

Adult Social Care CQC Self-Assessment

July 2024



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Overview and executive summary

About Camden

Camden has a rich history of social action – solidarity across communities that come together to stand up, speak out and demand a fairer, more equal society. Here we believe in the power of public services to tackle inequalities and improve people’s lives – our We Make Camden vision for our borough commits to putting communities at the heart of everything we do, and we carry that sense of urgency into our work, focusing on continuous improvement and impact.

In Camden we work together with our citizens and communities – testing and learning with them to ensure all our services are providing consistent care and support centred on prevention, wellbeing and independence. We Make Camden sets out four Missions – areas in which our communities want us to make real change but where we need to harness the collective resources of our partners and communities to do so. Our strategy is not just about what we want to change – but how we will go about it as an organisation and an advocate for local people.

We Make Camden provides a framework for delivering our shared vision and the changes we want to see. We know this is beyond the grasp of any one organisation, but when we work together, we can achieve amazing things - even in times of uncertainty. Our Missions-orientated approach to public service is focused on understanding and engaging systems (using data and insight), building capacities for change and transformation (such as digital and design), and supporting leadership that is humble, reflective, and impactful. Our Missions are rooted in our journey as an organisation around participatory and relational working – from holding citizens assemblies on health and care, to developing deeper relationships with health partners and anchors that share our vision for our place.

We want a better, fairer and more equal borough. We Make Camden sets out that the twin pillars of our work as an organisation are to tackle inequality and to prevent harm and crisis. As care leaders we focus on collaboration to respond to the pressures we face – most concerningly a deepening of inequalities in our borough. While there are people, areas and organisations in Camden with significant wealth, we know that many of our residents are facing financial hardship and living in poverty – exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. Inequality affects access to so much – from housing to well-paid work, education and training opportunities, income, and the ability to afford essentials. According to the ONS, Camden residents are also significantly more likely to identify themselves as lonely some of the time (33%) when compared to London (21%) and England (20%) – a key factor that we know compounds inequalities and which we’re committed to addressing.

Our passion for equality drives our deep commitment to investing in prevention and early help, both within the Council and across our partner organisations. That means looking at ways in which residents can access help early before they find themselves in crisis. If we can get this right, we can make a real difference to people’s lives and reduce the chances of them needing more intense or longer-term support in the future.

Camden is a dynamic and fast-changing borough where our context often changes and commands a response. For example, there is a significant churn in our population, with Camden having the ninth highest level of churn in the UK. Sadly, people are leaving the borough because they can no longer afford to live here. At the same time the borough is experiencing the impact

of our central London location - with the Eurostar as one of the gateways to Europe and a port of entry for Ukrainian refugees. There are a significant number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Camden and the largest number of Afghan refugees in London. Many of our new residents need significant support at what is often the most stressful and vulnerable time in their lives.

This dynamism at the heart of our place also brings opportunities - Camden has one of the fastest growing economies in the UK and is home to global businesses as well as academic and public institutions that can help us tackle challenges and achieve the Missions we set out in We Make Camden. We see ourselves as leaders of place and, as such, we are determined to bring the collective weight of these organisations together to ensure that all citizens benefit from the wealth and opportunity they bring to the borough. This means reaching out beyond our own organisation to work with partners, residents and communities to make positive change happen.

As an organisation we seek out opportunities to bring together data, lived experience and strategic leadership to improve services. Our approach to service delivery, stewardship and improvement in Adult Social Care has informed our commitment to participative, relational, empowering services outlined in We Make Camden and championed across the Council. Built on a foundation of core services, our organisation is taking a holistic view that recognises the broader effect of how we deliver for people - generating decent jobs, putting investment and power into grassroots movements and communities, facilitating skills and training for staff, and ensuring everyone feels a sense of belonging and connection to the borough.

Camden's demographics

Camden is an inner London borough with a population of 210,100 on Census Day 2021. The population has decreased by 4.6% since 2011, with those aged over 65 increasing by 3.4% and those aged 18-64 decreasing by 4.7%. We are one of the country's most unequal boroughs, with highly affluent areas set against significant areas of deprivation. The gap in healthy life expectancy between the poorest and richest parts of the borough is too wide – poorer citizens are expected to die almost 20 years earlier than those who are better off.

The population of Camden is more ethnically diverse than England with 40% of our residents from a Black, Asian or other ethnic group compared to 19% in England – this is up from 34% in 2011. There are more than 85 different languages spoken here and we are home to more LGBTQ+ people than the national average, with 17% people identifying as LGBTQ+ in comparison with the national average of 14%. There are fewer disabled people as a share of the population than the national average, 15.2% in Camden and 17.3% nationally.

Camden has recently been awarded Borough of Sanctuary status. Over the past few years, we have become a home for over 800 Ukrainian refugees as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and have supported 109 former Syrian refugees to apply for UK citizenship. We have also supported 1,800 Afghan refugees and recently settled many of them into forever homes in Camden.

Camden has the seventh highest proportion of people with depression in London and the prevalence of serious mental illness is amongst the highest in the country. Most of our older population live alone, and young people here are disproportionately affected by loneliness. We also face challenges with access to jobs, the availability of affordable high-quality homes and

keeping citizens safe. In an Adult Social Care context, 56% of people drawing on our support are 65 or older. [Open Data Camden](#) holds information and statistics about Camden and its local communities.

Our vision and priorities for Camden

As referenced above, [We Make Camden](#) sets out our vision for Camden and makes explicit our commitment to tackling inequality, supporting good health, wellbeing and connection for everyone, so that people can live and age well. We Make Camden outlines our commitment to four Camden Missions which represent the issues Camden residents say are the most important to them – including a Mission focused on the relationship between place and wellbeing. We Make Camden and our Missions strongly reflect practice and leadership from our care services around place-based partnership working, cross-sectoral leadership and strengths-based and relational working.

[The Way We Work](#) is our renewed approach to how we as an organisation will respond to the ambitions for the borough set out in We Make Camden and bring in the modern skills and capabilities needed to deliver high-quality services in complex contexts. As part of responding to the challenge of The Way We Work we have invested in data leadership and capacity to inform our service improvement and transformation work, and we have worked with service leaders to develop change and development programmes for staff that are rooted in professional practice as well as organisational priorities.

As we face new challenges in the years to come, we know the value of shared leadership, ensuring everyone's voice can be heard and allowing people to feel safe to test and learn with confidence, knowing that they will be supported every step of the way. We want to be a truly relational council in the way we lead our workforce and deliver all our services. For us relational means being human-centred, kind and compassionate – not bureaucratic and sitting behind systems and processes in the way we work.



Our Health and Wellbeing Board is providing partnership leadership in delivering [Camden's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2030](#). The strategy was built on the learnings from our [Health and Care Citizens' Assembly](#) and outlines our population health approach, highlighting the social determinants of health alongside places and communities, healthy lifestyles, and health and care services. It is informed by our understanding of population health need and sets out three short-term priorities for partnership action: healthy and ready for school; good work and employment and community connection and friendships. The strategy is complemented by the [Integration and Population Health Strategy led by North Central London Integrated Care System](#).

Our vision and strategy for Adult Social Care

Supporting People Connecting Communities (SPCC) is our council-wide strategy for living and ageing well in Camden. This responds to the expectations of our Health and Care Citizens' Assembly and is informed by our Camden Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, where priorities were set based on what residents told us about their experience of care. Our strategic vision and strengths-based approach are embedded in the consciousness of the organisation and have contributed to the development of We Make Camden and The Way We Work. Core principles are actively championed by our visible and stable leadership teams.

SPCC is founded on What Matters, Camden's model of Adult Social Care. This focuses on the strengths of people and includes a three-conversation approach to social care assessments, relational commissioning and a variety of tools and interventions for practitioners to draw on including Adult Family Group Conferencing, the Team Around Me, and our Adult Social Care Artist in Residence. It places the person at the centre of their care and commits our staff to work with partners in the community, providing early help and connecting people to the things that matter to them.





Adult Social Care activity and performance 2023/24

<p>3942 people made a request for support</p> <p>An increase of 6% on 2022/23</p>	<p>3419 people drew on long-term care and support</p> <p>1404 were 18-64</p> <p>2015 were 65 and over</p>	<p>2,300 people drawing on care and support at home, a similar figure to 2022/23</p>
<p>c.5,500 adults accessed support in last 12 months</p>	<p>Staff employed by Adult Social Care</p> <p>577</p>	<p>Gross total expenditure on Adult Social Care in Camden</p> <p>£111.237m</p>

Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF)

Camden performs well for many of the ASCOF measures derived from our data, including those around self-directed support and hospital discharge, which we believe demonstrates that we are meeting our Care Act duties despite the challenging context of high levels of inequality, loneliness, deprivation and mental health issues we see in the borough.

However, there are measures we are concerned about, particularly those derived from the Adult Social Care Survey (ASCS) and Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE), relating to quality of life, social contact, and feeling safe.

Our 2023/24 survey results have led to slightly improved ASCOF scores in these areas, but we are not content to accept this. We are confident that our approach, set out through this self-assessment, will improve the experience for people who draw on care and carers, resulting in an improved ASCOF performance in the coming years.

A summary of our strengths

Strong core services as the foundation for our ambitions: We hold an optimistic view of the future and are committed to modern public services capable of improving outcomes while responding to long-running financial pressures. This approach can only be pursued because of strong and foundational core services – reinforced through routine performance monitoring, quality assurance, resident insight and stable leadership. Our core services provide the platform upon which we challenge ourselves to do better, to innovate and to respond effectively to emerging challenges such as the rising cost of living, refugee crises and the proliferation of rough sleeping.

Our commitment to prevention and early help: Camden's political and officer leadership have made difficult decisions together to prioritise investment in prevention and early help across council services for many years. We believe this has a positive impact on managing need and demand for statutory services whilst also supporting our pursuit of improved outcomes for residents. Camden's family early help model provided the test bed for relational practice and enabled Camden to start building an organisational approach that spans the life course. In support of this approach, we have a culture of reflective, high-trust and high-challenge leadership where we bring our collective insight to bear on how we might more effectively prevent problems from worsening and improve lives.

What Matters, our approach to Adult Social Care: Camden's What Matters practice model is well developed, guiding everything we do in Adult Social Care and influencing the Council's wider ambition to be a relational organisation. Despite challenges presented by the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, What Matters has consistently served as our moral compass and is broad in reach; it guides commissioning activity as well as direct practice. It is underpinned by practice guidance, supervision, learning and development and quality assurance. Additional specialist capacity has been provided to our learning and improvement work through the practice development lead model.

Place-based partnership working: Camden has a long history of integrated working across health and care, enabling leaders (political and officer) across both sectors to prioritise good services and outcomes for communities. We are particularly proud of our Learning Disability Service and our strong integrated hospital discharge teams who ensure that Camden's residents don't stay unnecessarily in our hospitals. The Council also plays a leading role in health partnerships and our Executive Director for Adults and Health chairs Camden's Borough Partnership. Here we commit to integrated models, with more services delivered alongside communities in the neighbourhoods where people live. Our Adult Social Care teams are joining forces with counterparts in community health, mental health and primary care to become Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and we are working with health partners and anchor institutions as part of our Mission approach.

