



Camden Advice Partnership Invitation to Apply for Grant funding

Reading this invitation to apply

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1. Background

Camden 2025 sets out a bold vision for Camden – a place where everyone has a chance to succeed, where nobody gets left behind, and where everybody has a voice.

To help us deliver this, we intend to create a network of advice services that have the resident at the heart of all they do. They will deliver **high quality proactive advice**, will be able to **respond flexibly** to resident's needs, will be **rooted in the community** and will **work collaboratively** to ensure all residents are **empowered, resilient** and able to **thrive**.

To enable this, we are committing a total of £7million over a 7-year period, which will be allocated through a competitive grant. This equates to approximately £1million per year. We want to develop a wide advice network that incorporates and supports the broad range of existing services offering advice, so that all residents have access to advice in a way that is easy for them.

Through the establishment of an advice network, we envisage a much closer collaboration between the Council and advice providers which can include both larger and smaller community organisations. Providers will work closely together sharing expertise, coordinating support plans and maximising organisational capabilities to generate impact. The network will be led by a **Working Group**, comprised of VCS representatives and council officers. As part of the new model, we envisage senior involvement from the council with a Council officer responsible for the partnership overall.

The working group will be made operational through the establishment of '**Thematic Hubs**'. These hubs are smaller working groups which will focus on key areas of the network (themes) will be meeting regularly to develop and implement their agenda. We anticipate some of the themes to focus on will be:

- **Standardisation of working practices** – how we can work in a consistent way
- **Multi-disciplinary working** - development of holistic support plans to support the range of needs residents may have
- **Data gathering, evaluation and reporting** – how we will gather information and then use it to better inform service delivery
- **Collaboration with community organisations and outreach**- embedding services in the local community making the most of community assets and places for outreach activities e.g. local pubs, supermarkets, estates, places of worship, GP practices.

Why this approach?

We are funding advice services through grants because we recognise the value in providing voluntary and community sector organisations with core funding, rather than commissioning organisations to deliver specific services. The aim is to enable the sector to be resilient and sustainable and to encourage greater flexibility and innovation in how the sector responds to local needs and opportunities. We also need to ensure we are making best use of available funding to achieve our priority outcomes. As such will be working closely with the successful grant award recipients to ensure the grants result in high quality and impactful advice provision.

As a council, we are committed to working closely with the advice sector to ensure service-users receive well-coordinated quality advice. Through the establishment of the Working Group and Thematic Hubs, we want to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing and joint planning to respond to changing needs on the ground, where a system response would be most impactful.

Organisations will be encouraged to coordinate operations with Council teams and other advice partners across the system developing joint delivery approaches while preserving and leveraging their unique strengths. **Prevention and early intervention** will be at the heart of the new advice model. The Partnership will be expected to work collaboratively with a range of community organisations with strong community ties to plan and deliver **outreach** activities, engaging residents, establish new connections and build trust with the community. Brokering relationships and **facilitating access to services to prevent crisis** will be crucial. **Information and engagement will rely on existing community networks and assets** and could include establishing links with GP practices, local pubs, supermarkets, estates and places of worship which will allow the Partnership to build a community presence.

2. Aims and objectives of the new advice system

As part of the Camden 2025 vision, our aim is to empower the voluntary sector to be more resilient, more innovative and flexible to respond to resident needs. The Camden Advice Partnership grants will help support this.

There are several resident-focussed outcomes that the Camden Advice Partnership (CAP) can help us deliver and these will form the basis of the grant award criteria. We will expect any CAP organisation to be working towards these criteria and to be able to demonstrate and evidence this progress and impact.

Although subject to further development with the CAP once confirmed, it is envisaged that the following outcomes will indicate that the Advice Partnership is delivering for residents as intended:

- Residents have the right information and support so that they feel empowered and equipped to deal with problems themselves
- Residents are able to access advice in a way and location that is best for them and they know where they can go for support
- A reduction in poverty as a result of people accessing the benefits they are entitled to ('income maximisation')
- All residents from across our diverse communities have equal access to advice and no one is excluded
- The amount of contact with services is reduced as residents are able to get information, advice and support from the service they trust
- All services in the advice network are working collectively and are in regular contact, so that emerging concerns and trends are regularly being identified and appropriately responded to.

An award criteria has been developed, which considers how well grant applicants address these outcomes (section 5). The award criteria also takes into account how organisations demonstrate they will adopt the framework approach within their service. Appendix 1 provides draft indicators which expand on these criteria and would be used to assess applications.

