Camden
Parent Advisory Board
Annual Bulletin 2019–20
Camden Parent Advisory Board

The Board has been established to ensure that parents have the opportunity to help shape services to improve health outcomes for children. The group was set up to support the work of children’s commissioning in Camden - including health strategy implementation, CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services) transformation plan and also the council-led resilient families programme. The group meets monthly during term time to discuss plans that affect children and young people, responding to issues raised by North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (Camden) and Camden Council. Since coming together in 2016, the group has already helped to make leaflets and websites more parent-friendly, sat on panels for the procurement of local services and contributed to a range of strategic papers for consideration by various committees and boards. The group provides a great opportunity for parents to feed into the redesign of services and it ensures that the views of a range parents are represented.

One of the main aims of the Parent Advisory Board (PAB) is to ensure our parents in Camden play an important role in influencing the services we provide.

Parents have shared their personal stories on what it’s been like being involved. We hope you will read them and share them with your teams.
Being involved

I am a new resident of the borough of Camden. It is a unique borough because there is a real sense of community here owing to the emphasis given on volunteer participation. To that end, each volunteer is trained for his or her respective role with correct certification provided. I am a Families for Life Champion. My role is to engage the community in health and wellbeing programmes provided by the borough in a variety of centres. I have been trained for six weeks in health and wellbeing programmes in the borough, safeguarding, and best practices. I have also participated in training on ‘making every contact count’ and gone through a full DBS check. I am looking forward to going into the community now as a member of the Parent Advisory Board to be a force in tackling obesity, encouraging families to live healthily and to utilise all the services available to them. The Parent Advisory Board also enabled me to go on a two-day intensive Mental Health First Aid training course. Overall, I have found it a thoroughly enriching and rewarding experience living here and being involved.

— Sarah Jafri, mother of two

Co-production – who benefits?

The Parent Advisory Board consists of a group of parents who get together once a month under the umbrella of Camden Council and the NHS. We have visits from people who work for or are starting up, all sorts of services that benefit the borough and beyond.

We listen, comment, suggest and work as a sounding board to get a true idea of what parents, patients and service users want/would like help with getting changed. We do not have the same parents who come every time, due to other commitments, which makes for more varied discussions and opinions.

This has worked really well and has been successful in giving organisations a different perspective that they may otherwise not have thought of. Our ideas have helped shape the way services are advertised, websites constructed and pilot schemes progressed.

This is why we have now started to give ‘co-production’ talks to other groups to show them how beneficial and influential they can be. Some things to start these discussions are common sense but others may not have been considered. At the end of the day, we all want to have our voices heard and feel that we have had some say in the outcome of certain services or new healthcare initiatives.

Taking time out of your working day and getting a group together to help decisions on the future of certain projects benefits everyone. It actually saves time in the long-run. You get first-hand accounts and experiences from people who have lived through or are still living through them, not a ‘pencil pusher’ who has no idea what the service users really need, want or expect. If you have not thought about co-production please do and if you need help, or want to see how it works, come and join us or get us in to talk with you about it. The results will be positive I promise you!

— Bridget Coates, mother of one
‘Camden Can’ Reducing Obesity Conference

Last September, a conference was held at the Greenwood Centre in Kentish Town on the topic of ‘Reducing Obesity in Schools - A Camden Conversation’.

Julie Billet, Director of Public Health for Camden and Islington, was one of the people presenting. Her presentation started with ‘making tackling obesity everyone’s business’, with a whole-system approach that recognises everyone has a role to play. She also discussed the key actions for and in support of schools, such as how schools should equip children with the knowledge they need to lead healthy lifestyles and should create environments that encourage healthy eating and physical activities, including active travel. She said that during the school day, schools should deliver at least 30 minutes of the total recommended 60 daily minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity for children and young people, through active break times, PE, extracurricular clubs, active lessons, or other sport and physical activity events. Julie continued by saying Camden should support families on low incomes to access schemes, such as the healthy start vouchers for children from lower-income families, who are at greater risk of obesity, as well as updated school food standards, which should be a legal requirement for all maintained schools.