Our collaborative approach to commissioning: We see our external providers as strategic partners and invest significant time and resource nurturing those relationships in pursuit of the highest quality of care for residents. Strong relationships alongside robust monitoring and quality assurance have enabled us to build a culture of transparency, learning and continuous improvement. Whether working with in-house or external providers; the voluntary and community sector; or with health system colleagues, we approach service development and transformation opportunities in partnership and across sectors, delivering a diverse, flexible, and responsive offer for residents.

Innovation and sector engagement: Our commitment to insight, data and co-production shape our innovation and are essential to how we think about Adult Social Care. It enables us to build hope and optimism into our work and creates a culture of possibility and belief in the future. This is so important in the context of the pressures that our residents, staff and partners face every day. We have developed innovative models of care and support that have benefitted people, and we maintain close connections with our research partners, including academic institutions, in evaluating the impact of new models. Examples include our Adult Family Group Conferencing model, our work around self-neglect and hoarding and our in-house extra care sheltered accommodation at Charlie Ratchford Court.

Spotlight on Adult Family Group Conferencing - Michelle's story

Meet Michelle. For years, Michelle told us that she had been the one in control, the runner, the leader of her family, the carer. But suddenly she found herself needing care and support which turned her world upside down.

Michelle was referred to Family Group Conferencing (FGC) by her social worker. Michelle wanted to make a positive change to help her improve her life after medical changes affected the way she was living. Michelle's FGC was held at a nearby hotel within walking distance from her home. For someone who had been living in isolation, even the walk there, with support, was empowering.

The first part of the meeting was a gathering of everyone involved with Michelle. This included her family and friends, a Social Worker, Occupational Therapist and Sensory Needs worker. They introduced themselves, discussed objectives, and assigned responsibilities. The second part was family time: Michelle and her family had a private discussion about their needs and concerns. In the last part the professionals returned and the group developed an action plan.

Michelle spoke about how important it was for her to be able to convey her story just once to everyone simultaneously. 'It's about you as a person, your family, the people around you'.

After the conference, things started happening very quickly. Michelle's bathroom was measured for modifications, and she received her wheelchair. Finally, Michelle was able to go out to buy a gift for a friend, something she hadn't done in a long time.

The FGC wasn't about professionals deciding what was best for Michelle; rather, everyone in her network was supporting her to reach her goals. Michelle said that having a team of people behind her aware of her story, and working together, made a massive difference. She told us it was 'life changing', and with each step, she is moving towards a brighter, more independent future.

Our key areas of focus

Managing the demand and flow of work: We are seeing more people approaching us for support and with greater complexity of need. This is despite our commitment to prevention and early help and our population health approach. The high demand we are managing is resulting in people waiting longer than we would like for support. Over the past 12 months, our robust management plan has significantly reduced the number of people waiting for a review of their care and support and stabilised the waiting lists for Care Act assessments, despite high demand for these services. We are reviewing our processes to alleviate delays and ensuring we have the right capacity to meet demand, investing additional funding into our new neighbourhood teams. We are focused on supporting our staff to maintain the best quality of care whilst we manage increased demand, and we are drawing on the capacity of providers to support more reviews where possible. Our leadership team is maintaining a firm grip on the situation, with clear accountability and data reporting embedded in our corporate governance processes.

Strengthening our offer for people experiencing multiple disadvantage: We are also seeing a growing number of people experiencing multiple disadvantage in the borough. Camden has the second highest number of people sleeping rough in London and in England (the majority of whom come from outside Camden) and figures for 2024 so far are significantly higher than those for previous years. Those experiencing multiple disadvantage face significant health inequalities and are often under-supported by our existing health and care system, despite efforts to make our services more accessible and appropriate. We continue to see a high prevalence of serious mental illness, drug and alcohol issues and people with co-occurring needs. To tackle this challenge head on, the Council is leading a combined effort with partners to deliver enhanced support for those who experience the greatest disadvantage. We have co-produced new and specialist capacity within services, including Adult Social Care and are strengthening integrated approaches with Substance Misuse services, Housing, and our supported accommodation pathways.

Supporting and empowering our workforce: We highlight this as an area of focus because it is a corporate priority that the Council is committed to progressing at pace and in collaboration with our workforce. Our progress is positive and we don't want to lose momentum. We know from our organisation-wide pulse survey results that colleagues are feeling the difference of this work. In the 2023 survey 81% of staff told us that they feel they belong (up 26%) and 89% feel we are making progress to becoming an anti-racist organisation. We continue to be sector leading in our work to be a fair and inclusive employer; investing a further £1 million in the bottom of our pay scales to ensure a minimum earnings guarantee that is set above London Living Wage; being open and transparent with our pay and pension gap; and the first council to gain accreditation as a 'Bloody Good Employer', a workplace that is inclusive to people who menstruate. To support staff who are impacted by the conflict in the Middle East we set up dedicated wellbeing pages on our intranet and extended the trauma support in place. Our goal is to support, develop and retain our workforce so that everyone can flourish.

Comprehensive support for unpaid carers: We recognise the importance of unpaid and family carers and are committed to improving carers' lives. We know too many carers are waiting for a Carer Conversation or Carer Review and we are working to change this. We recognise and value the role they play in supporting and advocating for the person they care for, knowing that carers are often our first point of contact when we are assessing needs.

And critically we recognise that they themselves often need some support. We have a strong relationship with Camden Carers and continue to invest significant resource to ensure that carers have access to the wide range of services they provide. A year of co-production to develop our new Carers Action Plan will culminate in its launch at Camden's Full Council meeting in July 2024. This has been a whole-council response, and we are excited to hold our inaugural meeting of the Carers Partnership Board in Autumn 2024.

Theme 1: Working with people

In Camden we have effective arrangements for assessing, reviewing, and addressing people's needs in line with our duties under the Care Act. We take great pride in our integrated approaches to assess and meet the needs of people who require more specialist interventions, such as people with learning disabilities, people experiencing severe mental illness, and people being discharged from hospital. We know that only through more joined-up approaches can we bring the best of each partner's expertise and enable a collective focus on what really matters to people.

Our new Adult Social Care Neighbourhood service structure went live in June 2024 and will deepen our connections with local communities, fostering closer relationships between social care, residents, community partners and other council teams, such as Housing - broadening our collective knowledge and access to the full range of local support.

Being mindful of the diversity of our borough, we closely monitor disproportionality to tackle inequality and seek to engage with people from all communities; making sure we assess and meet need in a culturally competent way.

Our strengths

- Our effective practice model, What Matters.
- Our award-winning integrated support for people with learning disabilities.
- Our high-performing integrated arrangements to support people who are being discharged from hospital.
- Our innovative approaches to working with residents, including our emerging offer of Adult Early Help.

Areas we are focusing on

- Managing demand and reducing the amount of time people are waiting for assessments and reviews.
- Pioneering a community-based neighbourhood model to improve workforce experience and deliver better outcomes for people.
- Developing a new model of social work in mental health services.
- Improving the confidence of all services to support people with Autism.

Data and insights 2023/24

645 people received a full Care Act assessment, 9% more than 2022/23.

501 of these people went on to draw on long-term support.

58% of those drawing on long-term care and support for over a year have been **reviewed in the previous 12 months**.

Community reviews that are overdue have reduced by **61%** in the last 9 months following focused work on service pressures.

71.4% of people **did not** have to fund **additional** care and support.

This is an increase from **68.5%** in 2022/23.

602 people drew on a **direct payment**.

A **decrease** of 5% on 22/23.

988 carers received support from Adult Social Care. A **6.6% decrease** from 2022/23.

666 carers received a personal budget.

Embedding and enhancing our practice model

What Matters

What Matters is Camden's practice model; our approach to embedding strengths-based practice across Adult Social Care. It is our way of putting people at the heart of everything that we do and promoting the wellbeing of those who draw on support from Camden. This practice approach supports people, carers, families and communities to find solutions that are right for them.

During the pandemic we found that increased demand, reduced workforce capacity and concern about the risk and social isolation people were facing led some practitioners to rely more heavily on packages of care to meet needs. However, since then we've made progress to enhance strength-based practice, with 72% (936) of people who have had an initial assessment with Adult Social Care in 2023/24 being supported without the need for a full Care Act assessment. We are also seeing good evidence of strengths-based practice growing in our case auditing and anticipate this will reflect positively in future Adult Social Care Surveys (ASCS) and improved quality of life measures in our ASCOF results. This year 85.5% of people were quite or very satisfied with the care and support services they received, an increase from 83% in 2022/23.

Supporting and developing practice

Our What Matters approach has been refreshed and is supported by a committed and innovative Practice Development Team led by our Principal Social Worker. The team are at the forefront of strengthening the What Matters practice model and central to our model of

supervision and quality assurance. It is underpinned by a robust programme of learning and development to support all staff to embed What Matters into their practice and behaviours. The programme includes What Matters refreshers, peer-led reflective practice sessions, themed Open House sessions, and reference materials on What Matters in our comprehensive [ASC Practice Guide \(camden.gov.uk\)](https://www.camden.gov.uk/asc-practice-guide).

The team practice leads offer expert guidance across areas including Autism, safeguarding, homelessness, carers, mental health, and substance misuse. Our Lead Occupational Therapist also works to support Occupational Therapists with professional development and clinical supervision. Likewise, our Professional Social Work Educator supports newly qualified social workers in their first year of employment and nurtures new talent through a growing apprenticeship programme for social workers and Occupational Therapists. In 2023, the Practice Development Team launched a new two-year programme of work to support continuous practice improvement.

Sofia's story

Meet Sofia. As she sits in her bright room within a small residential care home which caters for 13 residents, she reminisces about the beautiful life she lived as a young opera singer living in Italy. Sofia is surrounded by photos of her performing on stage and other souvenirs of a life well lived. Her room is filled with interesting books about music and musical scores giving anyone who visits a glimpse into her passion.

At 95 and living with Alzheimer's dementia and various physical health needs, Sofia's life has changed significantly. Prior to moving into a care home, Sofia lived in her small but beloved flat. This was her sanctuary and despite becoming unwell and struggling to take care of herself, it was of utmost importance to her to remain there for as long as possible.

After becoming known to the Adult Social Care Neighbourhood team, Sofia's social worker did all they could to keep her happy and well supported at home. However, following the deterioration of her condition, Sofia could no longer safely remain there, and the decision was taken that it was in her best interest to move to a care home. The social worker took time and care to understand what mattered to Sofia and was very purposeful about the type of care home that would work for her. They also knew how important Sofia's photos and belongings were to her wellbeing and ensured they remained in her new home.

Having been supported with the move, Sofia now enjoys speaking with the staff and other residents, gladly sharing stories about her life. At other times she prefers to spend time in her own company, surrounded by her treasures. Sofia continues to revisit her most cherished memories through the stories she tells, and on the days that she prefers her own company, her carers and fellow residents are treated to the melodic notes of La Boheme escaping from her room and spilling into the corridors.

Working with residents to assess need and provide the right care and support

Working in neighbourhoods

Our ambition is to enable people to access advice and support from integrated health and care services closer to where they live. To support this ambition most of our social work and occupational therapy teams have recently been organised into five neighbourhood teams, the footprints of which align with our health partners in the NHS. However, for Camden, the concept of Neighbourhoods is more than this: it's about all local resident-facing services working more closely together, embedded in communities and creating new and self-determined ways of working that empower staff to be creative in how they work with people.

