



We Make Camden: State of the Borough 2025

How to navigate the document

Best viewing experience

This document is best viewed downloaded on a laptop or desktop computer. The interactivity will not work as well on tablets, iPads and mobile phones. You will still be able to view, scroll through and use some functionality such as hyperlinks, however the main navigation buttons on the right may be less effective.

Right hand navigation

The buttons on the right hand side take you to the different sections of the document. The 6 ambition sections each have their own contents for you to jump to a particular area with ease. Simply click on the button on the right to take you back to that section's contents. All other sections do not have a contents page.

Endnotes

Example:

In Camden in 2022, there were 6,389 children or 1 in 5 (19.8%) living in poverty, up from 13.5% in 2021.¹

To go to the reference of a particular Endnote, click on the number at the end of the paragraph.

Click on the number in the Endnotes to take you back to the page which the reference number is on.

Example:

- 1 Proportion of children living in low income households (60% of median income) before and after housing costs, Local indicators of child poverty, Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University for End Child Poverty (2022); Children in low income families: local area statistics, DWP (2022), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2022>, https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/report/Local_indicators_of_child_poverty_after_housing_costs_2021_22/23523453.

Text which is in blue and underlined is an active link. This example is a URL hyperlink which will take you to a webpage. Others may open up another document or activate an email programme.

Cross referencing

Example:

[See page 7](#)

Text which is highlighted in blue AND references a page number is an active cross reference link. This will take you to the text within that page where the cross reference is referring too.

You can click on the cross referenced text to take you back to the original active link.

Home and next/
previous page

Overviews

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

These all
have their
individual
contents
pages

WMC
Missions

Summary and
conclusion areas

About this report

The State of the Borough report is an annual report produced by Camden council. It is a shared evidence base for understanding the experience of people in Camden, with a focus on outcomes, rather than inputs or outputs. We want it to be useful to council staff, voluntary organisations, businesses operating in Camden and residents, as well as anyone interested.

Some things to note when reading the report:

Quantitative data: we have collated quantitative data mostly from trusted secondary sources, in order to allow a comparison across place and time. This helps us see whether what people in Camden experience is substantially different compared to previous years and to other places. Where possible we have also included breakdowns to smaller groups, such as ward level data, or socioeconomic data. We have also considered the confidence levels and statistical significance where these were available and relevant. The data used in the report is available at [Open Data Camden](#), including the metadata and links to the sources.

Borough comparison group: we have selected a group of boroughs to compare across all indicators, based on the Inner London boroughs and neighbouring. These are: Barnet, Brent, Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, Islington, Southwark, Newham, Hackney, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets, City of London, Greenwich, Haringey, and Lewisham. We also compare to the London and England averages where possible.

Evidence from partners: while most of the data we use in this report is from reputable secondary sources, such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Greater London Authority and government

departments, we recognise that our local organisations have a lot of accumulated knowledge and evidence about the experience of people in the borough. In November 2024 we invited partner organisations to contribute to the report from the data they have collected that relates to outcomes experienced by people in the borough. We are very grateful to the following organisations which have sent in their data: [Camden Giving](#), [University College London](#), [Citizens Advice Camden](#), [Kentish Town Community Centre](#), [Lifeafterhummus](#), [Old Diorama Arts Centre Veolia](#) and [Camden Carers](#). **Look out for 'learning from' sections in the report.**

Qualitative evidence: To ensure the State of the Borough report reflects the lived experiences of Camden's diverse communities, and to complement where we don't have quantitative data, we conducted extensive primary data collection across a range of settings. We engaged with residents through focus groups, drop-ins, community events, and targeted discussions, ensuring a broad and representative cross-section of perspectives.

We gathered qualitative insights through both traditional focus groups and more creative engagement methods. While structured discussions provided in-depth explorations of key themes, we also incorporated interactive approaches such as *Postcards to Camden*, *Pick a Number*, and *Interactive maps*, to encourage spontaneous and accessible participation, allowing residents to share their views in ways that felt meaningful to them. Quotes and insights from these are presented across the report.

To complement the primary research, we conducted a survey with colleagues across the council to identify previous engagement work with residents. This helped us incorporate a cross-cutting sample of

insights from consultations, focus groups, and surveys already conducted by different departments. We are very grateful to the following organisations for their support with our data collection efforts:

- [Camden Federation of Private Tenants](#)
- [Gospel Oak Living Room](#)
- [Kilburn Grange Children's Centre and Family Hub](#)
- [Regent's Park Children's Centre and Family Hub](#)
- [Somers Town Community Association](#)
- [South Hampstead and Kilburn Community Partnership \(SHAK\)](#)
- [St Pancras and Somers Town Living Centre](#)
- [Webheath Tenants Association](#)

