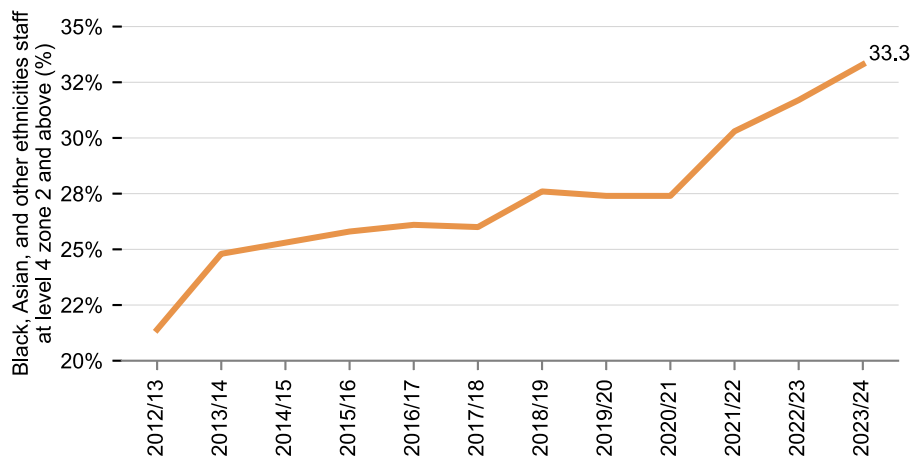
Figure 11.2: Camden council staff by sex, 2014-2023



Source: Camden Workforce Report, 2014/15-2023/24

- White staff form the largest ethnic group at 41.9%, though this is a 1.5% reduction from the previous year. Black staff comprise almost a quarter of the workforce, and the proportion of staff of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicities increased by 1.7% overall. The table below illustrates there continues to be an increase the proportion of staff of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicities working at Level 4 Zone 2 and above.

Figure 11.3: Share of staff of Black, Asian and other ethnicities at level 4 zone 2 and above



Source: Camden Council Staff Survey, 2012/13-2023/24

- The proportion of White staff at Levels 5 to 7 has decreased from 64.5% to 59.8%.
- 38.5% of Chief Officers (Level 7) are Black, Asian, or Other ethnicity and representative of Camden’s population (40.5%).
- The Council reports continuing progress towards closing pay gaps. The number and proportion of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicity staff at senior grades (Level 5 to Level 7) has continued to increase.
- The Council is focused on creating a disability-inclusive workplace. However, there are significantly low declaration rates, with 31.2% of staff yet to make a disability declaration. 8.5% of staff have declared a disability, a 1.2% increase compared to last year.
- The workforce is balanced across the key working-age bands of 25 to 60 years. Only 2.9% of employees are within the 16-to-24-year age bracket, compared to the 15.9% of the population, but this is largely due to Camden hosting a large student population around its 11 higher education institutions.

Our recently concluded Employee Experience Survey 2024 indicates that it is not just a matter of diverse representation, but inclusivity is felt by our staff. 89% of our staff believes organisation is making progress in being anti-racist and there is commitment from leadership in creating an inclusive workplace culture. Overall, compared to 2023, a higher percentage (81%) of staff recognise fairness and respect for all backgrounds in the organisation.

Since publishing our ethnicity and disability pay gap for the first time in 2015, we have come a long way, but inclusion will continue to be our active priority. We will continue to build a clearer picture of the state of diversity and inclusion in organisations through data and staff feedback and adapt our approach to inclusion to maintain our lead.



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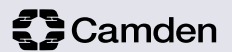
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Black on Board

Olmec and Camden Council partnered to deliver a customised Black on Board programme to address under-representation on boards. The goal of the programme is to prepare participants to serve on boards by developing their skills and confidence to take up a governing position.

The program delivers professional training that prepares people to become effective board members for range of organisation across private, public and third sectors including social enterprises, charities, unincorporated associations, membership associations, governing bodies, housing associations and regulators and so on.

The participants reported increased self-confidence, improved performance at work and resulting mental health benefits. It has resulted in placement on boards or promotions for 50% of the participants.

Opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices

Beyond leadership positions, another way the mission is looking at positions of power is by ensuring we open up power structures and amplify the voices of our diverse community. This amplification has to take place across all areas of the public realm and as a starting point, we have identified the following outcomes that would help create more equitable power in public realm:

- The council’s policies and services are co-designed with the community
- The voice of community is represented in local decision-making
- Local area developments (public or private) are undertaken in alignment with community voices

Investment in participation infrastructure and community capacity is the foundation for amplifying civic voices

Camden wants to shift from a transactional consultative model of involvement to a more meaningful, relational way of working with citizens, which brings together lived, learned, and laboured experiences and expertise as part of their everyday way of working. The council has been on a journey to catalyse civic engagement in the borough through multiple layers of consistent investment into the civic capacity and infrastructure.

- Firstly, by investing in building community capacity to engage in decision-making in the borough through a *‘learning by doing’* model. There has been active creation of opportunities for residents who wouldn’t have been engaged otherwise through programs such as Community Champions and We Make Camden Kit.
- Secondly, for this increased community capacity to have meaningful engagement with council’s decision-making, there has been investment in creating different engagement mechanisms such as Citizen Assemblies and Housing Panels. For service design, we adopt a data-led approach to ensure that the diversity of our borough is represented in the design process, and we are working on being able to report on this data as part of the mission.
- Thirdly, these investments have been catalytic in promoting neighbourhood level participatory initiatives such as Kentish Town Connects which enables local community organisations and residents to collaborate for the better of neighbourhood.

Residents’ ideas, energy, and creativity are one of Camden’s biggest strengths, and the council needs to work alongside residents, sharing power with them and being led by what matters most to them and doing so equitably across our Camden residents. The value of these investments is not always in the outputs that are delivered but more in the outcomes and experiences of people. It is in the opportunity to share experiences amongst each other and being able to meet

each other in a safe space that this process changes the way Camden Council can begin working with citizens.

As one of the participants from citizen assembly expressed,

“ I just felt like, I wasn’t intellectual. But [when I eased myself into the Assembly] I thought, oh, no, actually, I have good things to say. So I was quite surprised – [I found that I could] speak out loud. I don’t know it kind of put a bit of salt back into my life.”

After a Citizen Assembly, a participant expressed its value as:

“ It was a gamechanger being part of something like this. It didn’t matter what class you were from...”

Working closely with diverse Voluntary & Community Sector organisations helps us understand issues closer to our community

Camden has a diverse, active, and vibrant voluntary and community sector, comprising over 2,400 local groups.

The Community Partnership Fund is supporting equality-led organisations representing Camden’s diverse communities, advocating for their needs, and working to dismantle structural barriers. More than 50% of leaders identify as female and more than 40% belong to black and minority ethnic groups.