Camden's Neighbourhood model is at the forefront of ambitions for place-based integration in North Central London and has received leadership and financial backing from our Integrated Care Board (ICB). Our Adult Social Care services have led the way by committing to the model early and encouraging participation from NHS partners across primary care, community health and mental health. As this new model embeds, the partnership aims to establish Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) in each of our five neighbourhoods.

INTs will bring together primary, secondary, and social care, alongside community support, to ensure that care is holistic, strengths-based, and maximises independence. Planning for the first test and learn INT in East Camden has been underway for some time, with staff co-producing the early operating model and keen to build new collaborative working environments. This is led by a shared Head of Service who co-ordinates activity across several health and care organisations. The co-located East INT will launch in late summer 2024.

The Council has taken a strategic leadership role on Neighbourhoods, drawing together the INT initiative with equivalent work in Childrens, Housing and Community services. Together we are building a fundamentally different way of working that aligns with broader sector ambitions around devolution, subsidiarity, and community power.

Working with and providing support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage

Supporting adults experiencing multiple disadvantage is a key area of focus for Camden. This broadly refers to people facing a multitude of problems such as homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill-health and contact with the criminal justice system. Collecting data around multiple disadvantage remains a challenge due to its cross-cutting nature and flexible definition, however, there is strong evidence of its prevalence in services, for example through our recent [Drug and Alcohol needs assessment](#) and the North Central London Health Inclusion needs assessment.

People experiencing multiple disadvantage in Camden can sometimes be underserved by statutory services, including Adult Social Care, and are often ineligible or fall through the gaps in support. These people tend to become known to services towards crisis point, through complex safeguarding alerts, supported accommodation referrals and requests for Care Act assessments.

We know that our system wasn't set up to support people experiencing multiple disadvantage on this scale, and that better outcomes can only come about through multi-agency, joined-up responses and a more flexible approach to care that prioritises building trust and engagement. It is anticipated that our emerging Neighbourhood model and ambitions around Adult Early Help will provide an improved offer as they embed over time. In the meantime, Adult Social Care are a key partner in Camden's system-wide Homelessness Transformation. Through a co-production approach, this is creating a more integrated health and care offer for people experiencing homelessness who we know often experience a range of serious physical and mental health needs.

Adult Social Care Neighbourhoods also includes a new multi-disciplinary multiple disadvantage team to ensure that people experiencing multiple disadvantage draw on care that is tailored to their needs, and Camden's commissioning activity is equally focused on providing the right support. As part of this, all operational and commissioning teams work in close alignment with Camden's integrated drug and alcohol services and specific work is underway to align homelessness and mental health supported accommodation pathways and to develop safeguarding provider oversight processes for our homeless hostels.

Working with people who are being discharged from hospital

Adult Social Care has an excellent track record working with partners to support people who are ready to leave hospital. We have teams based in our two acute hospitals and in a rehabilitation hospital, where they work proactively to ensure people are discharged in a safe and timely way. We benefit from strong working relationships with the NHS, including discharge pathways and a commitment to the principles and ethos of 'home-first'.

This work has been strengthened through the effective investment of the Better Care Fund in integrated solutions. This is evidenced by consistently low numbers of people awaiting discharge from acute settings and provision of services that support people to return to their own home rather than being admitted to residential care. Of those discharged from hospital last year, 91.9% of people were able to go home with support from a range of services such as reablement, home care and our virtual wards.

Working with and providing support for people with a learning disability

Our award winning and innovative Camden Learning Disability Service (CLDS) currently supports over 530 people. This is a fully integrated health and social care service hosted by the Council in partnership with two local health trusts: Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust and Whittington NHS Foundation Trust. The service focuses on person-centred, holistic and multi-disciplinary support and works closely with commissioning teams to build a model of support that is reflective of what matters to people.

The First Contact model in CLDS was designed to improve the experience of people with a learning disability when they first contact the team. Our survey feedback showed residents found it easy to contact the service, felt listened to and were happy with how long it took to resolve their issue.

A Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) in [West Sussex](#) in 2017, involving a person from Camden, highlighted that even when annual reviews are completed, risks can be missed if the social worker does not know the person or the provider well. The SAR coincided with CLDS taking part in the Chief Social Worker's Named Social Worker Pilot. Based on our learning, we now work to ensure that all people placed out of borough have a Named Worker who will stay involved, and many people have had their annual reviews completed by the same worker for several years.

Kasibba's story

The Named Worker model and approach was key to our successful project to move Kasibba to her own home after decades of inappropriate detention in hospital in Hertfordshire, in part due to systemic racism. The outstanding nature of this 6-year programme of work, which put Kasibba's identity to the fore, was recognised by the National Social Work awards in November 2022, who not only awarded the 'Team around Kasibba' the Adult Multi-Disciplinary Team of the Year award, but also named the team as joint overall Social Worker of the Year, the first time ever this award has been given to a team.

Alongside CLDS, Camden commissions a range of high-quality services to support people with a learning disability to live independently and thrive in their communities. Learning disability supported living is commissioned through a locality model across three providers, all rated Good or Outstanding. High quality floating and community support is also provided through Centre 404, which enables people to live independently with an emphasis on participation in the community. Centre 404 is rated Good by the CQC.

Working with Autistic adults

Over the last three years Camden has increased investment in our Autism Hub and supported practice development by appointing a Practice Lead for Autism. We are ambitious and creative when thinking about a whole family approach and work in close partnership with our colleagues in Children's Services. The work to develop our new Autism Strategy captures these ambitions and associated actions, responding to issues raised by the people we support.

Action has been taken to increase the confidence and expertise of all staff around Autism. The Council is rolling out an e-learning module on Autism and we are planning for 60% of staff across the Council to have completed this by October 2025. Our Practice Lead for Autism holds weekly drop-in sessions for other practitioners to discuss individual case work and support best practice. The introduction of a passport for Autistic people is also being tested with some residents, and early feedback has been positive. We have worked with the Autism Hub to foster a collaboration with Rethink Advocacy, where they have developed an Autism-informed self-advocacy workshop programme as well as provided Autism training for advocates.

Brian's story

Meet Brian, a vibrant man in his 80s who loves life. Brian is Autistic and also contends with several physical health issues. His keen interests in electronics, computers, and reading serve as the bedrock of his wellbeing. Regular visits to the library for research and the therapeutic joy of viewing paintings bring him immense satisfaction.

Brian shares a trusting relationship with his Social Worker, a bond that allows him to openly discuss his needs and feelings. Currently, Brian is living in temporary accommodation under the care of a multi-disciplinary team after having a fall at home. His goal is to return to his sheltered housing flat, but decision-making and change can be particularly stressful for him. He thrives on being well-informed and involved in decisions but struggles with arriving at conclusions. Brian told us that "Being Autistic, I need someone to speak on my behalf," so we arranged for him to have an advocate.

Brian needs enough time to process information, especially when tired or anxious and the Social Worker's approach allows Brian to research and consider his options carefully, especially when needing clear communication about everyone's roles in his care and support.

Security concerns about his flat frequently occupy Brian's thoughts. Although he wishes to return home he is worried about falls and not being able to manage his day to day care needs. Nonetheless, Brian remains optimistic. His care plan includes support from a specialist care agency who can work with him to promote independence whilst balancing the need to reduce risks.

Through it all, Brian's story is one of resilience, hope, and the pursuit of a fulfilling life. His journey illustrates the importance of relationships and understanding and honouring what matters to him.

Working with people with sensory needs

We support over 700 people on our Visual Impairment Register and over 200 people on our Hearing Impairment Register. Our dedicated Sensory Needs Team works directly with people who are D/deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, and those with dual sensory loss, empowering them to maintain their independence. Following a recent review of our services and transition to a new Neighbourhood structure for Adult Social Care, we have identified some short-term investment to expand the service to reduce waiting times and enhance our referral systems and processes. This will ensure even better support for those we support. We will be reviewing these arrangements over the year to understand what capacity is needed going forward.

Zahra's story as told by one of our visual impairment workers

'I worked with Zahra, a young woman from Sudan last year who is blind and after she finished her PhD she secured a job in Stratford. It took a few weeks for Zahra to memorise the route but when she managed to crack it - she proudly stated that it had been the happiest day of her life. This moved me to tears! It was probably the most challenging route I had ever had to teach in 23 years, but she was absolutely determined to prove to her manager that she could do it. Zahra's self-esteem went through the roof after that. I also learnt a lot about the value of positive risk taking. I had to advocate to her manager that, in my professional opinion, she was safely able to do this. Being empowered in this way motivated Zahra to push herself further in other areas and believe she could achieve anything she wanted'.

Working with and providing the right support for people with mental health needs

Our skilled and committed mental health social workers support people in multi-disciplinary community and hospital-based settings. Their impact is evidenced through our Quality Assurance Panel with excellent examples of person-centred and strengths-based practice, supporting people to live independently in the community.

In 2023 we undertook a review of our mental health social work arrangements in response to concerns about how effectively they supported delivery of our Care Act duties. Working with Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust (C&I) the review highlighted good practice, and a genuine ambition for joint working by dedicated staff. But it also evidenced several concerns and risks around safeguarding arrangements, practice recording, data integrity, work with carers, multiple handoffs between teams, and staff feeling disconnected from the Council.

In response we developed an improvement plan which is in place with a series of immediate and more medium-term actions underway.

We are jointly developing a new Neighbourhood model of mental health social work, in consultation with our teams and ready to launch in January 2025. Our aim is to improve the quality and consistency of mental health social work without reducing integrated working. This will give Adult Social Care greater oversight and assurance and will ensure people with mental health needs receive high quality social care support. Through all these changes to the way mental health social work functions, alongside our Accommodation Plan, we are confident we can improve the proportion of people in contact with secondary mental health services who live independently (currently 6% in ASCOF).

In July 2024 we are launching a newly designed Mental Health Day Support Service at the Greenwood Centre, bringing together council support with clinical support from C&I, streamlining the experience for people drawing on the service and aiding recovery.

We have seen some real success in supporting residents with mental health needs into employment. Our provider, Hillside Clubhouse, has a deep-rooted ethos of co-production through their 'club' model. They engaged over 200 people between April and December 2023, and created 13 jobs. This Individualised Placement Support service with the North Central London ICB is at the forefront of growing this evidence-base in London.

Evania's story

Meet Evania, a woman in her 40s of Greek heritage who was born and raised in Camden. Despite facing significant mental and physical health challenges, Evania's spirit has no bounds - her vibrant character permeates through her love for music and art. She taught herself to play the piano and recently completed a singing course at City Academy and released an EP with her music therapy group. She told us that her passion for music really helps her stay well.

Evania currently lives in supported accommodation in Camden, engaging actively with her community mental health team and various supportive services. Over the years Evania has had multiple hospital admissions under the Mental Health Act. Recently she has built a strong relationship with her care coordinator and psychologist, attends regular appointments and copes using crisis services when needed. Following a Care Act Assessment, Evania has been using her personal budget to attend a local gym. She told us that she finds regular swimming can alleviate her pain, enhance her physical health, and improve her mental wellbeing.

Evania dreams of moving into independent accommodation and starting a family with her boyfriend of two years. She maintains strong relationships with her sister, her best friend, and her brother who lives in Germany. These connections provide her with emotional support and stability. Evania's story highlights the transformative power of engaging in creative and physical activities. Whether she's singing, swimming, or painting her art, Evania is doing what matters to her.