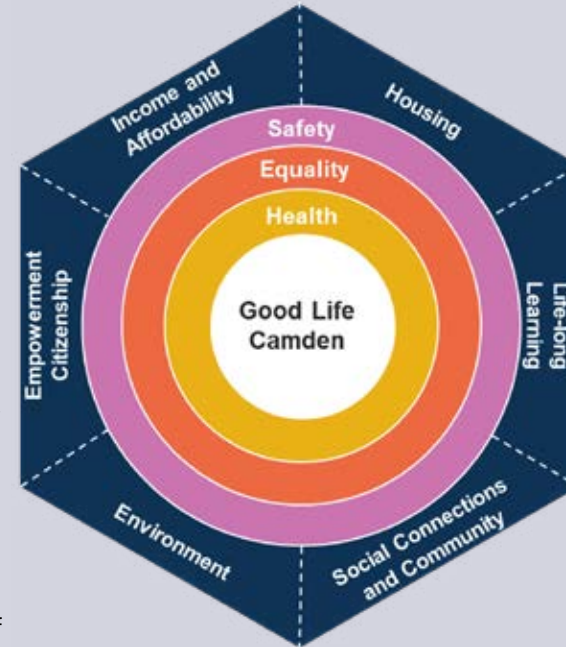
We would also like to thank the following groups and individuals who contributed to data collection:

- Adult Social Care (ASC) Co-production Group
- Carers Subgroup at the Council
- Attendees of Somali Cultural Day
- Attendees of the Youth Assembly on Violence Against Women and Girls


Finally, our thanks to all the community members and residents who participated in the data collection process.

Good Life Camden

The Good Life Camden framework was developed with residents and staff in 2022 (see [here](#) for more details). It breaks down the concept of living a good life into nine **themes**, which people told us are most important. These are: Safety, Equality, Health, Housing, Income and Affordability, Lifelong Learning, Social Connections and Community, and Environment. The themes of Safety, Health and Housing are identified as core cross-cutting themes.



We worked together to identify the **signals** that will tell us if we're making progress against the different Good Life Camden themes. The signals are underpinned by **measures**, which use data from a range of sources, such as official statistics or administrative data from schools, hospitals and transport.

Throughout the report, we have highlighted the relevant Good Life Camden signals where the data is presented and specified these at the beginning of each chapter. **Look out for these  throughout the report, presenting the relevant Good Life Camden signal in each section.**

The 6 WMC ambitions

This is Camden

Camden is a central London borough, almost 22 square kilometres in size – only about 1.4% of London by area but 9th highest in population density. It is home to internationally renowned institutions, a vibrant entertainment and nightlife scene, major transport hubs, and busy business and retail centres.

There are 11 higher education institutions in Camden, and the student population is the third largest in London. Bloomsbury has the highest share of the student population across Camden wards – around 40% of Bloomsbury residents were full-time students in the 2021 Census.

The rate of population churn, meaning the change in population from year to year with people moving in and out of the borough, is one of the highest in London. According to the [Consumer Data Research Centre's Residential Mobility Index](#), 35% of households in Camden changed from 2010 to 2020, and 59% in the decade before that. Some of the transient nature of Camden's population is explained by the high share of students, but high housing costs are also a factor.

Residents of Camden highlight the borough's unique character, accessibility, and opportunities for engagement, with one resident expressing their appreciation for Camden's diverse offerings:

“ I feel Camden provides good opportunities and, overwhelmingly, is a wonderful place to live.”

- SOTB general survey

Another resident, who regularly engages in local activities, shared how Camden's vibrant community life keeps them engaged:

“ I do a lot of volunteering in London & Camden, [I am] never bored. [There is] always something to enjoy.”

- 71+, Female, Adult Social Care Coproduction Group

Indeed, the Community Life survey (2023/24) shows that most Camden residents are happy to live in Camden. Almost 8 in 10 people in Camden said they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, higher than the London average. Around 6 in 10 people agree that they would like to still be living in their local area in five years' time, and 7 in 10 would recommend their local area to others, higher than the London average. However, fewer than 2 in 10 (15.7%) felt that the area had improved over the last few years, slightly higher than the national (11.4%) and close to the London average (17.8%). *Considering error margins, the Camden average may be the same as the London average.*

This sense of satisfaction is echoed in the experiences of a local resident who recently moved to Camden:

“ I feel like I am highly satisfied with my life at the moment since moving to Camden due to its centrality, diversity and rich artistic culture/ history. Camden has so much [...] it's exciting - it's so vast!”