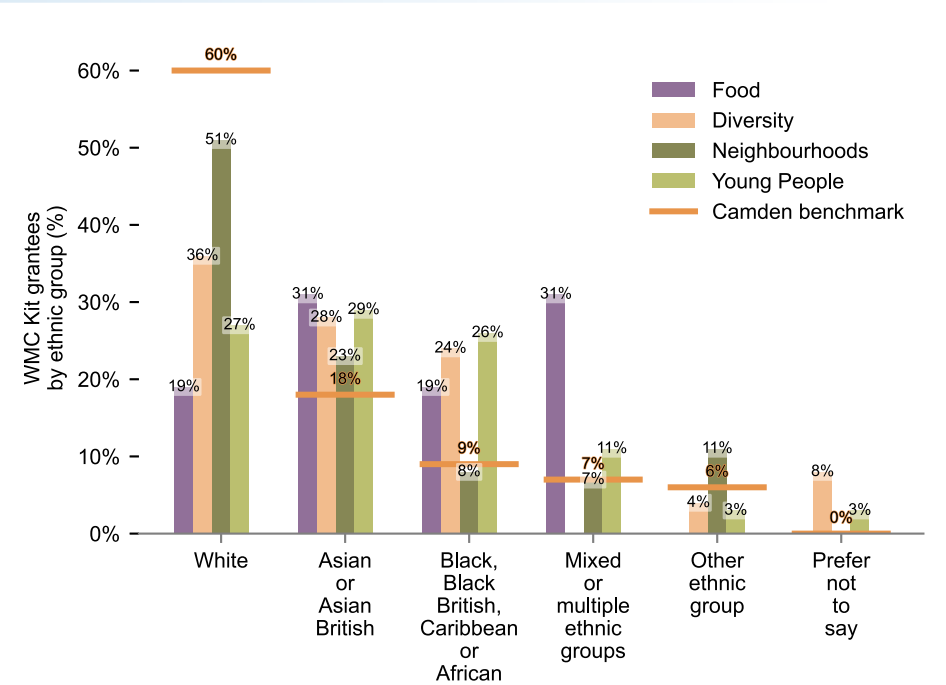
At a smaller scale, the We make Camden Kit, a participatory grant making program jointly delivered by Camden Citizens, Camden Council, Camden Giving and Camden businesses, pursues similar goals by supporting mission-aligned community initiatives led by diverse grantees. Since 2021, the kit has sponsored community projects, led by residents and organisations, to contribute towards achieving our missions. As of August 2024, the kit had distributed £646,908 among 365 mission-oriented projects, with 60% of them being led by residents.

One of the ambitions of delivering the kit as a participatory grant

making program is to make sure the grant is more equitably distributed across our community. Looking at data over last 3 years, we note that:

- The highest percentage of grants (28%) is awarded to grantees in 35 – 44-year bracket; the average age in Camden is 37.2 years.
- The highest percentage of grants (55%) is awarded to grantees who are women.
- The highest percentage of grants (38%) is awarded to grantees from white ethnic group, followed by 26% from Asian or Asian British ethnic groups and 17% from Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ethnic groups.

Figure 11.4: Distribution of WMC Kit Grantees by Ethnic Groups



Source: WeMakeCamden kit data, 2024



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The mechanism of kit is central to how we believe our missions contribute to wellbeing in the borough.

Firstly, they directly contribute to achieving our missions (which are priorities for the borough agreed with our community) by using their embeddedness in the community to impact outcomes and pulling levers closest to our community.

Secondly, these hyperlocal and small-scale projects act as a portfolio of mission-aligned experiments and contribute to our collective learning of missions in the community.

Thirdly, for the residents involved either as grantees or with grant making panels, the ambition is to empower community to actively shape decision-making in the borough, which is a key signal of wellbeing we have identified with residents as part of Good Life Camden framework.

From Sep 2024 to Feb 2025, we gathered insights from our grantees on the impact of the kit on them and their communities. For many of our grantees, this is one of the first grants for a community project they have received. They report a positive impact on their confidence, increased ability to make changes in the community and an overall improvement in their wellbeing. Our learning from some of the projects for respective missions is shared further in each mission’s chapter.

Participation rates in civic engagement are much higher in Camden than the London average but this doesn’t translate to feeling an ability to influence decisions

Data from the Community Life Survey – though it cannot tell us about the diversity of viewpoints on these topics due to sample size - points to a mixed picture for people’s engagement in decision making for Camden as a whole.

Broadly, answers to questions about engagement, activism, consultation and social actions showed higher (though statistically similar) levels than the London average. Participation in civic consultation, which includes completing a paper or online questionnaire, attended a public meeting or being involved in a face-to-face or online group, was significantly higher than the London average. Questions about the importance of having influence over local decisions, and wanting to be involved in local decisions, were statistically similar to the London average. But the question about people’s perception about the actual level of influence they had over decisions that affected them was significantly lower than the London average.

Data from a local survey commissioned by Camden Giving which asked about people’s perception of their ability to influence local decision making found variation across ethnic and age groups i.e. white respondents were slightly more likely to agree that they could influence decision making than black respondents, and older respondents were more likely to agree than younger respondents. However, the sample size for the survey was small, and from a group of heavily engaged residents. There is a need to gather more data on residents’ perception of their influence.

Qualitative research conducted by Camden Giving with residents in Kilburn and Somerstown, showed some frustration amongst residents and community researchers. One resident noted that,

“*Kilburn is full of different ethnic minorities. Sometimes it feels great, but sometimes it feels like we’re put in a box.*”

– Kilburn Resident, A Blueprint for Change Research by Camden Giving



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Measure / comparison to London	Worse	Similar	Better
Participated in civic engagement in the last year		39.7%	
Participated in civic activism in last year		12.4%	
Participated in civic consultation			29.3%
Involvement in social action		18.2%	
Importance of influence over decisions		58.2%	
Want to be involved in local decisions		38.2%	
Influence on decisions	22.2%		

An education system that prepares young people for leadership

While we work toward greater diversity in leadership positions and the public realm today, we do not want the challenge to persist for the next generation. In the diversity mission, we strive to ensure equitable opportunity for all young people to be a future leader. As a Kilburn resident said:

“Addressing inequality often involves investing in the younger generation to break the cycle of disadvantage.”

We believe in following outcomes to be fundamental to developing an education system that prepares young people for leadership:

- All young people have good levels of educational attainment
- All young people have skills for leadership development
- All young people in the borough participate in decision-making

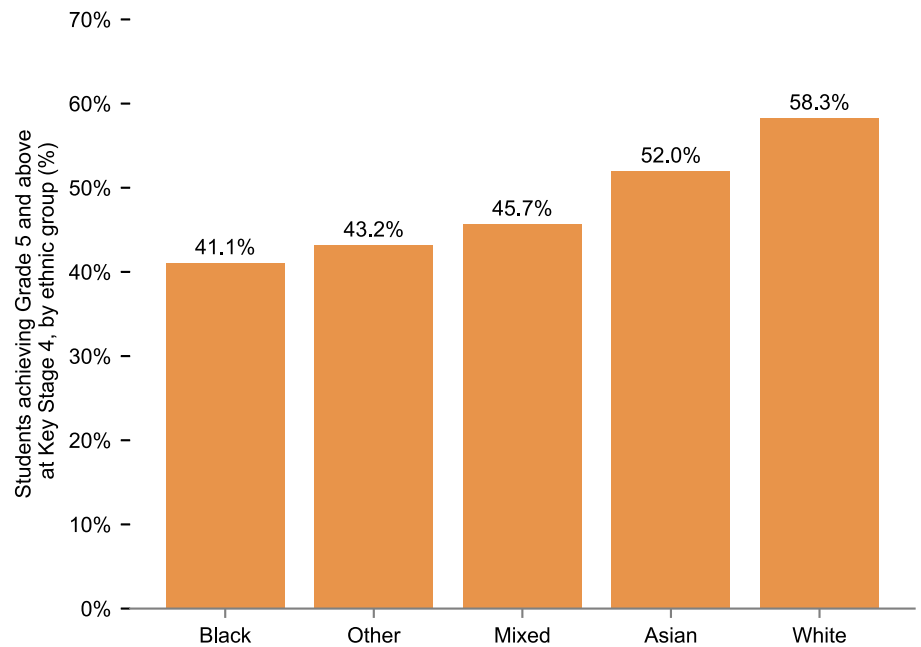
In this section, we further discuss our understanding based on public data and our engagement in the borough.