After that, she showed us diagrams on her slides that show the excess weight of people in Camden. Did you know that 20% of reception students (aged four to five) were recorded as overweight or very overweight and 36% of Year 6 students (aged 10 to 11) were recorded as overweight or very overweight, while 47% of adults in Camden are obese or overweight? These results show that childhood obesity is a strong indicator of adult obesity and that obesity rates in the most deprived areas are more than double that of Camden’s average. Julie confirms that Camden is currently focused on schools and school-aged children to tackle the obesity issues, with the help of Families for Life - healthy lifestyle programmes for families of primary-aged children, as well as support to achieve Healthy School recognition.

Healthy School London Silver and Gold awards train Champions of Camden

It was an amazing feeling at the Annual Parent Champion Conference last year when the Camden Parent Champions won the ‘Parent Champion Scheme of the Year Award 2019’. We are part of the national Parent Champion Scheme run by Coram Family Childcare, with 56 similar schemes running throughout the UK. I am a Parent Champion and sit on the Camden Parent Advisory Board. I attended the event with nine other Parent Champions and our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Sophie Jobbings.

It was a great day meeting people from all the other schemes, attending workshops, and learning from others. I also delivered a workshop with my co-ordinator and volunteers. This was a great experience, sharing the successes of our volunteering with others.

Winning the award was a fantastic achievement for us all and will help encourage us in our future volunteering in the community, signposting local families to use all services available for families and under-fives in Camden.

— Anita Khalil, mother of two
In particular, I consulted with them over letters that parents receive with their child’s BMI measurement, which is done as part of the National Child Measurement Programme. We improved the letter and have made it easier to understand and less stigmatising.

PAB also collated feedback from other parents on the day-to-day barriers that parents face which prevents them from making healthy choices. We asked them how much influence and power they have on the wider environment that is influencing our choices, such as marketing and advertising, access and affordability of fresh fruit and vegetables and physical activity classes. After this, the PAB took part in the conference ‘Tackling Childhood Obesity: Early Years and Families’ and spoke to the audience about the findings from our survey, offering solutions around how to support them to achieve the best health outcomes for children.

The PAB are fantastic. I have really enjoyed getting to know them and listening to their lively debates, where I have heard lots of valuable suggestions on how to make Camden a place where making the healthy choice is the easy choice. I would like to thank them for their wisdom, time and enthusiasm and I look forward to working with them in the future.

— Julie Edgecombe
Public Health Strategist
The event was chaired by Helene Reardon Bond OBE. The key focus of the Women’s Forum was supporting women who have been out of the labour market to get back into high quality, flexible employment.

In attendance were Cllr Georgia Gould, Leader of Camden London Borough Council, and Cllr Angela Mason, Cabinet Member Best Start for Children and Families. Both were keen to hear women’s experiences first-hand to establish ongoing relationships with the organisations and women involved.

At the event, we heard from Camden’s inspirational women who have overcome challenges. I had the chance to meet and network with organisations providing support and opportunities to women looking to return to high quality employment, as I shared my own personal experiences of trying to find good quality work, the barriers faced and the support which has been most helpful.

What stood out at the event was the diversity of women who attended in terms of race, culture, religion and professions. Having keynote speakers was good but that also should have been a diverse platform. We did not hear any speeches from women who were homemakers and were looking for inspiration to go back into the work market. Their stories would have been an insight into what a ‘mum' homemaker means to the world of work.

It would have been nice and more relatable to have had a BAME and/ or disabled carer as a keynote speakers as well.

It’s vital that we celebrate women’s achievements whether you are a chief executive or a cleaner, and all women should feel appreciated, praised and worthy of their role.

Let us not forget, some women might be content in their role in society as wives/homemakers, but they could also be highly skilled negotiators, careful drivers, budget controllers, cooks, etc.

Education and empowerment of girls is vital for future generations and we need to be aware of the advancing technological world that will cut many jobs. We need to adapt to that environment.