Working with young people preparing for adulthood

In Adult Social Care, we take pride in our strong partnership with Children's Services and the specialist Children and Young People Disability Service (CYPDS) which supports young disabled people up to the age of 24, ensuring they are connected to age-appropriate services and activities. We have a seamless transition pathway into Adult Services, fostering timely and coordinated conversations between individuals, families, and professionals. 83% of young people drawing on Adult Social Care were known to CYPDS at the end of March 2024.

Tom's story

Meet Tom, a 23-year-old man who dreams of going skiing, living independently, and working in Gloucestershire. Tom has a range of physical, sensory, and learning needs and uses a wheelchair to get around.

As Tom approached adulthood, a Preparing for Adulthood Assessment was completed by his Social Worker Gill and since then social care has played an important role in helping Tom make significant progress toward those ambitions. Tom has the capacity to make decisions about where he lives and after finishing school in Gloucestershire, he moved into a supported living home nearby. He now lives with friends and attends College whilst also working at a charity shop. Tom also has a designated Job Mentor to help him achieve his vocational goals and will soon begin working at a coffee shop.

Thanks to a personal budget, Tom visits his family in London every month, enjoying precious time with loved ones. Tom is also an active member of the local Boccia club and has been given the opportunity to qualify as a representative for England in the Paralympics. With additional support he has been able to attend the pre-qualifiers.

Tom's journey is a testament to his determination and the positive impact of a supportive community. His story demonstrates how collaboration, understanding, and unwavering support can help disabled young people achieve their dreams and lead fulfilling lives. He recently shared that he is "really enjoying life very much!"

Supporting carers

We prioritise support for carers in our Supporting People Connecting Communities Plan and we're taking action to help people sustain their caring role whilst fulfilling their own ambitions. During the pandemic we invested in an online support service for carers to complement the Camden Carers offer, and have been working with Mobilise ever since. Mobilise provide free online support to unpaid carers and have helped extend our reach to carers we would otherwise not have been able to support.

A recent external audit of practice in relation to carers highlighted examples of good strengths-based work, was complimentary about Camden Carers, and made recommendations around practice, process and recording that we are focused on. The activity is set out in our new Carers Action Plan, which was co-produced by carers and is overseen by our newly appointed Practice Lead for Carers.

Despite positive steps forward, we know that 584 carers are awaiting a Carer's Conversation or a Carers Review and we're therefore partnering with Camden Carers to address the backlog. We're also ensuring through the action plan that our Neighbourhood and specialist teams are proactively identifying and addressing carers' needs.

The Carers Action Plan will be governed through a new Carers Partnership Board with involvement from carers. The plan will be launched following a Council Debate on 22 July 2024 before a new approach to commissioning for carers goes to Cabinet in October 2024, with new contracts to be awarded from 2025.

Supporting our work

Understanding demand and reducing waiting lists

Service	People waiting	Change since October 2023
Care Assessment	304	34.5% increase
Care & Support Plan Reviews overdue	648	61% reduction
Carer Assessments and Reviews	584	5.7% reduction
Safeguarding Referrals	0	No change
Section 42 Enquiries	12	7 awaiting allocation in October 2023
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS)	0	No change
Occupational Therapy assessment	565	32% increase

Across Adult Social Care, our teams work hard to ensure people are supported in a timely way when they require urgent help. However, we know that too many people are waiting and that this can impact their health, wellbeing, and independence. Through 2024 we significantly reduced the numbers of people waiting for a review of their care and support. However, we have recently seen waiting times for complex Occupational Therapy interventions increasing again.

Our recent move to a new Neighbourhood model of Adult Social Care has streamlined processes and is helping us manage demand more effectively. This has been accompanied by work to simplify and speed up recruitment processes to ensure that we can fill vacant posts. Coupled with this, work is underway across North Central London to tackle demand and capacity for services using machine learning methods with preliminary results expected in August 2024. We strive to keep in touch with residents waiting for our support and will always prioritise people who may be at risk of harm or abuse.

Fixing and streamlining our systems and processes

Adult Social Care is exploring how to better support practitioners to carry out their Care Act duties with more of the right tools to do the basics well. Staff have told us some of our systems and processes are unnecessarily lengthy and bureaucratic, meaning they spend more time at their desks and less time with residents. In response we have launched several initiatives:

- The Magic Notes Pilot is testing out new ways of recording using Artificial Intelligence so that practitioners can spend less time on paperwork and more time with people drawing on care and support. So far staff have said that “it’s a massive time saver for supervision”, and “this has the ability to change the face of social care”.

- Our involvement in the Social Care Futures Fixing the Plumbing and Wiring Programme, focused on streamlining of recording.
- Our review of Mosaic workflows to enable us to further embed What Matters work into recording systems in a way that makes sense to our practitioners and residents.
- Our end-to-end review of finance systems and functions will uncover new and innovative ways to streamline our processes and make it easier for residents and staff.

Supporting people to live healthier lives

Promoting wellbeing with quality information and advice

[Camden Care Choices](#) is our website that supports local people to make informed choices about their care and support, connecting them to services. Information on the website has a range of accessibility features including availability in different languages and easy read versions as well as functionality that supports people who may have sensory needs. A series of resident focus groups helped to tailor the site to what people want to access, and mechanisms are in place to ensure it changes with people's needs and interests. The website is well used, with an average viewership of over 4,600 visits per month. For those less inclined to use the digital offer, the Camden Companion is a printed booklet showing a range of support and services that support people to stay well, active and connected.

Expanding prevention through Adult Early Help

Beyond a core offer for people with care and support needs, Camden is continuing to invest in prevention and early help, with work underway on an initiative called Adult Early Help. Working cross-council, and taking a design-led approach, a discovery exercise was completed eliciting deep insights into the current, sometimes fragmented, approach to prevention in the borough. Evidence has directed Adult Early Help work to focus on adults at risk of being overwhelmed by multiple stresses and disadvantages, exploring how to avoid people falling between the gaps of support. Often this means working with people who do not qualify for statutory support or aren't receiving the right (or any) kind of help. The ambition is to surpass our Care Act duties and use Care Act powers to do what is best for people.

Camden has developed a vision of what effective early help can achieve and we are beginning an 18-month pilot to explore innovative and relational interventions, specifically targeting people who are currently underserved by our system. An evaluation will take place over the life cycle of the pilot, which will determine the recommendations for what happens next.

Theme 2: Providing support

We know our population well and we have developed shared strategies that respond to local need. This work has shaped a high-quality provider market that encourages open dialogue about what is working effectively and what needs to be addressed in partnership. We manage risk in a way that is relational, supportive, and effective.

Camden values everyone employed in our local care sector, and we invest well in our provider workforce, supporting sector growth and workforce wellbeing. We nurture our regional and subregional partnerships to focus on the tasks that are best done at scale. Our longstanding approach to co-production ensures that our services strive to meet need in culturally competent ways.

Our strengths

- Our strong relationships with high quality providers, including our in-house services and the voluntary and community sector, underpinned by monitoring and assurance processes that work well.
- Our effective market shaping and co-production with residents, providers and partners.
- Our robust approach to risk management, including investment in the provider market and care workforce through market sustainability and our Workforce Strategy.
- Our strong offer for young adults with care and support needs, or those at risk of developing care and support needs.

Areas we are focusing on

- Preparing for our changing population's future needs through our Accommodation Plan and approach to reimagining care and support at home.
- Refreshing key resources that support our provider partners, including our Market Position Statement and our approach to quality assurance through our dedicated provider page.
- Better understanding of the needs and concerns of people who draw on our services but report lower levels of quality of life and satisfaction in our surveys than we aspire to.

Data and insights 2023/24

In 2022/23 **90.6%** of people discharged from hospital were able to go home with support

This rose to **91.9%** this year.

211 people drew on nursing care, **13% more** than 2022/23.

393 people lived in residential care, **8% less** than 2022/23.

20,500 hours of homecare were provided each week

4,400 people were supported by Camden Carer Service this year.

80% of our homecare/ reablement providers are rated good or outstanding by CQC, 2 are **outstanding**.

52.7% of people feel they have enough choice over services.

Understanding our local population and sustaining quality local care provision

All the care that we provide is designed to meet the specific needs of our population. We commission services in an evidence-based way, drawing on what residents tell us and what we know about Camden as a whole.

Our [State of the Borough Report](#) identifies that Camden has the seventh highest proportion of people with depression in London and plays host to a high number of risk factors that can contribute to the development of mental health problems, such as housing insecurity and affordability, relative poverty, inequality and loneliness. We have one of the least affordable housing markets in the country, with the second highest rates of rough sleeping in London, monthly rents in the private rented sector being the third highest in the country, and approximately one in ten households being overcrowded.

Camden's [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) outlines our population health approach and is aligned to [Supporting People, Connecting Communities](#). These strategies directly inform how we commission services in the borough, with the approach outlined in our [Market Position Statement](#) and [Market Sustainability Plan](#). They help Adult Social Care to inform wider council approaches, for example our [Draft New Camden Local Plan](#), which is currently being updated with a renewed emphasis on residents drawing on care and support.

Our [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) from 2022](#) has been supplemented since by Neighbourhood Data Packs and specific needs analyses into Autism and Learning Disability. There have also been deep dives into a range of issues including social isolation and loneliness, drugs and alcohol, inclusion health groups, good employment, and long Covid.

Meeting the needs of our diverse population

Thinking strategically about accommodation

It is our ambition to deliver the right support for people in Camden, however our inner London housing market means that finding accessible and future-proofed accommodation in the borough is a challenge. Our Supporting People Connecting Communities Accommodation Plan sets out proposals to ensure that people who draw on care and support can lead fulfilling lives through the provision of sufficient good quality accommodation. To deliver this we commit to increase good quality home care and extra care while recognising that a flexible pool of nursing home provision will always be required for those with the highest needs.

Camden's residential and nursing accommodation market is relatively small, but good quality. In addition to the 140 beds commissioned, we are currently supporting 505 people outside of Camden with the majority, 55%, in North Central London. Given the constraints of our local housing market, it's likely we will always need to use some out of borough provision. As such, our well-established sub-regional market development approach is designed to ensure that when we do place out of borough, we do so nearby and in housing that we know to be good quality and affordable.

We have seen a 13% increase in demand for nursing placements over the last 12 months, alongside an 8% drop in residential placements. Increasing extra care sheltered provision accounts for the fall in low level residential demand, although there is increasing demand for complex residential placements for people with higher levels of need.

We are seeing a growing number of private residential homes opening in Camden. These are unaffordable to people who draw on Adult Social Care and so do not contribute to our need for more in-borough nursing provision. Our reablement flats at Henderson Court help us to limit the number of permanent care home admissions. These flats provide a safe, comfortable and supportive environment where people can adapt to their new circumstances, maximise their recovery and make informed decisions about the full range of accommodation options available.

In line with local need, Camden has a substantial supported accommodation pathway for people who are experiencing mental ill health, with 199 spaces offering a mix of high (24 hour) and low (9am-5pm) support. This pathway will be redesigned over the next 18 months in tandem with the single homelessness and young people's pathways. The intention is to offer more flexible supported accommodation for adults and a more coherent market approach for housing providers overall.

Work is also underway to renew and improve our supported accommodation for people with a learning disability. To date, the programme has delivered three new supported living services, comprised of 15 units, which were used to rehouse people from existing services that were no longer fit for purpose. A further three services, comprised of 17 units, are in the pipeline. This work is essential to enable more people to stay in Camden and reduce our spot purchasing out of borough. Our commissioners continuously review models of support as contracts allow, adapting to changing need and reducing spot purchased care and support.

