

# Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly

Overview of the session  
1 September 2020

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# Reminder of Assembly process

**Event 1**  
Feb 2020  
(face-to-face)

Introduction to the Assembly and identified priority areas to discuss and focus on as an Assembly.

**Event 2**  
June 2020  
(online)

Regrouped after the pause due to coronavirus and shared experiences of the pandemic. Also reminded ourselves of the priority areas.

**Event 3**  
July 2020  
(online)

Had a more in-depth discussion about your **priority area 1 'reduce health inequalities'** and what you would like to change.

**Event 4**  
Sept 2020  
(online)

Had a more in-depth discussion about your other **priority area 2 'staying healthy safe and well'** and what you would like to change.

**Event 5**  
Saturday 26th Sept 2020  
(online)

Determining the expectations that you have of the Council and partners in addressing the priority areas you identified. We will draw together all the comments and insights shared from the previous sessions and from your citizen scientist work.

We are **here** in the process

# Section 1: Why are we here?

On 1 September 2020, we brought together the Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly for the **fourth assembly session**.

During the session, we covered:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. What we learnt and decided last time
3. Learning more about prevention, mental health and wellbeing
4. Discussing your expectations to support staying healthy, safe and well in Camden
5. Next steps

This pack provides an overview of our discussions

## Objectives for the session

- Remind ourselves what happened in the last meeting
- Understand how to stay healthy, safe and well in Camden - particularly our mental health and wellbeing
- Identify and discuss your expectations to support staying healthy, safe and well in Camden

# Section 2: What we learnt from the last meeting

We began the discussion by reminding ourselves what we learnt and discussed at the last assembly meeting

## What we covered...

- We regrouped as an assembly
- We were reminded of our objectives
- **Through our speakers and group discussions, you gained a better understanding of what 'health inequalities' are.**
- We explored what you expect to change about health inequalities in Camden

## Health Inequalities

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people.

They are differences between different groups in:

- Health status, e.g. life expectancy and prevalence of health conditions
- Access to care, e.g. availability of treatments
- Quality and experience of care, e.g. levels of patient satisfaction
- Behavioural risks to health, e.g. smoking rates
- Wider determinants of health, e.g. quality of housing

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## What we covered...

- We regrouped as an assembly
- We were reminded of our objectives
- Through our speakers and group discussions, you gained a better understanding of what 'health inequalities' are
- **We explored what you expect to change about health inequalities in Camden**

## Expectations included:

- Improving access to GP services
- Better communication about how services work
- Involving people in the design of services
- An easier way to navigate the system
- Supporting community to use technology and digital solutions
- Having alternatives to online services
- Services working together better to identify and understand community
- Support for local charity/voluntary organisations and groups

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

We then moved our focus towards the topic for this session, which was priority 2...

## Priority 1

Reduce health inequalities in the borough. Ensure that local services can tackle the impact of the pandemic on the most affected groups.

## Priority 2

Ensure my family, friends, neighbours and I can stay healthy, safe, and well in Camden, particularly our mental health and emotional wellbeing.

## Priority 3

Ensure local services work together to meet the needs of residents, and communicate effectively with residents.



## In this session, we focused on Priority 2:

We aimed to gain a better understanding of what staying healthy, safe and well means, and explored what participants want to change in Camden.

The ideas shared in the session will help us to, in our final session, set some expectations for Camden Council and the community to consider when addressing helping people to stay healthy, safe and well, particularly around mental health and emotional wellbeing, in the borough.

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

Before discussing our expectations and what we'd like to see changing in Camden, we explored what we meant by **prevention**.

## ? What is Prevention?

In this context, 'prevention' in health and care refers to what we can all do together to keep you, your family, friends and neighbours healthy, safe and well in Camden. For example:

- Provide adequate and accessible mental health services
- Provide person-centered and community-focused care, which addresses people's full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and environmental needs.
- Engage in preventative measures beyond 'traditional' healthcare:
  - Education
  - Exercise
  - Gardening
  - Creative activities (E.g. art classes)
  - Nutritional education (E.g. community cooking classes)

### Examples you had already told us about:

Poor health education for general public i.e. to help them know what is serious and what is less serious.

Shortage of services to support healthy lives and minds in school age.

Limited funding for voluntary sector e.g. support groups.

As an older gay man of African/Caribbean heritage, when I encountered mental health issues, I found it difficult to access culturally specific therapy through the NHS.

Poor planning in road layouts and road works - compromising air quality so worsening asthma.





# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

We then covered emerging themes from the citizen scientist work, showing you are interested in ways to stay healthy, safe and well - particularly around mental health and wellbeing.