Success and achievement comes in different forms. Women might have a master’s in neuroscience and another has only GCSEs. Both levels of achievement should be celebrated and we must not put each other down.

Lastly, I would like to quote Ngugi wa Thiong’o, a famous Kenyan author, who says ‘the condition of women in a nation is the real measure of its progress.’

— Anita Khalil, Mother of two
Oral health awareness

On the 28 March 2019, Nicola Ramnarine (Oral Health Promotion, Camden Early Years Lead) facilitated oral health awareness training with the group. It has always been recommended by oral health professionals that the earlier children start brushing their teeth and look after their mouth hygiene, the better.

Training included the following:
- Structure and development of teeth
- Common oral health problems
- Diet /sugars
- Prevention and how to share the message by raising awareness.

The good news, following a number of oral health initiatives, is that there has been a drop in decay among five year olds. This has been observed in Camden. Despite this, many challenges remain, including persistent inequalities in oral health outcomes. Therefore tackling tooth decay remains a key priority. Developing good oral health habits/behaviour during childhood is vital in preventing oral diseases throughout life. Oral health is important - why? Because it is a standard of health of the oral related tissues which enables an individual to eat, speak, and socialise without active disease, discomfort, or embarrassment.

Some of the problems with primary teeth could be injuries that can cause infection and disturbances in the colour, shape, and size of the teeth. Decaying teeth can become infected, leading to abscess and pain, which can leave children traumatised. Problems with primary teeth also affect speech and eating, and leads to low self-esteem. Nicola also discussed how teeth develop. We were informed that the jaw holds both primary and permanent teeth, the roots of the adult teeth are completed two to three years after they appear in the mouth, and the fact that the jaw grows in order to allow the teeth through. I was interested to learn about the main diseases affecting oral health.

- Dental cavities/tooth decay: bacterial processes that demineralise tooth surfaces resulting in cavities/holes in the teeth.
- Periodontal/gum disease: an inflammatory response from bacterial biofilm along the gum line, resulting in damage to the tissues and bones that surround and anchor the teeth.

Nicola went on to discuss the risks of poor oral health in children - for example, how the child could end up missing school because of dental pain and constant dental appointments. This then of course leads to the child missing a lot of their education, activities, and time spent with friends. The impact of tooth decay requires multiple extractions that may compromise the child’s chewing and speech, and may affect their self-esteem. The premature loss of teeth may result in the shifting of adult teeth, which may require orthodontic treatment.

The aim of this beneficial training was to raise awareness among ourselves and to help inform other parents we come into contact with. We as parents are responsible for what our children eat, the amount of sugar they consume, the cleanliness of their teeth, and their visits to dental appointments.

— Anita Khalil, Mother or two
Public consultation on a proposed move of Moorfields Eye Hospital’s City Road services led by Camden CCG

Last year the public consultation on a proposed move of eye health services was going to impact on the life of local and national eye patients. For this reason it was crucial to the CCG’s Parent Advisory Board to have detailed knowledge of the development of this consultation. The members of the Parent Advisory Board have knowledge about local health services in order to carry out their advisory role to Camden Council’s staff and local organisations. The following information is an update on the proposal in the consultation.

Sight loss is a serious problem and by 2050 it’s estimated that four million people will be living with sight loss in the UK. (Oriel, Creating the centre for advancing eye health, 2019). The number of people suffering from common eye conditions, such as cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease is expected to rise significantly over the next 15 years. The consultation ran between Friday 24 May and Monday 16 September – with thousands of people getting involved to voice their ideas on the proposal.

In order to put people at the centre of care and treatment of eye conditions, traditional hospital-based eye services need to be replaced by new models of care. This can be done by using new technology and by training other health professionals.

Parts of the current Moorfields Eye Hospital at City Road in London are over 125 years old. People have recently voiced the fact that they feel that the hospital’s layout is confusing to them. They also mention that they spend too much time waiting in uncomfortable and overcrowded spaces. The ageing facilities do not meet modern standards – the way clinics and buildings are laid out limits the development of innovation and interaction between clinicians and researchers, which enable faster ways to find new treatments.