3. Areas of advice to be provided

As outlined in the main report, we have identified a number of topic areas for specialist advice which would sit alongside general provision. For the purposes of the grant award we will ensure that all topic areas are covered and the available funding will be allocated accordingly. The topic areas are as follows:

- **General advice.** As well as providing general advice it is expected that an organisation with sufficient capacity to do so would also take on a central triage role to link in with the rest of the network. This would provide a single point of contact for those unsure where to get support, however residents could also approach other organisations directly if they already have a relationship or know what specialist support they need.
- **Specialist advice.** This would be broken into a series of subcategories as follows:
 - Over 65's
 - Young People (16-25)
 - People with Disabilities
 - Welfare/Benefits

- Housing
- Employment & Immigration
- Debt & Money

A further priority for advice provision is ensuring a good spread geographically. When reviewing applications, this will be carefully considered to ensure residents are able to access advice as easily as possible. This would be particularly important for any consortia bids as it would be expected that organisations working together would be able to provide good coverage across the borough.

The following is an **indicative** outline of how the grant money available could be broken down by area of specialism. Some of the funds available may be split across organisations if multiple organisations wished to deliver on the same topic area. Organisations may also wish to bid for multiple topic areas.

Topic	Indicative Amount Allocation
General Advice	£350,000
Advice & Advocacy for Older People (Over 65)	£125,000
Advice & Advocacy for Young People (16-25)	£50,000
Advice & Advocacy for People with Disabilities	£100,000
Debt & Money	£100,000
Housing	£100,000
Welfare Rights/Benefits	£100,000
Employment & Immigration	£75,000

4. Expectations of grant-funded partners

As well as delivering the specified service you will outline in your application, Advice partners will be expected to:

1. **actively participate in the advice network**, coordinating delivery with the Council and other advice organisations.
2. **collect data, monitor impact, identify emerging trends and develop a system response**.

Throughout the first two years, we will invest in capacity building to ensure all providers are equally involved in the network and equipped for data collection and reporting requirements.

In the first year of the grant, an **evaluation framework will be co-designed with advice providers**, generating a set of meaningful indicators, data collection methods and questions to address. This will **not be prescriptive or fixed through the introduction of arbitrary targets**. Rather, the **system will rely on an 'agile evaluation framework'**, able to adapt outcomes and success indicators to changing needs and demands. The council and partner organisations will agree what data to collect based on what will be most useful:

- In understanding how priority advice areas / priority groups are being supported
- In understanding when demand and need is changing and why
- In informing how advice provision should be modified in response to trends and changing priorities, especially in relation to referrals and pathways, prevention and assessment.

The **emphasis will be on data as a tool for learning and planning together**. The **data collected will be fed into review meetings between strategic advice partners and the council**, actively supporting an ongoing review and planning process that will underpin a responsive, proactive advice system.

4.1 Active participation in the Advice Network

Any organisations receiving a Camden Advice Partnership grant will be expected to be a member of, and contribute constructively to, the advice network (comprising CAP-funded providers, along with other advice providers in the borough and relevant council services). The network will meet on a regular basis. The intention of this would be to discuss and review emerging trends and issues so that collectively the advice network can agree the best way to respond. This would also serve as a forum to address any issues within the network, such as referrals processes. The network will be working together to achieve the following:

- **Coordination of support plans** across the system, especially when multi-disciplinary working is required
- **Sharing of user information and data**, including mapping multiple entry points in the system whilst respecting the personal information of individuals
- **Standardisation of working practices**, from self-assessments to the development of support plans
- **Effectiveness of outreach and referrals** making sure services are easily accessible and residents are able to get the help they need in a timely way
- **Informative data gathering and evaluation processes**, collecting data as a means to share learning in the system and identify trends
- **Development of coordinated responses to sector trends**, including the ability to advocate on behalf of service users with institutions as one voice across the system

To ensure a shift towards prevention and early intervention, all providers will have outreach responsibilities and will play a brokering role, directing residents to the most appropriate service in the network. Crisis prevention will be a shared effort which will require advice staff to understand the system as a whole. During the first year of the grant, the Council and Advice Partners will build a map of the advice network and deliver capacity building activities for all staff. This will provide a solid basis for a sustainable service system.