At Key Stage 4, a higher percentage of girls in Camden achieve Grade 5 and above, and the differences are consistent across ethnic groups

Comparing the educational attainment of girls and boys, we see girls outperforming boys similar to the national trend. A higher percentage of girls in Camden achieve Grade 5 and above in their GCSEs.

Across the ethnic groups in Camden, we see the percentage of students achieving Grade 5 and above are lower than Camden average for all major ethnic groups apart from White and Asian pupils, with pupils from Black and Mixed ethnic groups at the lowest end. However, even within the ethnic groups, the girls consistently outperform boys, albeit to varying extent.

Figure 11.5: Percentage of Students achieving by Grade 5 and above at Key Stage 4 (by Ethnic Groups)

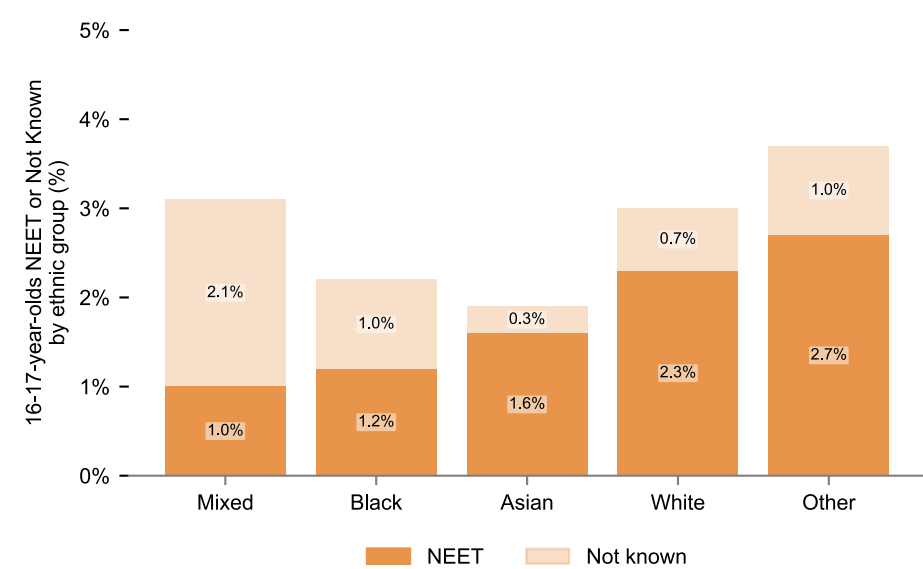


Source: Department for Education, 2023/2024

Camden has a low percentage of 16-17-year-olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) but we don’t know if they are developing leadership skills

Beyond KS4, more than 90% of 16 – 17-year-olds go on to sustained education, employment and apprenticeship destinations across gender and ethnic backgrounds. Among the rest, 1.9% are not in education, employment or training (NEET), which is lower than national average,¹ and destinations are unknown for the remaining 1.2%. The percentage of boys is marginally higher than girls in both NEET and Not Known categories. Comparing across ethnic groups, a lower percentage of 16-17-year-olds belonging to Asian, Black and Mixed ethnic groups are identified as NEET.

Figure 11.6: Percentage of 16-17-year-olds NEET or Not Known (by Ethnic Groups)



Source: Department for Education, 2024

Future Leaders Program

Future Leaders UK and Camden Council partnered to deliver a development programme for 100 16–18-year-olds from diverse backgrounds. The objective of the program was to prepare young people to be the future leaders by developing skills, building confidence, raising aspirations and empowering them to be an advocate for equality and diversity in their local community.

The tailored program was delivered across a 12-month period covering a range of different formats such as workshops, career fairs, field visits, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, 1:1 mentoring and application support and guest lectures. They were empowered to deliver social action projects to contribute to their local community.

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They led initiatives such as assemblies on issues important to their schools, social awareness campaigns, community cleaning projects, and sporting/creative events to bring their community together.

Based on the demographic data, 57.3% of the participants identified as female, 88% of the participants belonged to a minority ethnic group, 38% were eligible for free school meals. In the first instance, the programme was offered to young people facing compounding barriers such as refugee or asylum seeker, Special Education Needs, first in their family to attend universities, care-experiences and young carers.

While it is still early to assess if the program enables them to take up leadership positions in future, the post-program surveys an increase in confidence in applying for apprenticeships, in developing more ambitious career aspirations and reaching them.

We need more data about the voice of young people in decision-making

In addition to formal work and employment opportunities, we believe participation of young people in local community and decision-making is a key step to prepare them as a future leader. The participation can range from voting in local and general elections to participating in civic consultations and leading community initiatives.

Our partner, Camden Giving, who also administers the We Make Camden Kit, surveyed the alumni of their participatory grant making panels on their participation levels. Among the 16–25-year-olds of this highly engaged group, the participation in civic consultations varied and we notice the ones who strongly believe in their ability to influence local decisions is less than 20%.

These results are not representative of Camden’s young people overall; however, these are the questions we would like to ask young people in the borough, through the work of the mission going forward.

Figure 11.7: Percentage of alumni of Camden Giving’s participatory grant making panels (16–25-year-olds) participating in civic consultations

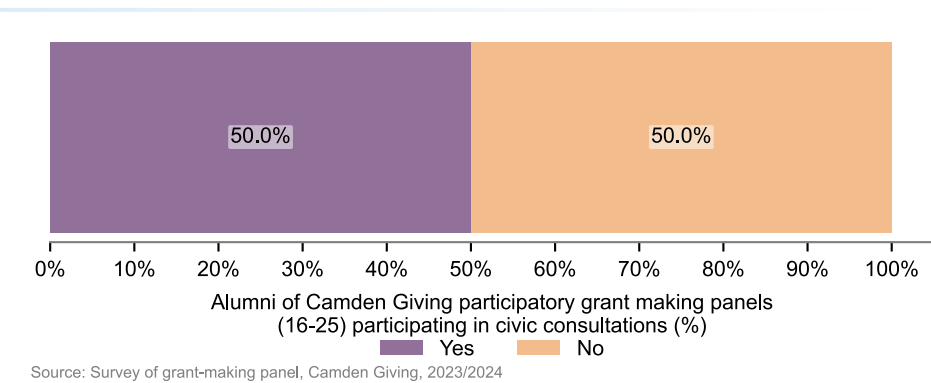
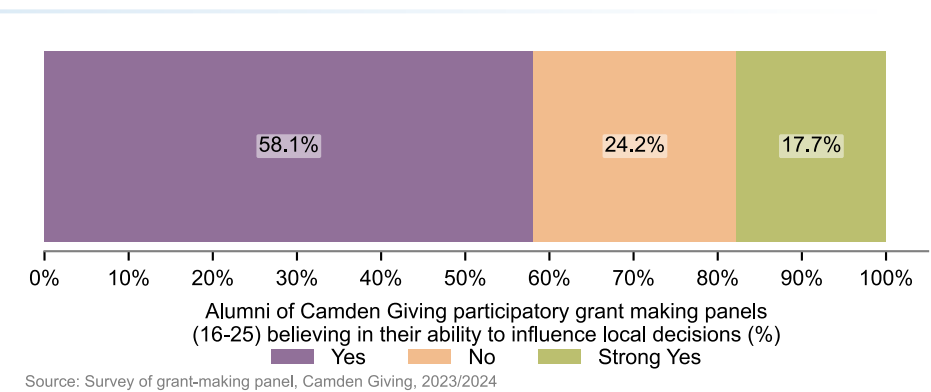