Below are some of the ways you are trying to stay healthy, safe and well

- Working in community gardens
- Growing your own fruits and vegetables
- Free online yoga classes
- Using online platforms (such as Zoom) to talk to friends and relatives
- Regular walks / exercise of some form
- Shopping for vulnerable neighbours
- Cooking

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

We then heard four short talks from local organisations working to support residents to stay healthy, safe and well (what we call prevention) - particularly with regard to their mental and emotional wellbeing - in Camden.

## We asked each speaker to answer the following questions:

1. How do people access local services and how do they achieve success?
2. What is the single biggest change since Covid-19? How did it impact residents?
3. In an ideal world, what would change to help people stay safe and well, particularly around their mental health?

## **Jonathon Horn**

**Strategic Commissioner, Camden**

## **Dr Jonathan Levy**

**GP Clinical Lead, Camden  
Mental Health Partnership**

## **Jennie Mackeith**

**Children's Commissioning Manager,  
Camden**

## **Leon Honeysett**

**Mental Health and Learning  
Disability Manager, The  
Greenwood Centre**

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

We then heard four short talks local organisations working to support residents to stay healthy, safe and well (what we call prevention) - particularly with regard to their mental and emotional wellbeing - in Camden.

## 1. Jonathan Horn, Strategic commissioner Camden Council

- As a a commissioner, Jonathan's role (with colleagues) is to plan and purchase mental health services for Camden's population. Making sure the right services and partnerships are in place to meet people's needs.
- The borough needs to balance the needs of the population, with the funding available from central government, they work with a range of partners to help do this (GP's, specialist NHS providers such as Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, and the voluntary sector, particularly local charities).
- In addition to the partners highlighted above, Jonathan mentioned several ways people can access services in the borough, including:
  - The Resilience Network - a collection of services and a website that work with local community centres, provides employment, and helps support residents to access things in the community.
  - Other mental health services such as talking therapy, counselling and psychological therapies.
  - Specialist teams - working with patients and GP's to keep people well.
  - 24-hour crisis line that residents can call, and a crisis resolution team.
- Covid-19 has placed a huge amount of strain on mental health throughout the borough (increased loneliness, anxiety, economic hardship, etc). It has also highlighted health inequalities, in mental health in particular the borough are looking at what these inequalities mean for residents.

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

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## 2. Dr Jonathan Levy, GP Clinical Lead, Camden Mental Health Partnership

- As well as being a GP in Camden Town, Dr Jonathan Levy works with North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and is the borough lead representing Camden in their mental health work.
- Overall, he has witnessed gaps in services where more support is needed.
- He works a lot within the voluntary sector, including organisations such as MIND - helping to discuss how these organisations can improve their services in the area.
- The terms 'reactive' and 'proactive' care were mentioned, for many people, accessing healthcare means visiting a GP when they are unwell and getting treatment (reactive). However, there is increasingly more focus being put on proactive care, in that it is important to consider the personal, or social needs of a patient, as these factors contribute to the state of their health (including mental health).
- For example, how we might help people with schizophrenia, is providing patients with stable accommodation so that they have a home that they know will be a home for a number of years. This has just as a powerful effect on their well-being as giving them antipsychotic drugs.
- In regards to changes since Covid-19, one change has been where patients go if they are having a mental health crisis, before Covid-19 this may have been a local hospital or A&E department. Now, with the prioritisation of only seeing patients who have serious physical injuries or illnesses in A&E, patients with mental health needs are seen in urgent assessment centres, better suited to their needs.

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

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## 2. Dr Jonathan Levy, GP Clinical Lead, Camden Mental Health Partnership (continued)

- Other changes induced by the Covid-19 pandemic included the ramping up and increased usage of charitable services, who have specialist knowledge on mental health needs (reaching out to patients via phone calls, checking if they needed extra assistance etc)
- Final biggest change, which is yet to come, is that in the wake of financial challenges and increased unemployment, we are expecting an increase in the demand for mental health services. To help cover this demand, we are looking at changing the structure of mental health services so they are located within patients local areas. Changing the hierarchy of services we have currently and opting for a more local solution - GP practices that share psychiatrists, specialist nurses, social workers, and utilising the voluntary sector.
- Part of this reorganisation is to help residents feel included in the community, supporting those who experience social isolation and the impact it has on people's mental health.

“We reached out before patients... with the charitable sector, to make phone calls, to check in and see how they were doing and if they needed extra assistance.”

**Dr Jonathan Levy**

“We know we are facing a period of financial challenge, increased unemployment, and we know that this will develop over the next few years and it will contribute to the mental health challenges we face.”