4.2. Working together to monitor impact

The effectiveness of the advice system will in part rely on its ability make use of data to monitor and understand impact. As noted above, the council will develop a monitoring framework with

partners, enabling them to clearly demonstrate the outputs and outcomes as detailed in their grant application, and provide quality assurance. The intention is that monitoring activity will closely align to the outcomes agreed and will be robust enough to demonstrate impact. We will expect partners to be proactive in helping to set the monitoring framework, in collecting that monitoring data on an ongoing basis, and in sharing insights and reflections on the data with other partners.

As well as providing important data to monitor the impacts of the grants, we intend that organisations will use it as a tool to improve performance and to help secure other sources of funding. This ongoing monitoring will be administered by the Community Partnerships team and overseen by the Executive Director for Supporting Communities in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Promoting Culture and Communities.

5. How to apply to be a grant-funded partner

As the Camden Advice Partnership will be focused on delivering high quality advice services for Camden residents, it is essential that any organisation applying for funding is based in Camden.

Organisations wishing to apply for grant funding, either by themselves or in consortium with other organisations, will be expected to demonstrate how they will deliver the intended outcomes for the advice partnership (also explained in section 2) against the criteria outlined below. For each of the below outcomes, they will be expected to demonstrate how they intend to measure their performance.

This will be used to help inform the ongoing development of the monitoring framework (which will be developed with Advice Partnership organisations and administered as above).

We strongly encourage applicants to coordinate their responses with other organisations and demonstrate how collaboration can enhance their unique strengths to achieve the outcomes below.

Grant award criteria	Weighting (%)
<p>Organisations show how they would deliver the intended outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents have the right information and support so that they feel empowered and equipped to deal with problems themselves - Residents are able to access advice in a way and location that is best for them and they know where they can go for support - Reduction in poverty through 'income maximisation' meaning that people have accessed benefits they are entitled to - All residents from across our wide range of diverse communities have equal access to advice and no one is excluded - The amount of contact with services is reduced as residents are able to get information, advice and support from the service they trust - That all services in the advice network are working collaboration and are in regular contact so that emerging concerns and trends are 	50%

regularly being identified and appropriately responded to.	
Advice services are high quality and person centred.	10%
Advice services adhere to the characteristics of the advice network to ensure that advice is preventative and proactive. These are: Focused on priorities and responsive to change Integrated, accessible and rooted in communities Strength based, empowering and enabling. A voice for individuals and communities.	10%
Advice network core element one: Services are easily navigable	10%
Advice network core element two: Planning and partnerships	10%
Advice network core element three: Gathering and using evidence	10%

Organisations should be able to answer clearly the following questions:

- Which advice topic area do you intend to deliver?
- How much money annually from the total annual pool of £1 mil are you asking for to deliver your service? (please refer to section 3 for an indication of funds available for each topic)
- How would you intend to deliver on each of the award criteria?
- How would you know that you have been successful (measuring outcomes)?
- How will you ensure staff are appropriately qualified to deliver specialist advice and what is your ongoing accountability structure?

6. How we will assess your application

It is important that your application demonstrates why you are applying and provides enough evidence to support your request for funding. You can cite your own evidence as well as citing any other relevant evidence, either from the information provided from the Council or from other sources. This may include evidence from your organisation and its expertise in targeting vulnerable groups over the years.

We are looking to invest in VCS organisations with a track record of successful delivery in meeting needs, are run by the communities they serve and are able to successfully articulate their communities' needs. In addition to the points listed in section 5, we are looking for applications that show:

- synergy with other applicants' proposals; **consortia are strongly encouraged**
- where there may be multiple organisations delivering on the same topic area, there is evidence to show how they would collaborate and **complement each other to respond to resident need**

- how they would collaborate with other community organisations outside of the Camden Advice Partnership, with a **focus on outreach and targeted hard to reach communities**
- **performance criteria to measure success and track performance**
- **capabilities and flexibility to adopting new ways of working**, e.g. agile evaluation methodology
- any business plans or other strategic documents that show **planning for the future** and how you intend to ensure your organisation will operate in the long-term