Figure 11.8: Percentage of alumni of Camden Giving’s participatory grant making panels (16–25-year-olds) believing in their ability to influence local decisions



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Young Governors Programme

In 2024, Camden Learning started delivering a Young Governors’ programme. The programme has placed a cohort of 13 young adults (18-30) on participating governing bodies on a year’s placement as Associate Members, with a dedicated programme of support prior to and during the year. Early indications show that this group is more representative of the schools’ population than the overall governor cohort. Still in nascent stages, we expect early insights to emerge by the time we write our next report. In Camden at present, governing boards are on average older than borough population. Specifically, we know that only 7.3% of the governors are below the age of 34, which reflects lower representation of young people’s voices in decision-making in an ecosystem that predominantly impacts them.

| A Local Economy that Supports Entrepreneurial Diversity

This is a new outcome within the Diversity Mission, after a process of learning, reflection, and reframing in mid-2024 identified that the Mission did not sufficiently extend to Camden’s business community. This rethinking highlighted the transformative potential of extending access to entrepreneurship and business opportunities more equitably. We already have a strong track record of offering support to residents to start and grow businesses such as financial support through Future Camden Fund and support to develop entrepreneurial skills through Rebel Business School, but we know we can go further. Our immediate priority is to establish an evidence-based for the diversity of entrepreneurs in Camden so that we can focus our attention and target investments to overcome the most significant barriers.

Over time we want to catalyse an ecosystem that has reduced barriers and increased support for entrepreneurs from all backgrounds at the point of entry. Specifically, we believe in achieving following outcomes equitably across our business community:

- Camden’s businesses have equal access to start-up and risk capital
- Camden’s entrepreneurs have access to resources and networks to support growth
- Camden’s businesses can access local markets and procurement

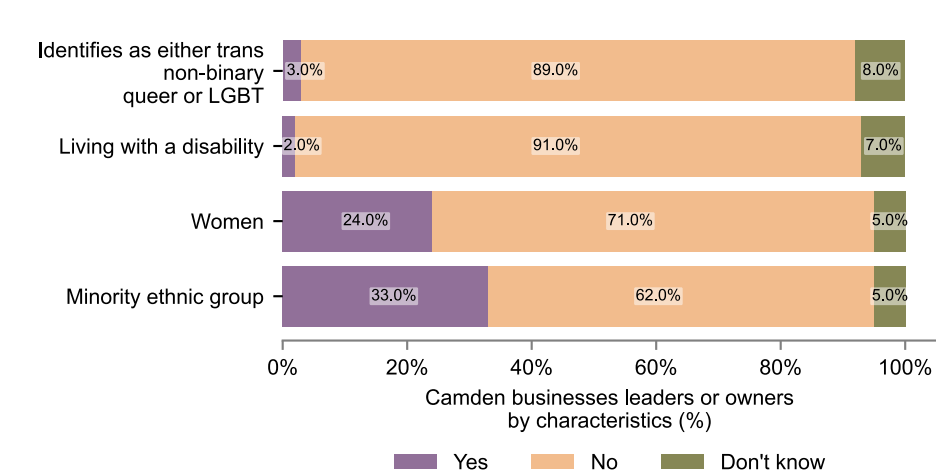
In this section, we further discuss our understanding, primarily based on Camden Business Survey 2022.²

While we have some insight into the diversity of business owners in Camden, we have limited understanding of the diversity of our entrepreneurs

More than 80% of the businesses surveyed by the Camden Business Survey were micro-businesses with less than 10 employees. When we look at the ownership of businesses by protected characteristics (Fig. 10), we find that,

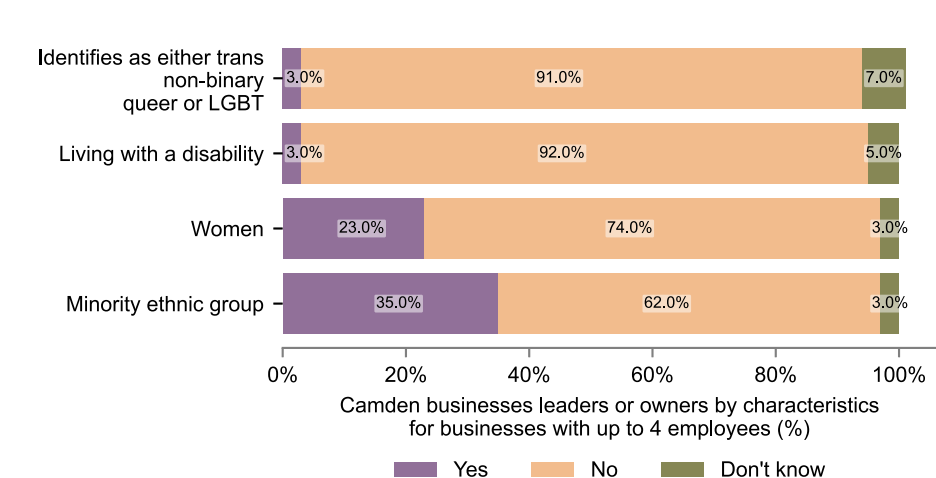
- 33% of businesses are led or owned by someone from a minority ethnic background.
- 24% of businesses are led or owned by women.
- 3% of businesses are led or owned by a person who identify as either trans, non-binary, queer or LGBT.
- 2% of businesses led or owned by a person living with a disability.

Figure 11.9: Percentage of Camden businesses ‘led or owned by’ for all businesses



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

Figure 11.10: Percentage of Camden businesses ‘led or owned by’ for businesses with 0 – 4 employees



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

If we look at smallest segment of businesses with 0 – 4 employees, the distribution across these characteristics doesn’t change significantly. However, it is to note, the small businesses are not an indication of new businesses.

Based on the Inter-Departmental Business Register, we understand that 3,445 new businesses were started in Camden in 2024, however, we do not have reliable insights into demographic of their owners. As a first step in the diversity mission, we want to develop a baseline of the diversity of entrepreneurs and new business founders in the borough.

Future Camden Fund

The Future Camden Fund, a grant and loan fund for small businesses which deliver social impact in Camden, was launched in 2022. The fund aimed to improve funding for underrepresented owners, with a focus on Black and female-owned businesses responding to [UK-wide evidence](#) that these groups are disproportionately disadvantaged in starting and growing their businesses³. They face specific barriers such as access to finance, deprivation, education, and under-representation in senior workforce positions.

100% of the applicants to the fund self-identified with underrepresented groups in business relating to disability, ethnicity, sexuality and gender. Over two rounds of funding, the fund has awarded £500,000 to 22 businesses. The broad range of sector-agnostic priority areas made the funding more accessible to a variety of businesses. 73% of the projects receiving grants and loans focused on opportunities for young people, support to small businesses, food security etc. and directly contributed to We Make Camden missions.