Promoting independence with Extra Care

In Camden we see Extra Care as providing residents with the opportunity to live independently for as long as possible, connecting flexible care and support to people's accommodation and enabling a vibrant, independent life. Extra Care can provide people with a 'home for life' that recognises their strengths and has wellbeing at its heart. Eligibility is defined by need, not by disability, diagnosis or age, and we celebrate the diverse communities across age ranges in our Extra Care settings. Our commitment to Extra Care is central to our vision for care and our Accommodation Plan. We are working towards an additional 20 units of Extra Care provision (+17% in capacity) in the next five years.

There are five Extra Care services in the borough, three of which are delivered externally alongside Camden's two in-house services at Charlie Ratchford Court and Mora Burnet House. Our aim is to build communities where the level of support can be adjusted as a resident's needs change over time. Current population projections indicate that an increase in demand for Extra Care services of up to 49% can be expected by 2035.

Charlie Ratchford Court was built by Camden and runs as part of our in-house provision. It has been open for two years and supports an intergenerational community, run by a self-managing team that has pioneered values-based recruitment and has been widely celebrated. We have been applying learning from this work to all our in-house services, including the recently insourced Mora Burnet House, where we are working with staff and residents to build a community approach that works for them.

Reimagining care and support at home

In Camden we recognise the pressure the homecare sector is facing and understand through analysis of the annual Adult Social Care Survey that people who draw on homecare are less likely to report positive outcomes around wellbeing and quality of life. This is not a set of circumstances that we're content with, and action is being taken both to improve the current offer and then fundamentally reimagine what good care and support at home can be.

Over recent years, Adult Social Care have built relationships with nine core providers who deliver reablement and neighbourhood-based homecare on our behalf - 80% of which are rated Good or Outstanding by CQC. We also spot purchase from a range of other local providers when needed but are gradually reducing our use of spot provision, and we have seen an increase in hours of care delivered by our core providers over the last year.

We foster strong connections between our core providers and local communities and are seeing an uptake in residents employed in the local care sector. Almost all (97%) of Rather Home Care's staff are residents, with 67% of all care staff across our core providers living in Camden. This means good work underpinned by our commitments to the Ethical Care Charter and London Living Wage, and in turn, better care for people with support needs.

Transforming Care and Support at Home is a five year major innovation project started in 2023, aiming to re-imagine homecare provision in a way that meets local needs and focuses on what matters. It involves commissioners starting a borough-wide conversation, and gathering the thoughts of residents, staff, commissioned services, the VCS and Camden's in-house provider services.

It includes multiple workstreams, from data and evidence to in-house operations, co-production, procurement, and direct payments. Initial activity includes peer-to-peer groups for residents who draw on direct payments, with the aim to increase learning and develop a local market for personal assistants and microenterprises. Another is focusing on support for neurodiverse and Autistic people not previously known to Adult Social Care at the point of discharge from hospital. Time and care is being taken to work with seldom-heard groups in innovative and creative ways, gaining rich insight from over 140 residents, carers, and care staff that will ultimately inform how people experience care at home in the years to come.

Encouraging community connectedness through day provision

We know that Camden is one of the loneliest places in the country, where most older people live alone, and young people are disproportionately affected by loneliness. In the 2023/24 Adults Survey, 34.5% of people reported less than adequate social contact. That is why tackling loneliness and social isolation is a whole system priority for us and one of our priorities in We Make Camden.

Aligned with our Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority, our multi-agency and cross-service Community Connectedness and Friendships Working Group convenes monthly, with the purpose of uniting activity across the borough to reduce loneliness, foster friendships and increase community connectivity, identifying shared opportunities to take on complex local challenges in a coordinated and evidence-based way.

Adult Social Care provides a variety of well used services that promote friendships and connections, particularly for older people, people with a learning disability and people experiencing mental ill health. There are four 'day services' for older people, one operated by the Council and three operated by voluntary and community sector partners. The Greenwood Centre in Kentish Town is the location of both the Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Day Services. Both services provide support directly from the building as well as in the local community. With a focus on physical and mental wellbeing, the Learning Disabilities Day Service provides support beyond that of a traditional day service with a focus on community inclusion.

Camden's Living a Good Life approach was co-designed with local community organisations following feedback from residents with a learning disability after the closure of building-based day services during the pandemic. People missed their friends and didn't want to go back to doing the 'same old stuff'. In response, a new opportunities planning group was established to build a directory of day opportunities and link people into community groups and activities more aligned with their strengths and interests. The directory is live and well-used and reviewed annually to ensure the activities continue to reflect what matters to people.

Gabriel's story

Gabriel, who calls himself the “Bikeman of London,” has always had a love affair with bicycles. Every weekend, he'd cycle to Brick Lane to sell refurbished bikes that he'd painstakingly mended. When the market stalls were closed, Gabriel lost his work and his passion. His mental health deteriorated, and he was detained under the Mental Health Act. Camden Adult Social Care teams worked with Gabriel to put support in place when he returned home, and he connected with his support worker at Centre 404 over his passion for bikes. He was put in touch with the Learning Disability Job Coach, through our Living a Good Life project, and before long, Gabriel was volunteering with a bike repair group as a valued member of the team. Gabriel and his job coach continue to meet weekly, as his dream is to get a job at a large bicycle company. “I've got skills,” he says, “and I like sharing them.”

Commissioning and delivering support with our partners

Investing well together with our NHS partners through the North Central London ICB enhances community wellbeing and sharpens our focus on preventative services. In line with most local authorities the majority of our Better Care Fund is dedicated to core health and social care services such as homecare packages (£9.6 million), district nursing (£5.5 million), equipment and assistive technology (£4.3 million) and care home placements (£2.3 million).

We made changes to our Better Care Fund priorities in 2023/24 to align it with our corporate commitment to prevention, further developing strengths-based integrated health and care services. This included increased investment of £74,000 into our WISH+ (Warmth, Income, Safety and Health) referral hub, to ensure increased access to preventative services through a single initial referral. Onward referrals made by WISH+ include the Handyperson Service, Camden Advice Network, Age UK Camden, and Camden Carers. We invested more into Camden Carers to develop a new health and GP liaison role to consider the needs and role of carers in all parts of the system, including through Virtual Wards, discharge planning and with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) services. A new recuperative model of care was embedded in our care homes, where staff provide specialist support to all newly admitted residents, with a particular focus on residents experiencing behavioural and emotional challenges associated with a mental health diagnosis or dementia.

Robust, creative, and relational market management

Working together with Camden's providers

We are confident in our knowledge of the local market and have good relationships with local providers, partners and stakeholders. Characterised by robust approaches to provider oversight, risk management and quality assurance, we have a proven track record of handling service issues quickly, safely and effectively. Where issues arise in our local and regional markets, we work closely with providers, practitioners, other local authorities, health and the CQC to ensure that concerns are addressed. For example, we have been working over the last year to

address quality issues with our new community equipment provider NRS and have begun to see improvements.

Alongside doing the basics well, our commissioning teams also engage proactively with providers to continuously improve, innovate and adapt to the needs of local people. Regular provider forums support practice development and collaboration, while our annual event brings providers together in-person to build personal relationships and connect with experts by experience. An Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Peer Review in May 2023 identified relationships with care providers and the voluntary sector as a key strength for Camden, with 'robust quality assurance processes within commissioning that are well received by providers as being supportive to make improvements (this was corroborated by the provider group)'.

Commissioners' influence also reaches through our Neighbourhood Networks and via the Camden's Community Partnerships Team who directly support the community sector. Together, we address financial viability, premises challenges, and business planning.

Investing in our provider workforce

Camden has been committed to the [Ethical Care Charter](#) since 2014, and ensures that all contracts specify the payment of London Living Wage for the essential care staff who provide support to our residents. In our domiciliary care arrangements, this includes the commitment to providing options for guaranteed hour contracts, payment of a minimum amount of travel time and occupational sick pay. In addition, providers have commitments to recruit Camden residents, provide apprenticeship opportunities and support the learning, development and career progression of staff. Across our provider markets, we spent £5.88m to fund 2023/24 uplifts to ensure market sustainability, the majority of which contributed to staffing costs.

We know from 2022/23 data published by Skills for Care that there are at least 4,500 full time equivalent posts across Camden's care workforce, and our new Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy aims to address the challenges with recruitment, retention, vacancy and sickness levels that exist across the sector as a whole. Our new Workforce Strategy identifies commissioned providers as one of our five pillars, with a clear vision and set of actions to reach our ambitions by 2028.

We are well connected to the London ADASS workforce strategy and have developed a joint programme of work across North Central London (NCL) Councils to support the care workforce. This covers recruitment and retention, international recruitment and staff pipelines through the [North Central London Health and Social Care Academy](#). So far, the Academy has supported over 220 people into roles within health and social care, with the aim to double this figure by May 2025. This work is well connected into the NCL Integrated Care System's People Board, working collaboratively across health and social care workforce challenges.

Good market management

We have a good understanding of our local market and a clear strategy to influence, support and develop it to meet our local needs.

Our 2023/24 Market Sustainability Plan involves a well-coordinated annual uplifts process clearly communicated to all providers, including spot providers outside of Camden. Direct

Payments are also uplifted to ensure equity for all care provision and enable personalised care. Recognising the ongoing financial risks to providers, we work closely with them to address issues as they arise. We managed a recent withdrawal from the market of one of our floating and community support providers, through collaboration with other local providers who were able to support and ensure continuity of care.

Our understanding of the sub-regional market is supported through close work with other NCL boroughs around market sustainability and inflationary pressures. NCL commissioning colleagues meet regularly to discuss regional issues, particularly where providers are working across different local authorities. We have a shared Market Management Strategy in place, which aims to develop a sustainable, high-quality market for care and support services across the sub-region. This strategy is co-produced by the five Councils and the Integrated Care Board and recognises that the inner London Boroughs (Camden and Islington) are increasingly reliant on the ability to spot purchase accommodation in our neighbouring boroughs Haringey, Barnet and Enfield.

A track record of investment in our vibrant voluntary and community offer

Camden enjoys robust relationships and regular, open dialogue with our care providers and voluntary and community sector (VCS). Local VCS organisations are critical to the care and support offer and are regular, valued members of our governance and oversight structures, including the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board, the Camden Health and Wellbeing Board and our Local Care Partnership Board.

The Council also encourages the VCS to take leading roles in partnership priorities, for example Camden Community Connectedness and Friendships Working Group (tackling loneliness) is co-chaired by Voluntary Action Camden (VAC) and Age UK Camden. Camden Carers and Mobilise are also active participants in our Carers Working Group, and our Social Prescribing Group, chaired by VAC and Holborn Community Association.

In February 2023, Camden agreed to implement a new 7-year grants programme that allocates £4 million annually to Camden's community organisations. These organisations are funded as equal partners, able to use funds flexibly in communities where they have a deep connection and can evidence prioritisation of prevention, empowerment of communities or tackling inequalities and disproportionality as principles of We Make Camden.