7. The application timetable

DATE 2019	STAGE OF PROCESS	FURTHER INFORMATION
4th SEPTEMBER	Grant application process opens	<p>Invitation to apply for grant funding advertisement published live on Camden website.</p> <p>Organisations interested in applying for grants begin to work-up their applications</p>
13 th September 14:00-16:00	Networking, information event	A space for Q&A with council officers and networking with other organisations applying for funding
20th September	Completed applications submitted to the council	By this date, the council must have received outline applications from all prospective grantees. This will enable the council to know which organisations are interested in which service elements, and will form the basis of follow-up discussions.
4th OCTOBER	Feedback on applications given to applicants	This allows us to give constructive feedback on applications before the final submission
4 th October – 1 st November	Ongoing development stage ready for final submission	During this time council officers will support organisations who may need to further refine their application
1 st November	Deadline for final submissions	<p>By this date all submissions must be received. No late applications will be considered.</p> <p>November – December will be used to evaluate bids and receive final approval on allocations</p>

20 th December	Successful grant recipients will be announced.	Successful applicants will be informed first. Any unsuccessful applicants will then be contacted.
Jan – March 2020	Transition phase	Successful applicants will be supported by council officers to prepare for the new partnership. This will include a communications campaign so residents are aware of the partnership and know where to go for advice.
1 st April 2020	The new Camden Advice Partnership goes live	All organisations will be expected to offer the services they have outlined in their application from this date.

Appendix 1 – Outcome indicators

This list is not exhaustive and is intended to be a guide to help organisations get a sense of what a high functioning organisation in the Camden Advice Partnership may look like when delivering services.

Intended outcomes	Negative Indicators	Good indicators	Excellent indicators
<p>Organisations show how they would deliver the intended outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents have the right information and support so that they feel empowered and equipped to deal with problems themselves - Residents are able to access advice in a way and location that is best for them and they know where they can go for support - Reduction in poverty through ‘income maximisation’ meaning that people have accessed benefits they are entitled to - All residents from across our wide range of diverse communities have equal access to advice and no one is excluded - The amount of contact with services is reduced as residents are able to get information, advice and support from the service they trust - That all services in the advice network are working collaboration and are in regular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents report they do not receive support needed and their problems are not addressed. • Resident’s issues become worse. • Residents report being confused about where to go for help and are unable to access advice services. • No reduction in poverty for residents engaged with an advice service or poverty (including debt) worsens). • Some residents, especially those from special protected categories are unable to access relevant information to support them. • Residents experience barriers to access which could include but is not restricted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Limited language options * Limited options for d/Deaf residents or visually impaired residents * Services are only offered online or via phone * Services are only offered in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are able to offer a basic level of advice and advocacy for residents • Service users are able to address some concerns themselves, however when new issues arise they are still reliant on organisations to support them. • Residents are able to access services but may have to travel some distance or experience some barriers • All residents are able to access advice however there is incontinency across groups especially more vulnerable groups. • The amount of contact is reduced but residents still need multiple sessions to get the right support • There is some evidence of collaboration between services although they still generally work by themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camden residents report that they experience little to no barriers to accessing information, advice and advocacy services to help them address concerns they have. • Organisations creatively have multiple routes to access their advice services which could include, but not restricted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Online services * Smart Phone apps * Phone triage or advice * Open access * Outreach in a range of locations • Advice services are able to show a significant impact on poverty reduction and have increased ‘income maximisation’ • Residents are able to consistently access good quality advice including those who traditionally may experience barriers to accessing services.

<p>contact so that emerging concerns and trends are regularly being identified and appropriately responded to.</p>	<p>one location *Services are only offered at certain times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents need to attend multiple services or multiple sessions to get help they need. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents can get the right information the first time and if ongoing support is needed the type of support and appointments are clear. • There is clear evidence of organisations working together in partnership and are actively responding to emerging need and trends. • Residents report
<p>Advice services are high quality and person centred.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice services fail to offer relevant advice, information or advocacy to residents • No change to residents circumstances or circumstances worsen even after seeking support from advice services. • Services are generic and not able to be tailored to individual needs. • Services do not take the time to understand individuals circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice services are provided and are of an adequate quality • No evidence of services going above and beyond to flexibly respond to resident need • Some evidence of resilience being developed but individuals needing support are still largely reliant on organisations to support them • Residents are given support plans but left to implement it themselves • Support plans are robust but inconsistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice is empowering and encourages independence whilst being able to recognise when people need more intensive support. (e.g. proactive referrals, someone to help navigate the system and keep in contact). A service might develop guidelines to help decision making as to when someone might need more intensive support. • Solution focused support where needs are complex and on and ‘advice journey’, people are encouraged to break this down into realistic stages. • Services allow for a relationship with a trusted