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Rebel Business School

Camden have commissioned Rebel Business School to deliver a number of pre-enterprise and start-up support programmes. The most recent, starting in September 2024, is a 12-month programme, combining in-person sessions across Camden’s neighbourhoods with virtual workshops to ensure broad accessibility. The focus is on building capabilities of budding entrepreneurs with sessions on business start-up essentials, growth strategies, and sustainable business practices.

The sessions have promoted participation from underrepresented entrepreneurs such as those who identify as female, belonging to ethnic minorities, all age groups, or as having a disability. They also support people who have other barriers such as a lack of home ownership or for people depending on benefits. A majority of the participants report some positive impact on their confidence and business network, and they report a higher confidence in being able to find support in their local neighborhood / area after the programme.

Learning from: Bloomsbury Beginnings – a We Make Camden Kit Grantee:

Bloomsbury Beginnings had already been working with female entrepreneurs for 9 years when they applied for the We Make Camden kit. Since 2014, they have worked with 500+ women from diverse backgrounds and offering them solutions such as incubators, flexible childcare and coaching.

The grant was specifically for a video project to amplify and celebrate the achievements of women founders in Camden. Driven by the life experience of a career shift with motherhood and determination to “put economic powers back in the hands of women”, the project specifically wants to build awareness about the disproportionate effects of becoming a parent on women and their careers.

They took a more personal and relational approach to filming as she explains,

“ We filmed people in the places that were important to them, that meant having a kind of special meaning for them. So that sometimes meant in their homes... on people’s business premises.”

The videos in themselves were not the end but became an opportunity for change and

“ for women to change their way of thinking about themselves, evaluating their future while they are caring for their children.”

Bloomsbury Beginnings founder would have liked to engage with and amplify voices of many women beyond her immediate network which has been difficult because of the need to develop personal trust first and fear of judgement. Reflection on her personal experience and years of engaging with other entrepreneurs who are mothers, she emphasises the need to reframe

“ how we view motherhood”

and that

“ being a mother is not a liability.”



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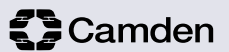
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| Our priorities for the coming year

Over the coming year we want to:

- Share our inclusion journey and plans with other Camden organisations and build a coalition willing to continue to champion the importance and value of diversity across their workforce and in leadership. We hope to improve conversation, collaboration and learning across the borough and encourage others to, at the minimum, share their inclusion work and data more transparently. This will help us build a clearer picture of leadership diversity in the borough and to galvanise collective action to create a borough with equitable power structures.
- Continue to articulate our journey and philosophy around participation and power sharing with residents and communities, and find ways to take this further and beyond our existing work in their area through the mission. We want to gather more comprehensive data on the diversity of residents engaging in all forms with the Council – whether that is via service design co-production activities, participation activities, local area development consultation etc.
- Build an even stronger partnership with schools and find ways to add value and amplify the work already being done across the borough – in particular through bringing together a range of leadership initiatives for young people under the umbrella of a Camden leadership programme – providing more structure, clearer entry and exit points, opportunities for progression and looking for gaps in our offer of support.
- Deliver two pilots in participatory investment (£2M each) for the Community Wealth Fund. One pilot will feature a small scale approach with a diverse group of young people. Our second pilot will engage over a 1000+ diverse residents to help distribute capital to diverse entrepreneurs working in Camden. Through these pilots our aim is to understand the best approaches to working with

residents in an investment process, including learning about what is the best type of content to offer residents, where they feel the most engaged and excited, and how all of this interacts with council and investment regulations.

Endnotes

- 1 NEETS <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-neet-age-16-to-17-by-local-authority/2023-24>
- 2 The Camden Business survey was commissioned by Camden Council covering a representative sample of 1,000+ businesses across sectors and sizes. The maximum sample error is +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence level, i.e. we can be 95% confident that if the entire population of businesses was surveyed, the responses would be within 3.1 percentage points.
- 3 [Alone together: Entrepreneurship and diversity in the UK | British Business Bank](#)



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Our Food Mission

By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food



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| Why is this a Mission?

The COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis severely intensified the issue of food insecurity. What was once a question of accessibility and affordability has now evolved into a systemic challenge. Environmental events driven by the climate crisis, geopolitical shifts, and volatile food prices have fundamentally altered the dynamics of food insecurity.

In Camden, 14.1% of the population was income-deprived in 2019, but we believe that food insecurity is not simply the case of people not having enough money to buy food—it’s shaped by personal, systemic, and environmental factors beyond individual control that we call the food system. In globalised food systems, Camden doesn’t have control over food production and processing, but we can influence demand and shape new markets to influence how food reaches our tables, is consumed and is disposed of.

Poor and inadequate nutrition contributes to a range of long-term conditions including heart attacks, strokes, diabetes and some cancers. These conditions have a major impact on the health and quality of life of our residents, as well as increasing pressures on health and social care services. Beyond this, for every £1 spent on food, there is an additional £1 of hidden social costs, including environmental damage and health-related expenses.¹

Food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste are all part of a food system that profoundly impacts the environment—and, in turn, impacts our ability to produce and supply food sustainably. These interconnected challenges are deeply intertwined, demanding a whole-system approach that can influence both supply and demand.

What are the key aims of the Food Mission?

By 2030, we want everyone in Camden to eat well every day, with nutritious, affordable, and sustainable food. To do this we have broken down our mission into the following outcomes:

- Residents are food secure and no longer need to rely on crisis food provision.
- Residents eat a healthy and balanced diet
- Food is a foundation of children’s and young peoples’ flourishing lives
- Camden’s food system drives climate action, contributing to solutions for the environmental crisis

“We believe that through a strong and dynamic Camden Food Partnership, that brings together residents, businesses and the voluntary sector, we can share knowledge, resources, and innovation to drive local, national, and global food system transformation. Together, we can shift behaviours, policies, and practices to improve food quality, demand, access, and affordability for everyone.”

Good Life Camden – measuring progress

The table below sets out the mission’s current thinking about relevant outcome measures to track progress. These reflect both where data is already available and our ambition to develop new measures to better understand mission progress.

We have aligned the outcome measures to our Good Life Camden wellbeing framework. Good Life Camden sets out a range of themes and signals to enable us to understand what it means to live a good life in the borough.

This data will help us understand change at a system level, but we recognise that Camden is only one actor within this system. The change we hope to see – and which the mission can contribute to – will be dependent on a range of factors including national policy, private and third sector partners, and, economic circumstances.

These outcomes cannot tell the whole story and will need to be complemented with qualitative data and project level learning over the life of the mission.

Outcome	Indicator	GLC Theme
Residents are food secure, and don’t need to access crisis food provision	Number of low-income households (further breakdown available – households with children) (DWP)	Income and affordability
	Number of emergency food parcels distributed to people in crisis (The Trussell Trust)	Income and affordability
Residents eat a healthy and balanced diet	Percentage of adults who meet the 5-a-day guidelines in Camden	Health
	Share of adults and children who are overweight or obese	Health
	Healthy Life Expectancy	Health
Food is a foundation of children’s and young people’s flourishing lives	Percentage of children and young people who eat fresh fruit / vegetables on most days (HRBQ)	Health
	% children who are overweight or obese in Reception and Year 6	Health
	Number and percentage of children in Camden eligible for Free School Meals, who take up the offer (further breakdown available by ethnicity, postcode, age, gender) (School Census)	Health
Camden’s food system contributes to tackling the climate crisis	CO2 emissions / Food and non-alcoholic drinks consumption-based CO2 emissions of households in Camden (University of Leeds and London Council)	Environment



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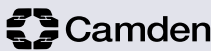
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Residents are food secure and no longer need to rely on crisis food provision

This Food Mission outcome aims to provide comprehensive, wraparound support for individuals accessing crisis food provision, ensuring they have greater choice and agency over the food they consume.