Listening to the voice of people who draw on commissioned services

We have a strong track record of involving the people and carers who draw on support in how we design, commission, and deliver services. This work is supported by our new Co-Production Framework and Toolkit, which were introduced in February 2024. The Framework was developed with people who draw on services and their carers, as well as our providers and practitioners. The purpose is to support everyone working in our services to build confidence and skills at co-production and will ensure people who draw on services have even more influence over our work. It builds on Adult Social Care's strong track record and the expertise of the Council's Participation team.

Camden commissions a Learning Disability 'experts by experience' function, currently hosted by The Advocacy Project, to ensure that the voice and experiences of people with learning disabilities informs our work. This includes co-production of our Learning Disability Partnership Board. Experts are actively involved in supported living contract monitoring, to ensure the voice of lived experience is central to how we consider performance and quality.

Camden commissions and is a member of an alliance contract with four voluntary sector providers, which focuses on prevention and early intervention for people with mental health needs. The alliance brings together a range of recovery-based support and there is a strong culture of co-production which has shifted the relationship between providers, commissioners and people with lived experience to be more equal and collaborative. The alliance has lived experience representatives in decision-making spaces.

Spotlight on the Camden Mental Health Alliance: David's story

David has been attending activities in the Community Wellbeing Garden after being referred by his GP and psychologist for one-to-one support. On finishing one-to-one sessions, he became a regular member of 'Reach Out' community activities at the Likewise Hub. David had been going through a tough period with his physical health and life circumstances and gave feedback that he really values having activities that he can attend at his own pace, whether it be to connect with nature, work on a project, or simply being with people. He has a background in landscaping, so working in the garden has allowed him to reconnect with skills he hasn't used in a long time. "Places like this are really good to get you interested and stimulate you at your pace and you also know that there are people here that are not only understanding but that you're also safe."

Theme 3: Ensuring safety

Our statutory duty to safeguard adults who are at risk of harm or abuse is central to all that we do. Through our safeguarding processes we efficiently manage demand and currently have no waiting lists for Safeguarding or Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). Safeguarding work is always prioritised, with risks addressed proactively across our services and partners including through our committed Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board.

Camden ensures people's safety through rigorous monitoring, reporting, and case sampling. We have robust quality assurance arrangements to support safeguarding practice, including audits, practice development, and training. We are committed to learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs). Together, we work cohesively with our Children's Services to ensure seamless transitions to adult services, demonstrating our commitment to young people.

We recognise the need to do more joined-up work to safeguard people facing multiple disadvantage. Our new Multiple Disadvantage team, our involvement in Camden's Homelessness System Transformation programme, and our re-designed mental health social work arrangements are important steps towards this goal.

Our strengths

- Our safeguarding practices, processes and pathways are clearly defined and understood by staff and partner agencies with multi-disciplinary working at its core.
- Our clear corporate commitment to adult safeguarding with strong governance and assurance around how people are safeguarded from harm.
- Our joint leadership with Children's Services to ensure young people transition safely to adult services.
- Our work to support refugees and asylum seekers.
- Innovative practices such as Adult Family Group Conferencing and Team Around Me.

Areas we are focusing on

- Strengthening the connection between the learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and our quality assurance work and building this into our everyday practice.
- Transformation work to safeguard people who may be experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Data and insights 2023/24

1,433 DoLS cases were active in 2022/23 and **1,537** active in this year.

In **2023**, of those who had desired outcomes, **92%** said their outcomes were either fully or partially met.

9 in 10 people lacking mental capacity were supported by a **friend, family or advocate** through their safeguarding enquiry - the same as last year.

There were **1,404** safeguarding concerns raised and **472** enquiries completed. This was **1,445** and **486** in 2022/23.

Of completed and ongoing DoLS assessments, **67%** were granted in 2022/23 and **62%** this year.

72.6% of carers and **64%** of Adults feel safe (preliminary ASCOF 23/24)

Corporate oversight of Safeguarding Adults in Camden

As well as playing a leading role in the Camden Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB), the Council actively ensures that safeguarding is a corporate priority, with Adult Social Care required to produce quarterly Safeguarding Assurance reports to Camden's Corporate Management Team (CMT) which is our top leadership team chaired by the Chief Executive. These are also presented to the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care for political oversight and inform quarterly meetings between the DASS, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. A combination of performance data, practice insights and real-life stories demonstrate how well we are conducting safeguarding activity across services, and to identify any trends which may be impacting communities.

Camden Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB)

Camden's well-established SAPB is a central element of our local safeguarding processes. Under the leadership of an independent chair, the Board meets quarterly and coordinates activity between agencies, facilitating joint training, awareness raising, monitoring, and reviewing progress in safeguarding practice, developing ways of working which will improve our ability to support Camden residents across the community to live a life free from abuse, and learning from lessons where people have not been adequately protected. Attendance is consistent and reflective of the long-running commitment to adult safeguarding across partners in the borough.

The Board has four subgroups accountable for commitments and workplans described in the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Strategy, with progress reported into the Board, which in turn oversees the performance of partners' safeguarding systems. The subgroups focus on SARs, Learning and Development, Engagement, and Quality and Performance.

The [SAPB Strategy](#) is reviewed each year and flexibly adapts to emergent priorities. The latest strategy for 2023 to 2028 sets out new strategic priorities informed by engagement with residents and stakeholders. It was published and made available in several languages and an accompanying video developed to raise awareness amongst Camden's diverse communities.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)

The SAPB published a SAR in April 2023 in relation to '[Matthew](#)' who was a victim of cuckooing whilst living in a flat in Camden and died unexpectedly in 2020. The review identified multi-agency lessons to be learnt and made recommendations to improve practice and working together. Since then, the Camden SAPB Multi Agency Cuckooing guidance and toolkit have been updated to better support agencies to identify risk of coercion and potential cuckooing, and know how to report it. The Board oversees dissemination, training, and evaluation. Camden's multi-agency self-neglect toolkit for practitioners was recently refreshed by the Board who hosted a series of accompanying learning events.

We work to ensure that the key learning from SARs and any associated actions or recommendations are picked up as a priority by Adult Social Care and embedded firmly into our Quality Assurance Framework, with regular reporting to the Quality Board. Our Learning and Development plan is regularly refreshed to reflect training needs identified in SARs, with managers ensuring staff access to learning events and revised guidance.

LeDeR (National Learning Disability Mortality Review Programme) reviews

Camden's LeDeR Steering Group is responsible for the outcomes of any LeDeR reviews of people with a learning disability who died in Camden. Camden Learning Disability Service (CLDS) are represented on the LeDeR Group with actions or learning identified recorded in CLDS' learning log which is monitored by the Learning Disability Quality Forum. CLDS always take part in reviews of people for whom Camden is responsible, but who die outside of borough, ensuring all opportunities for learning are captured and actioned.

Practice audits and quality assurance

Every year the SAPB commissions a theme-based audit across partner organisations, and feedback and learnings from these are fed into the Board's business plan for the year. Adult Social Care conduct weekly reviews of safeguarding concerns, enquiries and case closures which provide assurance to managers that safeguarding enquiries have been sufficiently conducted and concluded. Outcomes are shared with managers and feedback involving providers is shared with commissioners who ensure that learning is disseminated to providers through forums and training opportunities.

Three pen audits of safeguarding enquiries per month are carried out across operational Adult Social Care teams, with examples of good practice and areas for improvement then shared

with staff and specific feedback given to managers and practitioners. Themes from the practice audits are fed into learning and development plans, toolkits and guidance. In the last twelve months our audits have confirmed that we have been doing well at ensuring a person-centred approach, embedding Making Safeguarding Personal principles in our work; Multi-Agency Working and collective exploration and management of risks through Multi Disciplinary Team meetings; good practice around use of the Mental Capacity Act; and triangulating information during our screening and during our investigations.

Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal is central to our What Matters work and principles. We strive to ensure our safeguarding is done in a person-centred way that focuses on achieving outcomes that the person wants through any enquiry and investigation.

We are confident people are being asked about their desired outcomes for safeguarding proceedings and that the majority of people reported that their outcomes are either fully or partially achieved – with 9 out of 10 people agreeing over the last 2 years. Evidence shows that very few people reported that they were unsatisfied with the outcomes of their safeguarding.

Supporting practitioners and partners to carry out their safeguarding duties with expertise and confidence

We recognise that safeguarding work can be complex and challenging; providing practitioners and managers with the right tools to do the job well is essential. As well as being on hand to provide individual advice, our safeguarding leads provide a range of material, toolkits and learning and development sessions to support practitioners and partners including NHS colleagues, commissioned providers, housing and hostel providers and contingency hotel staff.

Training and guidance covers cuckooing, modern slavery, self-neglect and hoarding as well as general safeguarding awareness and responsibilities under the Care Act. The MASH continues to serve as a point of reference and support in the Council and across the partnership on modern-day slavery. This is incorporated into the Council's mandatory e-learning module 'An Introduction to Safeguarding' for all council staff to complete, which is complemented by a 60-minute e-learning module 'Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking'.

Spotlight on safeguarding training

'I just want to say a big thank you to you both for delivering a fantastic session on self-neglect and hoarding to our GP's yesterday. It was very well received, detailed, appreciated and just fantastic!' - North Central London Integrated Care Board

'Hearing from a practicing social worker on what's expected from us and having the chance to ask questions makes a difficult subject easier to understand and confirms good practice. I found it helpful that we can contact Adult Social Care and ask for advice'

'I thought this training was very good. Very clearly presented with good examples. Its clarity meant that issues were easily understandable and didn't get lost in the morass of procedure, something that often happens with safeguarding. The presentation was pitched at an ideal level, for me at least. It helped reaffirm previous learning and highlighted areas that I had forgotten' - Age UK Camden

Innovative approaches to safeguarding in Camden

Transitional safeguarding

Adult Social Care works hand in hand with Children's Services to strengthen pathways for young people at risk of harm when transitioning between services. Together, we have a range of services that work with young people aged 18 to 25.

Camden has taken a systemic and focused approach to transitional safeguarding, building on a strong reputation for work with adolescents evidenced through our HMIP and Ofsted outstanding inspections. Following the national evidence and research, we have centred our initial attention for transitional safeguarding on three groups particularly at risk of difficulties during key life course stages – children with disabilities and special educational needs including Social Emotional and Mental Health, children who come out of the care system, and children who have passed through the youth justice system or have experienced extrafamilial harm. Examples of our work include:

- Making care experience a protected characteristic to ensure additional protections and supports can be put in place for children leaving care including local policies around housing and access to financial support to promote independence.
- Our Mind the Gap project, providing robust and community-based support for young people moving from children's to adults mental health support.
- Our Evolve project (see Kevin's story below).

Our ambitions for our young people are high and we are now working on further plans to ensure transitional safety and security for any young person who may need it. We see our emerging Adult Early Help model as a key vehicle for change; in partnership with well-established family early help teams to secure safe passage for young people through to 25 years where needed.

Kevin's story

Meet Kevin, a young man who was entrenched in criminal activities by age 13, spending nearly six years in custody and under the care of Children's Social Care and the Youth Justice Service. Despite this, fate had a different plan.

Whilst in custody, Kevin was referred to the Evolve service. Evolve supports 18-25-year-olds at risk from youth violence and exploitation. Kevin formed a strong relationship with his case manager Jayde and told her about his dream to be an entrepreneur. After his release Kevin and Jayde began working together and she supported his journey by helping him attend business conferences, receive public speaking lessons, and engaging in interview preparation. He enrolled in a project management course, conducted market research, and pitched his business idea, eventually creating a Community Interest Company (CIC) named Khady's Dream. His business received grants from Camden Giving and the Princess Trust, and he delivered his first workshop in October 2022.