			<p>advisor and can play a connecting role when needed. Advice providers would not be restricted by providing only advice on specific topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way support plans are developed is consistent across the system. • Organisations in the network are using a set of self-assessment tools to understand what support someone would benefit from to develop effective support plans such as 'Goal Based Outcomes'.
<p>Advice services adhere to the characteristics of the advice network to ensure that advice is preventative and proactive. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on priorities and responsive to change • Integrated, accessible and rooted in communities • Strength based, empowering and enabling. • A voice for individuals and communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice services show no indication of incorporating these characteristics into their service delivery. • Advice services are unable to show how they have identified priorities for their service delivery and do not respond to needs that are presented to them. • Services are based in a single office or provide limited options to support residents. • Services are not based in the communities they state they support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are able to demonstrate that they have incorporated some of the characteristics into their provision • Some evidence that they have identified priorities but not be clear that they have a plan to respond appropriately • Have links with local communities but no evidence local community are helping them shape service delivery • Services are strength based in approach but services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice services have a plan to show how they are identifying current and emerging problems and what they plan to do to offer advice to residents around these areas in a proactive way, rather than being reactive. • Services are able to show how triage and initial assessment determines priorities and how they would respond accordingly. • Services show a plan of how they will be geographically based and are able to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services still focus on deficits and do not provide any evidence they consider strengths available to individuals or communities to help address issues presented. • Services provide no evidence that they have sought service user feedback and used this to influence their service delivery. • Services show no evidence of advocating for the needs of individuals and communities they work with 	<p>user resilience not actively encouraged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of advocating for residents and helping provide them a voice • Support plans are generally short term in focus 	<p>deliver advice locally in peoples communities. This could include co-location in other community organisations for a day a week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support plans are able to show the long term intended outcomes for individuals so they no longer require specialist services. • Advice services are able to advocate on behalf of residents and show how they are responding to needs. This may involve things such as feedback reports or a service user forum.
<p>Advice network core element one: Services are easily navigable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services are overly complex and provide a barrier to people seeking advice support • Residents remain confused about where they can get support and what support is available to them • Onward referrals are overly complicated and residents are not supported to access other specialist services. • Residents have to attend for multiple sessions or multiple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are able to get the support and advice they need, however still find it difficult to access • Advice services are being delivered but there is still some duplication of service • An online service is provided but not regularly updated and does not contain enough information • Residents receive the support needed but still experience delays in receiving it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring residents can get access to the help they need and it is easy to find the information they need • Reduce inefficiencies in the process and avoid people falling between the cracks or being bounced between the 'right' service • This could ensuring an easy to navigate online service with easy or generic questions answered on a website.

	<p>services to get support they need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents drop out from support services when being passed from one service to another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals between service take place but are inconsistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services can demonstrate that it is easy for someone to get support needed in a timely way rather than having to wait or move between services. • If referrals between services is required services have a clear efficient process for this.
<p>Advice network core element two: Planning and partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice services to not participate or contribute to the advice network • Services do not attend meetings of the network • There is little to no communication from advice services to other parts of the network. • There is no evidence of analysing needs and using this to plan how best to deliver advice services • No evidence of planning as an organisation how they will continue to be sustainable in the future or thinking about how they could meet ongoing need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of planning based on feedback and data • Advice services meet with other organisations and are part of the network but contribute little to wider plans for the network • Services take a lead on some areas but do not consistently adopt a leadership role within the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration within the advice network is encouraged to create a constant feedback loop as well as encouraging greater peer-to-peer advice and ongoing resilience in the community. • Organisations will meet regularly to share learning, reflect on needs, monitor consistency of approach, refine referral advice networks & plan for future need based on this. • Organisations also meet regularly with council advice providers to share this within the wider network of advice in Camden. • Formal members directly funded by the council will also have a plan to show

			how they will take on a strategic leadership role and support smaller community organisations that provide advice services and are not directly funded but form an important part of the wider advice network.
Advice network core element three: Gathering and using evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services have no way of collecting and storing information or data • There is no evidence of collating and analysing data and evidence • There is little to no evidence that data is being used to understand resident need and using it to inform service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is collated and stored but is very basic • Some evidence that information collected is being used to inform service delivery • Are able to show need and possible trends but unable to apply this to their long term service plans • Data is still used responsively rather than proactively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and strategic advice providers agree an agile evaluation framework that is citizen-centred and able to adapt to changing priorities. • Council, providers and community organisations proactively use data to understand trends in demand, effectiveness of the advice network (e.g. referrals, pathways, early help) and to respond.