- 21, Female, Polish student, Community Kitchen drop in

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

**How many people exactly live in Camden?
It's complicated!**

It is hard to confidently say exactly how many people actually live in Camden. The 2023 ONS estimate places it at about 220,000 people. However, these figures are based on the 2021 Census, which occurred during COVID restrictions – likely undercounting residents. Camden was one of just three London boroughs showing population decline, dropping 4.6% from 220,300 (2011) to 210,100 (2021), while London overall grew by 7.7%. The GLA population projections at the time for Camden were closer to 280,000, meaning the 2021 Census results were a drop of 70,000 from what we expected the population to be at the time.

Other indicators suggest a larger population:

- GP registrations show about 260,000 people (2024) (although we know people don't update these regularly)
- Council tax properties increased from 103,000 to 113,000 since 2011 (while the number of households in the Census was estimated at around 93,000)
- Electoral roll numbers fluctuated between 152,000 and 146,000, but it may be affected by political changes and new voter ID requirements

These conflicting data sources show why determining Camden's exact population remains challenging. While we think there was an underestimation in the 2021 Census for the population of Camden, we do not know what the precise number should be. However, the Census remains an important source of data for understanding the makeup of Camden's population as well as experienced outcomes, so we are confident in using these statistics throughout the report as they are the best source we have.

What can we learn from the 2021 Census about our wards?

The 2021 Census provides a very rich and detailed dataset that we can explore for gaining insights about the population in relatively small areas, such as wards. We have looked at around 40 indicators and compared these across the 20 wards of Camden. The analysis shows some interesting findings:

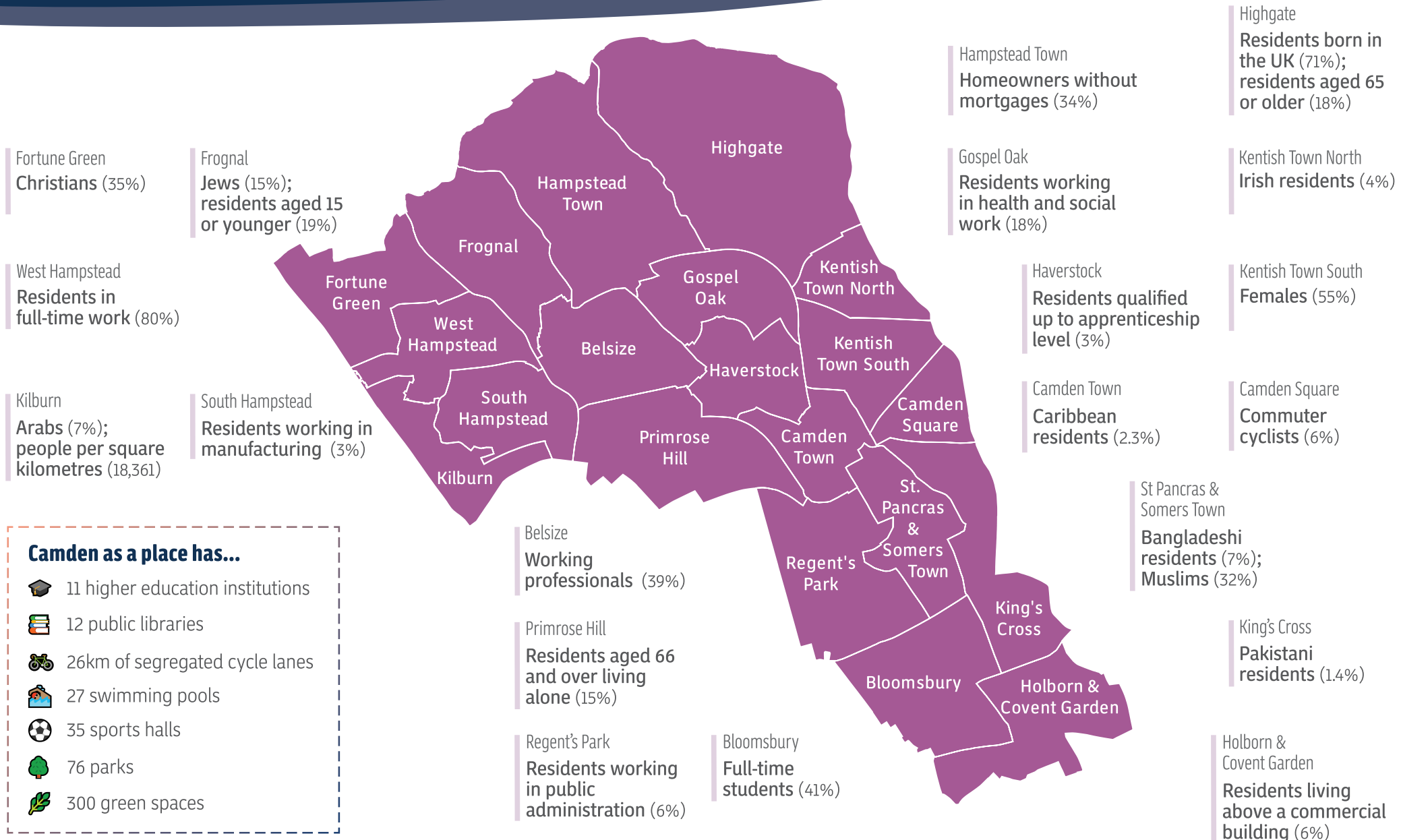
- In some areas, the population across wards is fairly similar, such as the sex distribution (male/female), disabled people in the household, full-time work, Christian, UK born and living in the UK over 10 years.
- For other areas, there are big differences across wards, such as for Jewish, Muslim, Bangladeshi and Arab people, who live in more concentrated areas in Camden, as well as students. Overcrowding is more concentrated in some wards compared to others, as well as social rent, detached housing, and people who walk to work.
- St Pancras & Somers Town, Hampstead and Highgate stand out as being at the top or at the bottom of the distribution across a range of variables. St Pancras & Somers Town stands out for most social renting (64%), overcrowding (18.1%), apprenticeships as highest qualification (2.7%), Bangladeshi (18.5%), 4 or more people in the household (22.3%), disabled people (19.1%), Muslim (31.9%) and providing 20 hours or more of unpaid care (4.9%). Hampstead tops the charts for most housing owned outright (33.8%), aged 65 and over (18.1%), working from home (70.5%), and level 4 qualifications and above (75.5%), whereas Highgate tops the charts for most detached housing (7.8%), and UK born (71.3%).