According to Citizens Advice cost-of-living data², rising energy and rent costs exacerbated the crisis at the start of 2024, leading to a record number of food bank referrals. Although these numbers have gradually declined throughout the year, they remain at historically high levels, with certain groups disproportionately affected.

While Camden-specific data is not available, broader trends indicate that the borough is not immune to these challenges. Analysis of Citizens Advice referral data highlights the following key findings:

- More **individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions** have been referred to food banks compared to those without such conditions. Among disability types, individuals with multiple impairments and those with mental health conditions are among the highest users of crisis food support. In contrast, those with physical impairments are three times less likely to access food banks.
- **Single-person households and single-parent families** are more than twice as likely to require crisis food provision compared to other household types.
- **Social housing tenants** access food crisis support at significantly higher rates than private tenants and owner-occupiers.
- **Black/Black British residents** are among the highest users of crisis food support across all age groups.
- Age-wise, **individuals aged 35–44 access** crisis support at the highest rates, followed by those aged 45–54. The least likely to access these services are individuals under 25 and over 65.

Over the past year we have been working with partners to build a strong Camden Food Partnership that can mobilise residents, partners, and businesses to tackle food insecurity collaboratively, bringing together expertise and resources.

The key focus is on a money-first approach, which aims to empower residents to reduce their dependence on crisis food provision. Interventions in this area prioritises increasing residents’ income by helping them access financial support they may be entitled to. Additionally, residents will benefit from integrated local crisis support, including provisions for individuals with no recourse to public funds. A money-first approach also involves reducing residents’ core outgoings through targeted interventions. This includes:

- Budgeting support to help manage financial pressures effectively.
- Improving access and affordability of healthy food within local communities, ensuring people do not have to travel far to source healthy and culturally appropriate food.
- Strengthening connections between residents and community food projects, fostering local support networks and long-term resilience.

Residents eat a healthy and balanced diet

This outcome aims to ensure that all residents have easy access to healthy food options locally, with a particular focus on ensuring that Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities can access culturally appropriate food within their neighbourhoods.

Improving diets can enhance overall population health while reducing wider health inequalities. Unhealthy diets are responsible for 13% of all deaths in the UK, largely due to their role in increasing risk factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes—all of which are major contributors to heart attacks and strokes.

In Camden, from 2015 to 2022, there has been an upward trend in the

prevalence of overweight and obese adults, with the rate increasing from 44.1% to 52.8% in 2022/23 (this is lower than the England average of 64% but similar to other boroughs in London). We know obesity has a major impact on residents, communities, health & care services, and the economy. Reducing and reversing this impact will require concerted action on a range of factors, including enabling health behaviours, enhancing the local environment to support healthy behaviours, treatment where appropriate, and promoting mental wellbeing.

Consumption of five portions of fruit and vegetables per day is a key indicator of a healthy diet. In Camden, adult 5-a-day consumption is 33.5% of adults, slightly higher than both the London and England averages. However, this trend has declined between 2020 and 2022. The cost and access to fresh fruit and vegetables can be a barrier to eating healthy for some residents.

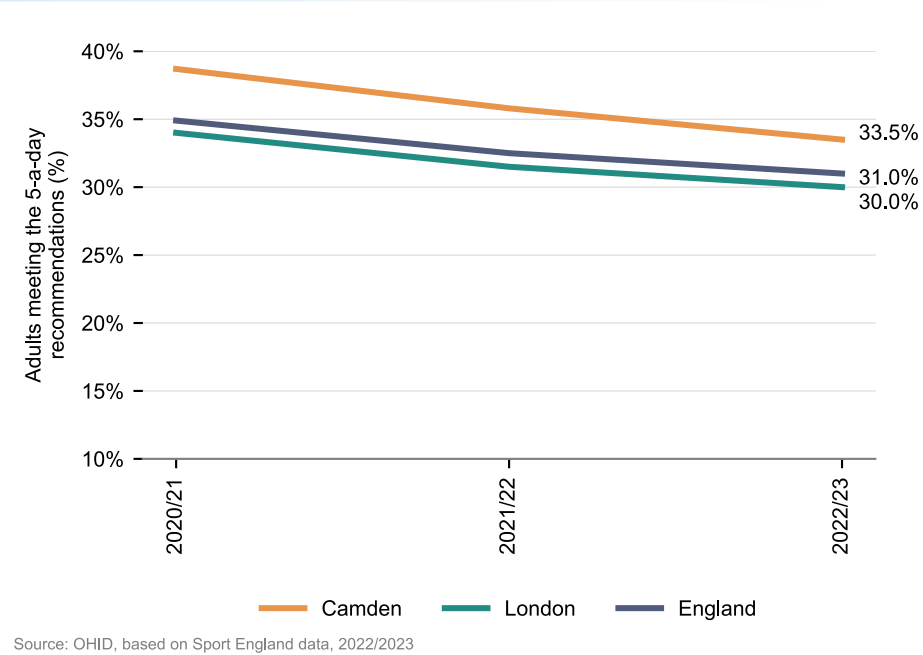
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We don't have a fruit and vegetable market like they do in other parts of Camden. Because of our location [Warren Street] the food is even more expensive, so we should be considered because of where we live in Central London. I understand the shopkeepers need to do that because the rent is higher in those areas, so it's like a vicious circle. It should be a full circle moment where there is a bit of help between each process, so everyone understands one another, and not a problem for everybody.

– Female, focus group discussion for mothers at Regent's Park Children's Centre.)

”

Figure 12.1: Share of adults eating at least 5 fruits and veg a day



A key part of the Food Mission’s approach to this outcome is supporting people with the necessary resources to store, prepare, and cook food, alongside ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to prepare healthy meals. In addition, this outcome seeks to create opportunities for residents to participate in food-growing initiatives that promote sustainable agricultural practices. These initiatives not only encourage environmentally responsible food production but also help people connect with nature and develop a deeper appreciation for fresh, natural food.

One place where residents can get involved in picking their own fruit and vegetables is, the Story Garden:



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“My kids always go to the Story Garden and do digging, picking fruits in summertime. They don’t have this experience, so they like playing with soil, run around. It’s nice. What I see in this country is that kids don’t have those opportunities.”

– Female, Regent’s Park Children’ Centre focus group

One mother, speaking at a focus group at Regent’s Park Children’s Centre, described how the cost of food influenced her choices at home:

“I buy a lot of fruit, but my kids eat a lot of fruit, and then I find myself not eating it because the kids are going to eat it. And it’s expensive—so even though I buy a lot, they eat a lot, and I want them to have the good stuff. So I find myself eating the not-healthy stuff.”

Learning from: Rhyl Community Kitchen at Rhyl Community Primary School (funded by River of Hope)

Family Dinners at Rhyl Community Kitchen supports families through winter by providing healthy, hot meals. With rising living costs and some families in temporary housing without cooking facilities, this initiative ensures access to nutritious food while fostering community connections.