Despite challenges with his mental health and anxiety around transitioning between prison and independent living, Kevin's journey with Evolve and the creation of Khady's Dream is a testament to the potential for transformation. The comprehensive support he received, from housing and health to education and business development, played a crucial role in his remarkable turnaround. His story is one of resilience, determination, and the profound impact of dedicated support.

(Adult) Family Group Conferencing

Adult Social Care introduced Family Group Conferences (FGCs) as an adult/person-led decision-making meeting. They empower and support the person, along with their family and wider support network, to make decisions about their future and help them to develop a plan that addresses their concerns and focuses on their desire for change.

Central to the process is the empowerment of any person who may otherwise have difficulty expressing their views. A crucial element of FGC is ensuring that the person's voice is heard and that they are encouraged and enabled to participate fully in the process. Participation may be assisted using an independent advocate, or by the support of a friend or family member who will be supported by the coordinator to help them undertake this task.

FGCs work successfully alongside safeguarding processes in that they can support participation of people with a less formal approach when safeguarding concerns are raised and can provide advocacy for the person to support them with the process. We have seen the uptake of this approach increase yearly, with 55 referrals for FGCs in the past 12 months.

Working in partnership to safeguard the needs of refugees and asylum seekers

The safety and wellbeing of new communities coming to Camden is a corporate priority. We have a significant number of refugee and asylum-seeking residents living in contingency hotels and are focused on ensuring we work effectively in partnership with Childrens Services, NHS colleagues, Community Safety and the Home Office, meeting fortnightly to maintain oversight and assurance about the safeguarding of individuals and their families. We provide fortnightly drop-in sessions at the hotels to provide cross-council support.

During these sessions people have raised a multitude of issues and challenges, including depression and post-traumatic stress, isolation and loneliness, lack of resources for personal care and meal preparation, financial difficulties, access to employment, asylum application status, and access to legal services. As well as providing information and advice about the universal services available, our visiting social workers ensure that people are connected to the appropriate NHS, Council, and voluntary sector services. They also ensure any urgent concerns about safety, wellbeing and mental or physical health are escalated as necessary.

We work in close collaboration with an organisation called RAMFEL (Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex & London) which is a nonprofit organisation supporting migrants with advice, support, and advocacy. Camden provides RAMFEL with a grant to deliver this support. We signpost those who have had negative Home Office decisions to Migrant Help for support to appeal the decisions or with repatriation decisions. We recently supported a young woman who was trafficked to the UK by referring her to the Home Office using the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). We ensured that she was receiving adequate support at the hotel and that she was being well supported by specialist mental health services.

Adult Social Care work very closely with our Homelessness Prevention Team to help people with positive asylum decisions to complete applications and prevent homelessness. There has been a steady increase in positive decisions made by the Home Office which has resulted in an increase of homelessness in Camden due to the lack of suitable housing options. The Council is working relentlessly to seek out individuals who may be vulnerable as a result and ensure they are connected to the right services to support them.

Safeguarding for people experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage

When people don't get the right support at the right time, it can lead to increased safeguarding risks and gaps in support can result in poor outcomes for people. Learning from the Homelessness System Transformation Programme and safeguarding investigations has informed improvements in our safeguarding processes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Adult Social Care has increased joint working with rough sleeping services and collaborated with Housing to develop a safeguarding assurance oversight process that involves Adult Social Care staff in routine visits to Camden's homelessness hostel accommodation. The new Multiple Disadvantage team in the Adult Social Care Neighbourhood Service will also have close ties

with services like Routes off the Streets, and mental health and drug and alcohol services such as Focus and Change Grow Live.

Our ambition is to work with NHS and other partners to truly transform our system into an integrated health and care model that supports people who experience homelessness in a much more joined-up way. This priority, as agreed by the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and the NCL Integrated Care Board, is in its last stages of planning with a view to recommissioning a transformed model in early 2025.

Theme 4: Leadership

In Camden we pride ourselves on strong, courageous, and authentic leadership. We lead from the front, empowering staff to deliver strong and effective core services whilst pushing the boundaries of innovation and change - challenging the status quo.

To achieve this, politicians and executive leaders work side by side with staff and residents to bring about change in line with We Make Camden. Our Mission-led approach sets a clear direction with associated action catalysed by investment in organisational capabilities like data, participation, and design. This shared infrastructure is enabling cross-council innovation and supporting Adult Social Care to move forward with pace and confidence to test new approaches that better meet the complexity of need in our borough. It's also helping the vision of Supporting People Connecting Communities to reach across services in a new way; ensuring that living and ageing well is a priority for housing, employment, community and environmental services, just as much as for Adult Social Care.

Adult Social Care has played an important leadership role across the organisation pioneering new strengths-based and relational approaches. This has made an important contribution to our journey to become a truly relational council, putting citizens at the heart of our work, and building a local system that allows us to be more than the sum of our parts. Our philosophy as a Council has been shaped by social work practice and is evolving into a courageous leadership model that is purpose-led and rooted in relational practice.

Our strengths

- Our strong and cohesive leadership ensuring robust management of risk and finance, and delivery of effective core services.
- Our influential strategic leadership of Camden's Health and Wellbeing Board, within the Camden Borough Partnership and our integrated care system, providing the driving force behind Camden's ambition to introduce Integrated Neighbourhood Teams
- Our clear and effective governance structures maintaining service standards, quality assurance and improvement of our Adult Social Care services through a robust transformation programme.

Areas we are focusing on

- Implementation of our new Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy to harness the potential of our workforce through wrap-around support.

Camden's leadership approach

Courageous leadership has seen Camden make big investment decisions, transform services, and improve outcomes for residents by stepping away from traditional hierarchy and control. Empowering our staff closest to the work to influence and lead change, and to experiment with new ideas to see what works, has helped us become stronger as a learning organisation better connected to our citizens.

Our political leaders are knowledgeable of, experienced in, and ambitious for Adult Social Care. They believe that there should rightly be a political dimension and local democracy at the table in providing wider system leadership of the health and care system. Our Health and Wellbeing Board has been chaired by the Leader of the Council for many years and recently passed over to our Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care. The Leader previously held the Cabinet portfolio for Health and Care and has continued to play an active role in our Integrated Care System, including as an active sponsor of our borough partnership work on Neighbourhoods. Our Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care brings professional expertise in co-production and health and care policy as well as strong political relationships in the health and care sector within and beyond Camden. The Chair of our Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee provides stable leadership and constructive challenge rooted in the community experience of care.

Camden values the relationship between Cabinet and our Corporate Management Team (CMT), investing time in joint leadership development and building trust that allows for honest discussions about service pressures and risks. This paves the way for strategic planning and effective mitigation, and both are deeply committed to power sharing with residents and staff.

A review of the Adult Social Care leadership structure 18 months ago led to the creation of two new Directors and additional Head of Service capacity. This has enhanced our capacity for insight, innovation and quality assurance, and has brought renewed vigour with a new senior leadership team that has built energy and commitment to make our services even better.

Authentic leadership exists at all levels of the organisation, and we promote the concept of leadership for all. Together we understand our shared responsibility to meet people's needs and keep people safe, particularly those facing the greatest disadvantage. Camden's Adult Social Care leadership team ensure the effective discharge of responsibilities under the Care Act.

Leaders of place

We are passionate about our role as leaders of place, ensuring our citizens can influence the future and working alongside a wealth of partners to make Camden a better, fairer and more equal place. Our senior leaders and politicians are a constant and visible presence within and beyond our organisation, helping to shape the Council's future with health partners with a shared focus on tackling the health and care inequalities that exist in the borough.

Camden's Health and Wellbeing Board and Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee are active, well-attended and influential in leading and scrutinising system change across Camden's health and care partnership landscape. Focusing on specific topics, they ensure the system is meeting its statutory duties and held to account for service performance and improvement. The Health and Wellbeing Board provides the strategic leadership and democratic accountability delivering our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-30 and the Better Care Fund.

The Camden Borough Partnership has a core purpose to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities through the integration of health and care services. It is a longstanding coalition of organisations who work together through the Camden Integrated Care Executive (CICE) and the Local Care Partnership Board (LCPB). CICE is chaired by the Executive Director of Adults and Health, creating a direct link between the executive functions of the Council and borough partnership, and facilitating alignment on complex challenges and setting the direction for integration.

Adult Social Care presence and influence across the organisation

As a member of CMT, the Executive Director for Adults and Health ensures Adult Social Care influences Council priorities and policy development through the delivery of We Make Camden – most recently influencing new thinking around health equity as we promote a corporate understanding of population health.

Our Executive Director also holds the statutory responsibility of the DASS and reports directly into the Chief Executive. There is regular engagement between Adult Social Care and all Cabinet Members and scrutiny panels, reflecting our integrated ways of working and recognising that people who draw on care and support can have multiple relationships across other services.

Our commitment to cross-council and systemic leadership is modelled through our Supporting People Extended Leadership Team who come together every six weeks to collaborate on joint priorities. Heads of Service across two Directorates, Adults and Health and Children and Learning, have created a dynamic space to collaborate and think together about a range of priorities that cut across the life course.

Our track record on joint working is strong, including our operational response and the rapid wraparound support provided for refugees and asylum seekers in contingency hotels. We use our leadership sessions to share information and best practice and create space for workshop events to develop joint approaches to equalities and inclusion, improving support to our care experienced young people as they move into adulthood, develop our approaches to Transitional Safeguarding and strengthen our understanding of population health.

Harnessing the potential of our workforce

We know we need to support our staff to do their jobs well – their work requires sensitivity and resilience. We need to create the best working conditions for them and give them the tools to do their jobs well. Our goal is to empower more creative practice, encouraging staff to use their best judgement to focus on what matters.

One of the things we are most proud of at Camden is our strong sense of values and passion for social justice. We have a long history in the borough of championing equity and inclusion and as an employer we continue to be sector leading in our work to be a fair and inclusive employer. We have been awarded GOLD in the Mayor's Good Work standard and this year we invested a further £1 million in the bottom of our pay scales to ensure a minimum earnings guarantee that is set above London Living Wage and that helped our lowest paid staff in the cost-of-living crisis.

Being open and transparent with our data has underpinned our work on inclusion. We publish our pay gaps by gender, ethnicity, and disability, which is beyond the statutory requirement; and this year became the first authority to publish our pension pay gap. We are the first Council to be accredited by Bloody Good Employers as a workplace that is inclusive to people who menstruate. To support staff who are impacted by the conflict in the Middle East we set up dedicated wellbeing pages on our staff intranet and extended the trauma support in place. We offer all staff a comprehensive employee support offer which includes mental health support, coaching and counselling, financial support and access to a wellbeing passport. Staff can also access a corporate mentoring scheme and our Leadership Development Programme for managers which builds on the programme developed by CMT.

Within Adult Social Care we are committed to increasing staff morale and know that communication is key. The Directorate has been trialling a new CMT communication cascade of key corporate messages so that our staff can feedback to CMT what works best for them. We have an internal communication plan which includes weekly email updates to the whole Directorate, monthly content, Open House sessions, listening exercises and whole-service events to ensure we are open and inclusive. We work in an open office environment with our leaders sitting alongside their teams, making them visible and approachable.