Moorfields and its partners, the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and Moorfields Eye Charity, are proposing to build a new centre over the next five to six years to provide the highest quality eye care, innovative research and education. The proposed location is a site on land available at St Pancras Hospital, in a purpose-designed centre. Money would come from the sale of the City Road land, contributions from central government and from donors. The plan must be in the interests of the health of the local and national population, in line with long-term plans to improve health and care, and be an effective use of public money.

The current model of care was adapted to fit the problematic layout of the outdated building, rather than designed to meet patients’ current needs. One example of this – a routine appointment can involve several different tests in different locations away from the first appointment. This is not ideal for patients who find it hard to move around, and this affects the flow of patients around the building, so appointments may take longer than necessary.

The proposal aims to address this issue by putting patient experience at the centre of the design of the new building. Clinicians have suggested shared flexible clinical space to include better use of equipment and diagnostic facilities for adults and children. This could take place even with a separation between these groups.

If this proposal goes ahead, the new centre might be opened in 2025/2026. For the latest updates on the project, visit oriel-london.org.uk

— Sara Katchi, PAB Member
The publication of the NHS Long Term Plan is going to impact on the lives of local and national NHS patients. The Plan brings about a national vision for the future of the NHS. The NHS aims to integrate services. There is a focus on wellbeing and on strengthening the prevention agenda.

The objectives are:

- Improve prevention and reduce health inequalities
- Focus on care quality and outcomes for major conditions
- Pay more attention to supporting NHS staff
- Improve data usage and digital technology
- Use NHS funds more effectively.

National clinical priorities are part of the plan. Areas such as:

- children and young people
- cancer
- cardiovascular disease
- stroke and diabetes
- respiratory disease
- mental health.

The new system will be borough-based with partnerships of integrated care. Commissioners and providers will both have to agree on how to use the resources available, design services and improve population health.

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) were introduced in 2019 to new GP contracts. There are seven of these in Camden. They will be part of integrated neighbourhood teams and also aim to be central to delivering new service models of care.

The plan includes:

- A North Central London Integrated Care System, that provides strategy and planning
- Camden Integrated Care Partnership, that works by covering the Camden population with the Council, primary care, communities and mental health services
- Seven Primary Care Networks where practices and partners collaborate to cover a population of 30,000 to 50,000 people.

The group is supported by Camden CCG.

**Development of a Camden Neighbourhood Prevention Action Plan**

The publication of the Camden Neighbourhood Prevention Action Plan is crucial to the lives of local residents. In 2016 the Camden Local Care Partnership agreed to develop a more integrated way to deliver quality care for local people. In Camden’s Local Care Strategy, prevention is an essential part of the strategy. The aim has been to develop a prevention plan which is made up of several priorities, such as:

- Children
- Mental Health
- Adults.

People tend to present with multiple health needs. Camden population groups were analysed by grouping people who shared common needs. This provided a different way of identifying particular needs of different population groups. Opportunities arose for developing a prevention plan for each population group and leading to possible health interventions.

The next plan was be working with the neighbourhood teams to finalise the list of priorities and develop an action plan for each neighbourhood. A plan was submitted to the Local Care Delivery Board at the end of 2019.

— Sara Katchi, PAB Member
Autism training

I attended the autism training provided to Camden staff. The training was delivered by Ambitious about Autism for the first time in Camden. The aim of the training is to raise awareness and understanding of autism amongst staff members to facilitate service delivery to individuals within the autistic spectrum.

The training also covered useful strategies relating to good forward planning and to improving communication to support and deliver services to adults with autism.

I was happy to find that the training was well attended by staff from various departments and there was much enthusiasm reflecting how the learning could perhaps improve the scenarios they have previously encountered in their work.

After the training, everyone was asked to fill an evaluation form. The parents who attended were also asked to feedback on whether we as parents felt the training was useful and pitched at the appropriate level for the staff.