Parents and carers also have the chance to build skills and confidence. So far, two parents have earned a Level 2 Food and Hygiene certificate, with growing interest from others. The project aims to upskill as many parents as possible, empowering them to cook for themselves and support their community.

Food supports children and young people to thrive, laying a foundation for flourishing lives

This outcome aims to support the development of young people from early childhood through to adulthood, ensuring they have access to a healthy diet at every stage of life.

From birth, we aim to support parents who choose to breastfeed by providing guidance and resources to help them do so successfully.

“...thank you for the support we received when he was born especially with establishing breastfeeding, with midwives and health workers coming to my home the day after we arrived back from hospital.”

– Female, Regent’s Park Children’s Centre focus group

Encouraging a balanced diet for children that is low in sugar, salt, and saturated fat is essential, along with fostering a positive and healthy food environment at home. We support young people in building their knowledge and interest in healthy and sustainable food, equipping them with the skills to make informed dietary choices. By integrating these efforts across different stages of childhood and adolescence, we aim to create a healthier future for young people while fostering long-term positive eating habits.

Almost 1 in 5 children in Camden are overweight or obese by reception year (19.1%), which is similar to London (20%) and lower than England (21.3%). By the end of primary school (year 6) this figure rises to 1 in 3 (36%), following a similar pattern to London (38.8%) and England (36.6%). The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data also shows that pupils living in the most deprived areas, or those from Asian and Black ethnic groups are more likely to be overweight or obese.



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Camden School Breakfast Programme

Data from the Health-Related Behaviours Questionnaire (2021-2022) indicated that 11% of Camden primary school pupils and 29% of Camden secondary school pupils had nothing to eat or drink before lessons on the day of the survey. In 2022, qualitative feedback from school staff highlighted the issue of hunger before lessons in schools across Camden. School staff noticed hunger affecting concentration and behaviour among pupils, and several staff members reported keeping discretionary funds or stores of food to feed pupils who came to school hungry. In response to this the Council commissioned Magic Breakfast to deliver the Camden School Breakfast Programme in January 2023 to meet the needs of Camden’s most deprived schools.

The Camden School Breakfast Programme has expanded over the past two years and engaged with schools to ensure that all schools across Camden offer breakfast for free to all pupils on Free School Meals at a minimum, with the aim of supporting schools to offer free breakfast to the entire school roll. The breakfast programme has supported the roll out of Magic Breakfast at 24 of our most deprived schools that have a Pupil Premium Eligibility of at least 30%, including 2 special schools and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. There was an initial step change in the number of schools that joined the Camden School Breakfast Programme, increasing from the original 9 Magic Breakfast schools in December 2022, to 22 schools by April 2023.

Uptake figures from Autumn 2024 indicate that this Council funded initiative implemented by our schools enables up to 3228 children to have a free breakfast every day - up from 587 children in 2022. The Magic Breakfast provision is highly valued by school staff, parents and pupils. Not only does providing school breakfast help to tackle the issue of hunger in children and young people, but qualitative feedback shows that the provision of school breakfast has had positive impacts on school attendance and concentration and has helped reduce some household costs during the cost-of-living crisis.

“ *This has really helped motivate my daughter to get to school on time, having breakfast with her friends each day is a real incentive to get into school.*”

– Parent, La Sainte Union

“ *After I have my breakfast, my brain is better at concentrating and managing my distractions.*”

– Year 3 pupil, Christ Church School

Free School Meals take up pilot

In response to low Free School Meal (FSM) uptake in Camden secondary schools the Council partnered with research agency Word on the Curb to explore barriers to FSM uptake in two schools (Haverstock and Regents High).

FSM uptake is measured twice a year through the School Census. As of Spring 2024, on average 61.5% of registered FSM pupils in Camden ate their meal on census day, similar to Spring 2023 (62.3%), with uptake varying across schools from 47.6% to 84.3%.

Key insights from the work include:

- Stigma wasn’t a major issue, but pupils faced barriers like limited variety, inconsistent portions, and inaccessible menus.
- Many students reported feeling hungry at school, affecting focus and energy, with some resorting to unhealthy coping strategies.
- Parents lacked awareness of FSM benefits, faced language and digital literacy barriers, and had misconceptions about meal suitability.
- Schools needed better systems to capture and respond to pupil feedback on meals.

As a result, several changes were introduced:

- FSM Application Support – Extra staff now assist families year-round.

- Breaktime Fruit Offer – Free fruit provided in six secondary and two special schools.
- School Meal Improvements – The new meal contract (from April 2025) includes deeper pupil engagement and expanded dietary options.
- FSM Auto-Enrolment – A process using Camden benefits data to enrol eligible students automatically, reducing administrative barriers for parents. Launch is planned for 2025.

This strategic approach ensures FSM access and school meals are co-designed with pupils, making them more appealing and accessible.

Uptake of the Holiday Activities and Food programme

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is centred around providing essential support to children and young people through access to enriching activities and nutritious meals during school holidays. The Camden HAF continues to build on its successes and go above and beyond the provision funded through the national Department for Education (DfE) programme, enhancing the offer through collaborations with local partners and extended access for families.

Most recently, the Winter HAF 2024 programme ran successfully for 900 children over December and January, with 19 providers delivering sessions across 22 venues. Children and young people participated in a wide range of activities. Looking ahead, the Easter programme is scheduled to run from 14th - 25th April 2025. 20% of the DfE funding will be dedicated to ensuring young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have access to enriching activities during the Easter holidays and additional funding from Camden Council will further enhance provision to ensure that some of those who need the support but do not meet the DfE’s strict criteria are still able to benefit.

Camden’s food system drives climate action, contributing to solutions for the environmental crisis

This Food Mission outcome aims to support residents, businesses, and organisations in Camden to adopt sustainable food practices. This includes shifting consumer demand toward environmentally friendly-diets, ensuring easy access to locally and ethically produced food, promoting low-carbon cooking methods, minimising single-use plastics, and reducing food waste.

Food growing is at the heart of community engagement, sustainability, and social connection in Camden. To support this, Camden has invested £230,000 over two years in a borough-wide food-growing programme, removing barriers and making food growing more accessible.

A review of Camden’s food-growing spaces identified at least 55 community sites, including gardens, orchards, and raised beds, with additional food growing happening in private and untracked spaces. Allotments remain in high demand, with 208 fully occupied plots and a waiting list under review to ensure fair access.

To streamline new food-growing projects, Camden Council has assessed internal processes and identified potential barriers to inform clearer guidance for residents and create defined roles within the Council to support food-growing initiatives.

Community-led approaches are central to this work. In partnership with Castlehaven Community Association, we launched the Camden grower’s conversation to connect growers, share knowledge, and co-develop a sustainable food-growing strategy. A successful food-growing celebration in November 2024 reinforced the need for a coordinated network, which is now being established.

Beyond growing food, this initiative fosters cultural and social connections, particularly among Camden’s diverse communities.