Camden attracts loyalty – many staff come here, stay, and build their careers here. The turnover rate in Adult Social Care for 2023/24 was only 4.6%. Our service managers are a critical part of our leadership model – connecting the ambitions of senior leaders to the frontline by ensuring support needs are met with the appropriate care whilst also engaging in service change and improvement.

At the heart of our relational practice is our commitment to regular supervision and team meetings, creating space for reflection, support and sharing best practice. We have made recent improvements to the consistency of practice and ways of working. Building on this we are nurturing a strong, consistent, and confident team of managers.

Tackling systemic causes of discrimination

Alongside the responsive work, we are tackling the systemic causes of discrimination. This includes the launch of a Reporting Discrimination Hub, designed with staff groups and underpinned by the principles of restorative justice and healing. Our pulse survey results tell us that colleagues are feeling the difference of all this work. 81% of staff feel they belong (up 26%) and 89% feel we are making progress to become an anti-racist organisation.

We are ambitious, determined and have built strong foundations to tackle glass ceilings and improve internal progression; this includes having no all-white candidate shortlists in our recruitment to level 5 and above. Our top 30 leaders now represent our community, but we have more to do at lower tiers to improve this further. All of this sets the tone for who we are as an organisation and what we value. We want our staff to feel seen and safe and able to do their best work.

From a leadership perspective we are doing a huge amount to embed equalities in all we do in Adult Social Care. This includes our Race Equality Action Plan; a Zero Tolerance memorandum of understanding that we co-produced with our providers; regular deep dives on equalities data; active engagement with national toolkits that promote best practice on equalities, such as the Skills for Care LGBTQ+ Learning Framework and Open House events focusing on equalities issues.

Whilst delivering our Race Equality Action Plan we are also expanding it out to other protected characteristics and ensuring that intersectionality is properly considered. We are developing this with our staff this summer and progressing our data work to better understand population demographics for residents who draw on care and support in Camden.

We are committed to becoming an antiracist organisation, and we pride ourselves on not only protecting people's human rights, but also celebrating difference. The Council's [Inclusion Calendar](#) reflects the diverse communities we serve in Camden, and is actively led by members of our Adult Social Care Senior Management Team, who have champion roles for particular focus areas that include neurodiversity, LGBTQ+ and ageism.

Spotlight on equalities in Camden

Camden has recently launched its Reporting Discrimination Hub for staff. It is made up of a diverse group of colleagues with a variety of lived experiences, skills and expertise, including three colleagues from our Adults and Health department. The hub members provide a safe and supportive space for staff to report any discrimination they may see, hear or experience at work. Staff will be able to talk about what has happened on a one-to-one basis with someone they can trust to be objective, and who would not be involved in any next steps they decide to take. The development of the Hub has been a collective process from the start, engaging with staff to create a safe space that is human centred, relational and inclusive.

Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

Adult Social Care launched its new Workforce Strategy and a refreshed Learning and Development programme in 2024. The strategy sets out our plan to make Camden the best place to work in social care and describes how we will build and sustain a workforce that meets the needs of those who draw on care and values staff, now and in the future. The strategy includes creative models of pay, conditions, learning and progression routes to deliver the required care while supporting the well-being of the workforce. Our vision for the workforce is bold and focuses not only on the staff that Camden employs directly, but also the vital care staff who work for our providers and in voluntary and community organisations.

Spotlight on Camden Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

Through our pulse survey, staff told us that they felt white staff were more likely to receive performance bonuses (known as reward payments in Camden) compared to colleagues from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds. A deep-dive analysis of the Adult Social Care reward payment data was carried out, which confirmed that white staff were in fact receiving more 1% or 2% bonuses than their non-white colleagues. To address this issue of disproportionality, a communication and engagement process took place with all team and service managers in Adult Social Care, talking them through the eligibility for reward payments and highlighting the inequity with who was receiving the awards. The agreement for awards was also changed from a signing-off process to a post-reward quality assurance process, which made this easier and quicker for staff and managers. Following the extensive engagement work with teams and the simplification for granting the awards to staff, data was reviewed over the last 12 months and there is no longer a significant variation in who receives these reward payments based on ethnicity. Adult Social Care has committed to reviewing this data twice per year to ensure we stay on track.

Governance and accountability

Governance is strong in Camden, and our mechanisms for managing risks are well-embedded, understood, and shared. Camden as an organisation and Adult Social Care specifically encourages learning, transparency, and continuous improvement.

A focus on quality assurance and performance

In 2023 we renewed our Quality Assurance Framework to guide more consistent and robust quality assurance activities across services. The framework sets clear standards and is overseen by a Quality Board which actively monitors practice and impact. We have a Quality Action Plan in place, with a dedicated Quality Assurance Lead helping to drive the improvement priorities and facilitating the development of an Auditing Framework.

Over the last two years the Council has made significant investment into data capacity, with Adult Social Care now having a dedicated team of analysts. Our Quarterly Performance, Activity and Finance Board is providing strategic direction on financial and service performance and activity across Adult Social Care.

Managing risk and business continuity

In Camden we understand risks, mitigate for them, and take clear and immediate action to address issues. We utilise data to understand risks through our statutory returns, service pressures data, NCL and NHS measures. The monitoring and managing of risks are clearly identified across the organisation, with escalation points as well as accountability at all levels.

Our corporate governance of risk is sound, accessible and holds the organisation to account through our Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and corporate reporting to CMT. A Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board risk register is in place in addition to the individual risk management approaches for all partner agencies.

We are embedding quality and risk analysis into all areas of our work systematically. There are straight forward routes for Adult Social Care teams into our Senior Management Team to ensure that risk management is consistent, with clear lines of accountability. Adult Social Care holds 11 Business Continuity Plans, which reflect the work of each aspect of the Division and are regularly reviewed and revised as required.

Innovation that drives improvement

In addition to meeting our statutory duties under the Care Act, we actively seek opportunities to innovate through creativity and imagination. Our Supporting People Connecting Communities (SPCC) Transformation Programme allows us to protect investment in new types of care which we know make a real difference to people's lives.

Embedding co-production and responding to the voices of local people

The Council's strong commitment to participation provides the backdrop to our co-production work in Adult Social Care. We take every opportunity to include people who draw on care and support and communities, listening to people's experiences, and to then reflect and act. Our investment in a Co-production Lead and having an expert by experience on our leadership team have made a real difference. In our ADASS Peer Review co-production across Adult Social Care was highlighted as good practice.

We have been sector-leading in participation for some time. Our Health and Care Citizens' Assembly in 2020 set the building block for all work with residents. Citizens set out their expectations of the emerging borough partnership and this has driven our work ever since.

We seek to co-produce wherever possible, and this is demonstrated through a wide range of activities and governance arrangements that cut across all aspects of our statutory and transformational work, including our Carers Action Plan; Autism Partnership Board; Mental Health Partnership Board; Learning Disability Partnership Board; Homelessness Transformation Programme and our Co-Production Manifesto.

Spotlight on mental health day service redesign

Camden Council and the North London Mental Health Partnership worked together to design a new integrated mental health day support service following extensive engagement with more than 116 residents. This included four workshops and one focus group specifically for Autistic adults with mental health needs. Residents shared their views on the current offer and contributed their ideas on what they envisaged for the future. Following these larger events, a smaller number of residents were involved in the co-design of the new services. The co-design involved two workshops, of which one was dedicated specifically to residents currently drawing on the services. These workshops included a review of all the engagement, feedback and ideas received, and plans were designed together alongside residents for a new mental health day support service launching in July 2024.

A disciplined approach to Adult Social Care transformation

Our SPCC Transformation Programme Board oversees service improvement and transformation work. As a cross-council board it ensures a two-way connection with corporate ambitions. Many SPCC projects described in this self-assessment collectively demonstrate the strong leadership and governance that exist across the programme.

The transformation programme is the delivery vehicle for our SPCC plan. The Board has successfully enabled Adult Social Care to shift its investment towards prevention and early help, realising our ambition to transform and innovate in an uncertain financial landscape. By designing, planning, and governing the work as a programme it enables us to keep sight of how the work cumulatively affects change and positively impacts on the objectives and outcomes we are trying to achieve.

The programme captures our strategic planning framework, service redesign and recommissioning initiatives, and system change projects including our digital self-assessments and self-referrals project, and our homecare portal.

Leading the way on equalities in Camden Adult Social Care

Camden's ambition to be a borough where no one is left behind and everyone has a voice has driven our efforts to tackle inequality for over a decade – focusing on reducing poverty and addressing the health inequalities that have such a profound impact on life expectancy of our poorest communities.

It has also influenced a thoughtful approach to equality impact assessments in Adult Social Care on our policy development work and the redesign of services. More broadly you will see equalities embedded in our strategies, change programmes, What Matters practice model and the development of Language Matters, and Identity Matters.

Influencing and leading across the wider care sector

Camden is an active collaborator across London and beyond. We want to share our work, learn from others and collectively influence practice and strategy at a national level. Our Executive Director is the Vice-President of ADASS and will become President in 2025/26. Our Director for Adult Social Care Strategy and Commissioning sits on the National ADASS Research and Branding Committee and is working with colleagues across the UK on research proposals that focus on seldom-heard voices in the social care sector. They have also presented research on how to support LGBTQ+ people as they age at several national conferences.

Our Head of Camden's Learning and Disability Service (CLDS) is actively involved in both the London and North Central London Learning Disability and Autism networks, as well as a member of the British Association of Social Work's (BASW) England Committee to develop the Homes not Hospitals and 80:20 campaigns. Camden also supported BASW to create the Professional Capabilities Frameworks for Social Work with adults with learning disabilities. Camden is an active member of Research in Practice, is participating in Social Care Futures' Community of Support 2024/25 and 'Fixing the Plumbing and Wiring' project. Camden will also be piloting new national training in the autumn that focuses on supporting people as they age who experience suicidal thoughts.

Spotlight on research

Camden works with the New Economics Foundation on a research project exploring conditionality in the welfare system. The organisation has also enjoyed a partnership with The Kings Fund and recently been working with the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose on a research project exploring mission-led procurement. The latter focuses on our innovative programme to reimagine Care and Support at Home and is contributing to the national debate about public sector reform.

We were consulted by the Institute for Government during their research for their report on 'A preventative approach for public services' and we took part in roundtables and workshops that informed the report's findings and conclusions. The report's authors are due to visit Camden in September for site visits of local preventative services.

Camden also partners with the UCL Institute for Global Prosperity (IGP) on a research project exploring how we might translate IGP's academic theory around Universal Basic Services into a deliverable vision for the future of the welfare state. The Council recently facilitated sessions to socialise and stress-test our thinking with representatives from academia, think tank organisations, and philanthropic institutions including Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Demos, Trust for London, Nuffield Foundation, IPPR, New Economics Foundation, Demos Helsinki, Autonomy, and the British Academy.

We are ambitious for Adult Social Care in Camden and proud of the work we do every day to ensure that people living in Camden are supported to thrive. We are looking forward to demonstrating this to CQC when you visit later in the year.



The photos on this cover are of Alfred and Sara, who both began drawing on Adult Social Care during the pandemic and have since passed away. Our artist in residence had the privilege of working alongside one of our social workers and recording a short chapter in their rich Camden life. Alfred and Sara gave permission for these photos to be used publicly, and their family are currently working on plans to turn one of the photos into a mural on the estate in which they lived.