**Dr Jonathan Levy**

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

We then heard four short talks local organisations working to support residents to stay healthy, safe and well (what we call prevention) - particularly with regard to their mental and emotional wellbeing - in Camden.

## 3. Jennie Mackeith, Children's Commissioning Manager, Camden

- Jennie works across both the council and the NHS in a joint team for children's health services. She works with a wide network of NHS and voluntary and community providers, Camden learning and schools, public health, GPs, children and youth services.
- The network provides mental health and well-being support, from early intervention and prevention through to crisis and inpatient settings. Camden's main children's clinic is provided by the Tavistock and Portman foundation trust.
- One of our main priorities for accessing services is being able to get the help you need at the right time. In order to support this, our mental health workers are integrated into our schools, children's Centres, and social care team, reducing the need for long referral processes and ensuring close working between health and other children's services.
- Counselling and therapy services can be accessed in clinic and community settings including schools, but that isn't the only way people can access mental health support. The network also trains teachers, youth workers, social workers and community services in mental health support so that people can have helpful and therapeutic conversations with the people that they are already working with and then get more help if needed.

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

We then heard four short talks local organisations working to support residents to stay healthy, safe and well (what we call prevention) - particularly with regard to their mental and emotional wellbeing - in Camden.

## 3. Jennie Mackeith, Children's Commissioning Manager, Camden (continued)

- We understand that formal clinical meetings are not necessarily what young people want or need so we have a range of provisions such as art or music therapy, equine therapy and peer support and mentoring programs that provide alternative ways of getting support.
- The aim of these services are to provide prevention to ensure children and young people are thriving and emotionally well in order to achieve, an example of how services are working together is 'Minding the Gap'. This service was developed with the help of young people who highlighted issues going from child to adult services, with young people struggling to get the help they needed. Part of this service is a youth hub called 'Hive', who put on activities such as Yoga, gardening, cooking, etc. There is also a sexual health clinic and work experience and advice, and young people really enjoy the opportunity to make friends or access that one-to-one support without the stigma of a clinical setting.
- Covid-19 has meant services adapting: lots of provision has moved to video, or telephone delivery. This has been really helpful for a lot of families but we also know that lots of children didn't have a safe space to talk to a counsellor or therapist at home, or the technology to access it.
- There were lots of really positive and creative changes that have happened which has included clinicians having walk and talk sessions with young people in parks when buildings were closed, the creation of online well-being resources for families, and an online counselling service for young people. We're working across the system to think about those changes and offer more choice to families ensuring we are reaching families of people who are most affected.

# Section 3: Understanding prevention, mental health and wellbeing

We then heard four short talks local organisations working to support residents to stay healthy, safe and well (what we call prevention) - particularly with regard to their mental and emotional wellbeing - in Camden.

## 4. Leon Honeysett, Service Manager, The Greenwood Centre

- Our services offered a service for people accessing secondary care or specialist mental health services. We're not a clinical service. Really, we place high importance on social skills, rather than clinical treatment, so we offer a programme of activities to our clients - placing high importance on creative expression.
- We assess what kind of groups would be helpful for people, and they are mainly categorised into physical help groups, therapeutic, living skills groups, social groups, and learning.
- What we do is help people structure their lives. We support people to get help when they really need it and to avoid isolation. That is probably the biggest need across the membership.
- We only take referrals from people who are under secondary care and they have to be eligible for adult social care.
- Covid-19 had a huge effect on membership. Isolation is a real problem for many of our members, the inability to structure and plan ahead massively affected the membership also.
- In an ideal world, we will provide change to help people stay safe and well. A traditional place where people can come to to access things and it is a physical space. Online is great but we feel you need to be around people.

“Many clients go into crisis quite frequently and our role is to support people through the process and support them back into the community when they are ready”

**Leon Honeysett**



# Section 4: Our expectations

After hearing more about prevention, mental health and wellbeing, and how local organisations have supported residents to stay healthy, safe and well - particularly with regard to their mental and emotional wellbeing - in Camden, we split into small groups to discuss what we'd heard.

In small groups, we discussed the following questions:

**Q1: Based on your own experiences, and the conversations you've had as part of the assembly, what are the best ways to stay healthy and well – particularly around mental health?**

**Q2: In an ideal world, how would the borough support people to stay healthy, safe and well, particularly around their mental health and emotional wellbeing?**

## Why did we do this exercise?

1. Your discussions will help us understand your expectations for how health and social care should change in Camden.
2. We will revisit your ideas in the final session to form a prioritised set of 'expectations', which will then be used to inform changes to health and social care in Camden.