I, like many others on the course, felt this had been a very useful and enlightening session. I hope that more Camden staff can have access to this training as I believe this could help to improve autistic people’s experiences of local services. I hope this isn’t just a one-off and that this course will be part of mandatory training for all staff.

Michele, mother of three

Local Offer Steering Group

I was invited to participate in the tender of interpreter services provision in Camden. It was a process to individually and collectively determine the merits and shortcomings of various companies’ proposals to deliver interpreter services based on the requirements specified by Camden through a tender process. There were representatives from various departments and two parents from the Parent Advisory Board involved in the process. In the beginning, there was a lot of reading and scoring of the tenders to complete individually before meeting collectively. During the meeting we discussed our scoring and the respective justifications. I found this part of the tender, with some passionate discussions and debates, most interesting, as I enjoy hearing different people’s opinions and a range of perspectives. I have also gained a lot of insight into the complexities of trying to provide services to a very diverse make-up of the population in Camden.

Michele, mother of three

I was invited to participate in the Local Offer website Steering Group to help improve Camden’s Local Offer website, originally set up in 2015.

The Local Offer website aims to provide information for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and their families, including information on a range of services available to them. It became apparent from consultations with parents, carers, young people and professionals who have tried to access this website over the last few years, that they want the Local Offer website to be easier to use and more effective. Technically, I do feel this is a rather challenging task considering the vast range of information which covers a wide amount of special needs and age groups from 0 to 25.

There have been a series of meetings and the website improvement work continues progress with much discussion and collaboration amongst the representatives from the Parent Advisory Board and the various departments and agencies including IT specialists, health services, special educational needs and specialist therapy providers, early years, social services and KIDS charity. I feel privileged to be able to share my opinions and ideas from a parent’s point of view. Watching it grow and take shape, however slowly, has been a very rewarding experience so far.

Michele, mother of three
The planned adult orthopaedic review team from North London Partners in Health and Care joined the Parent Advisory Board meeting in February to ask for the group’s views and ideas relating to the public consultation on proposed changes to this service in north central London.

We talked to the group about the proposed changes and how this would affect patients who are referred for orthopaedic surgery, typically operations such as hip and knee replacements but any kind of surgery on bones, joints or muscles.

The group were able to share their perspective and raise the things that mattered to them, in particular long waiting times and the risk of cancelled operations, which make it hard to organise childcare and family life. A few members of the group had personal experiences of using the service and were able to share these.

It was really useful to hear the group’s questions and comments about our proposals and we had a number of really helpful suggestions that we will feed into the consultation response. We were invited to come back and update the group on how proposals develop after the consultation and we’ll be looking forward to catching up with them again soon on this and other pieces of work to improve health and care for local residents.

Public consultation on these proposals was completed as planned on 6 April 2020.

Chloe Morales Oyarce
Head of Communications and Engagement

The Camden Inclusive Innovation Network have been researching how the community can benefit from developments in their local area.

We’ve been talking to residents about what’s important to them and how they would like to be involved in development decisions. We’ve also been speaking to developers and experts to explore how we might measure the impact and social value of developments.

The PAB really engaged with the topic and offered some valuable insights on the day, in particular a quote stood out for me:

“We need more social houses, not these ‘affordable’ houses, they are NOT affordable to people like us.”

It was really helpful to hear about what was important to them and their communities. The discussion was robust and challenging. And four of the PAB joined us at the next stage of the research, where we generated ideas about how to empower local communities to inform us what is important to them at all stages of the planning process.

Emma Haigh
Inclusive Innovation Network Catalyst

On Wednesday 1st April Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington CCGs officially came together to form North Central London (NCL) Clinical Commissioning Group. You can read a letter here from Frances O’Callaghan, NCL CCG Accountable Officer and Dr Jo Sauvage, NCL CCG Chair which gives you more information on the merger and future plans.

The Parent Advisory Board meets monthly in term time from 10am to 12.30pm at The Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, NW1 1BD.

We are always looking to recruit more parents. If you are interested or would like more information about the group, please email sandra.soteriou@camden.gov.uk