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Maintaining engagement through events, workshops, and shared learning is crucial to long-term success. Future council support must be accessible, with clear guidance in multiple languages, ensuring food growing remains an integral part of Camden’s communities

Learnings from: Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society

Lifeafterhummus is a key player in Camden’s food partnership, rescuing five tonnes of surplus food per month, redistributing it to 80 households, 11 hostels, an after-school club, and a faith group. Their 50 local volunteers collect food from 45 stores weekly, ensuring that good food doesn’t go to waste. In 2024, Lifeafterhummus concluded a study on food waste in and around Somers Town, bringing together insights from food businesses (such as restaurants, supermarkets, cinemas etc.) and VCS organisations providing food-related services (such as subsidised food, food vouchers, non-perishables to take away etc.) The majority of food waste is unavoidable waste such as plate scraps, vegetable peelings etc. which, if segregated properly, is sent to an anaerobic digestion site or a composting site by the North London Waste Authority. However, the 109 businesses surveyed also identified other types of food which could potentially be donated - edible fresh food within use-by date, imperfect/damaged but edible stock within use-by date, edible stock within use-by date and edible stock within the best-before date. The VCS organisations providing food related services noted that they often fell short of the demand. The residents they serve face challenges such as insufficient food, poor nutrition, having to choose between food and other essentials which often impacted their ability to study or work. Lifeafterhummus collect just over 1000kg of surplus food per week, around five tonnes of food a month. This is then repurposed, prepared as hot meals and other food for different outlets such as after-school clubs, hostels, surplus food cart and others, including selling the food at their café in 5 Pancras Square library.

Learning from: Food for Homeless – a We Make Camden Kit grantee

The Food for Homeless project is dedicated to supporting the homeless community in Camden. Driven by founder’s personal experience and a deep commitment to community, this project has now expanded significantly, providing meals, essentials, and vital connections to those in need across the borough.

This initiative is focused on providing food and support for homeless individuals in Camden - offering not just meals, but also a space for connection, understanding, and dignity. The project began when the founder, as a refugee struggling with their own financial hardships, used their personal savings to provide food for rough sleepers and the homeless community.

The project operates through a mobile model, delivering food and essentials to people in need across Camden. The founder walks through the streets, bringing food in a trolley to multiple areas in the borough.

The impact of the project comes from using food as a foundation to create a human connection that many rough sleepers and homeless people lack. The founder emphasised the importance of interacting with those they help,

“ I remember what one guy told me; I said hello. How are you? And he said “Oh, how am I?” You know, that is the sentence I haven’t heard for two years.”

The project has grown with the funding received from the kit as explains the founder,

“ I started to feed 5 people maximum weekly... now 50 people come weekly.”

Food for Homeless highlights the power of individual commitment and the importance of community-driven initiatives. The founder reflects,



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“ If I [see someone] especially with the hunger and hardship, absolutely, I try to help.”

The project has also underscored the importance of addressing both immediate and long-term needs, with plans to expand in the future to incorporate additional support services, such as mental health and housing advice.

“ The first mission I have is to tackle the poverty, to understand people and recognise their need and provide [for] their needs, and move them from the street, to give them a roof.”

| Our priorities for the coming year

The current Food Partnership has been instrumental in bringing us to where we are today. In 2025, we will focus on building new partnerships while strengthening existing ones to drive the systemic changes we aim to create. Key initiatives will include:

- School of Food: with a focus on the potential for enhancing curriculum learning through cooking lessons as well as empowering communities through education and skill-building, Camden is exploring what a Camden School of Food could look like, working with schools and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.
- Camden Council is partnering with Lifeafterhummus to run a six-month experiment with Waste Café in a local library, serving affordable meals made from surplus food. Prepared and sold by young people, the café will reduce food waste while creating employment pathways. If successful, we aim to expand the Waste Café model across Camden.
- The Food Mission is launching its first Challenge Prize this year to drive innovation and collaboration in addressing delivery gaps and shaping market solutions. We identified surplus food in the business sector as a key challenge for our goal to make Camden’s

food system more sustainable. We are now in the discovery phase, engaging with restaurants, supermarkets, and food waste suppliers to refine the problem statement.

- Local Food Hub: Supporting partners with food distribution and enhancing local supply chains. Camden is also engaging with local landlords, including those managing shopping centres, to reimagine these spaces as community hubs. The vision is to transform them into active environments where residents can cook, learn about food, and connect with others, advancing both the healthy eating and sustainability agendas.
- Camden is exploring a Right to Grow policy to strengthen food resilience and sustainability. We are also piloting projects to support family hubs, nurseries, and schools in food growing, helping children develop food literacy and connect with nature. Following the success of our first seed bank at Camden Town Library, we plan to expand to more libraries, offering educational sessions and resources.
- Following the completion of the Camden Food Buying Standards as a regulatory lever, we are now working to implement them across Camden and encourage our partners to adopt them. These standards aim to promote healthy, sustainable, and environmentally friendly catering across all council services where food catering is purchased or commissioned.
- In partnership with UCL and a local community organisation the food mission is experimenting with Mobile Community Kitchen initiative. The planned project entails the collaborative design and build of a communal mobile food space, together with asylum seekers and long-term residents of the borough.

Through these ambitious initiatives, Camden is not only addressing immediate food needs but also laying the groundwork for long-term, community-led food system transformation where food is grown locally, connects our diverse communities, and nourishes us to lead long, healthy, and happy lives, all while caring for the planet.



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A.1 A note on the Community Life Survey 2023-24

The Community Life Survey is a national household online/paper survey of adults aged 16+ in England. The survey is a key evidence source on social cohesion, community engagement and social action. The sample sizes at local authority level were relatively small (c.200-400) depending on the question, therefore the data is reported with 95% confidence intervals which have been displayed on the graphs as upper and lower estimates. This means statistically we believe there is a 95% chance that the true values are in this range. Where the margin of error for Camden overlaps with London or England, we will describe our position as “similar”, if there is a clear gap we have said above or below.

No data at lower levels of geography or for different demographic groups in the borough was released (due to the sample size being too small to reliably report on smaller groups).

Table 13.1: Overview table of included Community Life Survey measures

Measure / comparison to London	Worse	Similar	Better
Feeling of belonging		56.7%	
Change in local area		15.7%	
Neighbours pull together to improve area		51.0%	
People in the neighbourhood can be trusted		32.2%	
People from different backgrounds get on well		83.9%	
Proud to live in your local area			63.8%
Do you still want to be here in five years?		59.0%	
Would you recommend your local area?			69.6%
Satisfied with local area as a place to live?			77.0%
There would be people there for you if needed		89.9%	
Formal volunteering at least once a month		16.5%	
Formal volunteering at least once in the last year		31.0%	
Informal volunteering at least once a month		25.3%	
Informal volunteering at least once in the last year		47.7%	
Participated in civic engagement in the last year		39.7%	
Participated in civic activism in the last year		12.4%	
Participated in civic consultation			29.3%
Involvement in social action		18.2%	
Importance of influence over decisions		58.2%	
Want to be involved in local decisions		38.2%	
Influence on decisions	22.2%		

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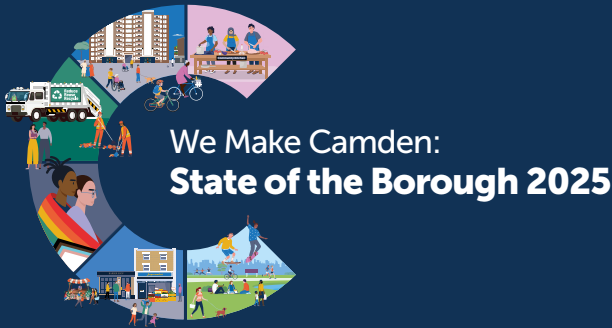
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