# Section 4: Best ways to stay healthy and well

We asked **“What are the best ways to stay healthy and well – particularly around mental health?”**

As part of this discussion, some residents were asked to consider **what makes it difficult to stay healthy, safe and well in Camden?**

- Supporting children and other relatives, such as elderly parents, can make it more difficult to prioritise your own wellbeing.
- Financial pressures, adding to residents mental strain. Occasionally exacerbated by mistakes from the council, including mistakes with council tax, rent, and difficulties in contacting council services.
- Accessibility difficulties, including language barriers making it more difficult for some residents to contact and access services - this also applies for deaf residents who rely on access to BSL interpreting to access services and good healthcare.
- Some residents were unaware of where to go when accessing services.
- Difficulty in accessing GPs was reported by some residents, with many expressing that this needs to be made easier to have a positively impact residents staying healthy and well.

“We’ve been having problems communicating with the council and getting a (BSL) interpreter. We’ve been fined and can’t access (BSL) interpreters to help us”

“For the adults having to look after children all the time...we’ve been left to manage mental wellbeing of children. We didn’t have the resources to manage the children”

# Section 4: Our expectations

We asked **“In an ideal world, how would the borough support people to stay healthy, safe and well, particularly around their mental health and emotional wellbeing?”**

## 1. Improving access to GP services

- Residents reported difficulties contacting and accessing GP services in relation to mental health.

“GPs are not very welcoming for mental health issues, accessing it feels like an uphill struggle, they can be condescending”.

- In response to this, residents expected easier access to GP services, as well as a receptive, empathetic and consistent approach to mental health engagement and assessment across the borough.

“GPs should be receptive and sensitive to my mental health issues, regardless of which practice I belong to”.

## 2. Increased use of localised services

- Residents cited the need for local voluntary sector services local to residents, focussed on proactive, preventative measures, that would help reduce demand on health services and reactive care.

“We expect there to be a focus on local, community-based mental health support, preventing the need to access more reactive services through GPs and NHS Trusts”.

- Residents also reported the need for more localised community hubs, promoting services, community activities, and support networks, these should be accessible to all.

“Services should be embedded in the community, via local hubs and in collaboration with VCS, and designed so they are easily accessible to all Camden residents, no matter what language they speak”.

# Section 4: Our expectations

We asked **“In an ideal world, how would the borough support people to stay healthy, safe and well, particularly around their mental health and emotional wellbeing?”**

## **3. Taking ownership of the community’s health and wellbeing where possible**

- Residents reported the importance of continuing the positive behaviour shown throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, including supporting neighbours, and helping those who were socially isolated or vulnerable in the community.

“During the pandemic the community came together and people helped their neighbours and vulnerable residents, which helped to prevent isolation. We should continue to look out for one another beyond the pandemic, and for community groups to do so also, to ensure no one is ever isolated.”

- Where possible, residents expected support (including financially) in promoting, organising and running community activities or classes that improve people’s mental health and wellbeing.

“Camden Council should provide more adult education, for example dance. This can help both physical and mental health. I used to run classes, the public performances helped to increase people's' confidence.”

## **4. Ensuring everyone can contact and access services**

- Some residents reported difficulties in contacting and accessing services.
- More consideration should therefore be made for residents where English is a second language, and for deaf residents who rely on BSL.

“...being deaf means we are limited on how we can access services. Telephone access isn’t helpful for deaf people.”

- Residents with physical disabilities who are shielding due to the Covid-19 pandemic should also be supported to access services.

“You should be able to leave your home without distress. I’m in a wheelchair. My housing provider hasn’t fitted an adaptation that I’ve been waiting eight years for. This has affected me physically and mentally. If this problem was dealt with, my mental health would improve”

# Section 4: Our expectations

We asked “**In an ideal world, how would the borough support people to stay healthy, safe and well, particularly around their mental health and emotional wellbeing?**”

## 5. Other, less common expectations mentioned by residents included:

- Be more open and transparent about service delivery publishing data measures, available to the public, so you can monitor and measure impact and there is accountability.
- More thought should be given to resident’s first contact with mental health services, this needs to be an effective first impression of the service.
- Medical staff, fire marshals and fire brigade – there should be an increase in members of staff who are trained in how to work with people who have mental health conditions.
- More activities and facilities for parents and children, including more local open space areas and more community festivals and events for kids to bring the community together.
- More support overall for children's mental health services

We will revisit the expectations you have highlighted in our final session, where we will refine and prioritise the key points.

# Thank you.

Thank you for such a constructive input to the session - we really appreciate it.

We look forward to seeing you at the next digital session, taking place:

- Saturday 26th September 2020,

Please email [HealthandCareCitizenAssembly@camden.gov.uk](mailto:HealthandCareCitizenAssembly@camden.gov.uk) or phone 020 7974 1459 for any questions you might have.