This ward-level data shows that some of the expected differences which can be related to housing affordability and availability are indeed evident, but that there are other differences which make each of these areas unique in some way. In the map below, we have computed for each ward, what indicator or category that ward is highest in.

Did you know? This ward has the most...

...compared to other wards, based on the 2021 Census.

The 6 WMC ambitions



Best Start

Camden is a borough where every child has the best start in life



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In 2024, there were 1,532 children who are Camden residents and had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, and 1,065 pupils with EHC plans in Camden schools (not all of whom are also residents) **21**

People are safe in their homes 23

Camden has a higher rate of children with a child protection plan than national and London levels (45.7 per 10,000 children), and rates of Children Looked After (at 59 per 10,000) are lower than the national average **23**

There were 110 proven criminal offences were committed by children (aged 10-17) in Camden in 2023/24, or a rate of 66.2 offences per 10,000 children **24**

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Childhood is a critical period for life outcomes - it lays the foundation for lifelong health and well-being. Early experiences, including education, health, and social interactions, shape later development. Positive childhood conditions can lead to better educational attainment, healthier lifestyles, and greater social and economic opportunities in adulthood.

This chapter presents the latest available data about how children in Camden are faring across a range of issues. Poverty is still a reality for one in five children, rising to two in every five children after housing costs are considered. Full-time childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds can cost around £15,000 a year, which may contribute to the lower uptake of early years education compared to London and England. The high cost of childcare, combined with other financial pressures, has made it difficult for some parents to justify returning to work. One local resident talked about the need for support and investment in youth in order to address inequality:

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

- Kilburn Resident, A Blueprint for Change research by Camden Giving

Despite facing barriers, young people in Camden have good opportunities when they leave school, and children achieve good educational attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4. Notably, the attainment gap between disadvantaged and advantaged students is narrower than in London and England, indicating effective support for disadvantaged students.

On a positive note, 94% of Key Stage 4 pupils progressed to sustained education destinations in 2022/23, and rates of 16-17-year-olds who are engaged in Education, Employment, or Training are higher than the London and England rates. In Camden, 24% of secondary school pupils missed more than 10% of sessions in 2023/24, which might impact their long-term educational outcomes.

The rates of Children Looked After are lower than national and London averages, although there is a higher rate of children with child protection plans than national levels. In 2023/24, there were 110 proven criminal offences committed by children, or a rate of 66.2 per 10,000 children aged 10-17.

Good Life Camden

This chapter includes signals from the Health, Education, Income and Affordability, and Safety themes:

- ◆ Young people have good opportunities when they leave school
- ◆ Schools are safe, inclusive and accessible
- ◆ People are safe in their homes
- ◆ Young people can afford a good life in Camden
- ◆ A good life is affordable in Camden

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

Key insights

In Camden, 2 in 5 children are in poverty



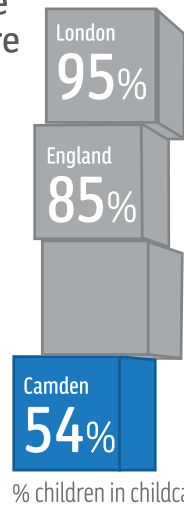
Childcare in Camden for a 3-4 year- old costs

£15,000 per year

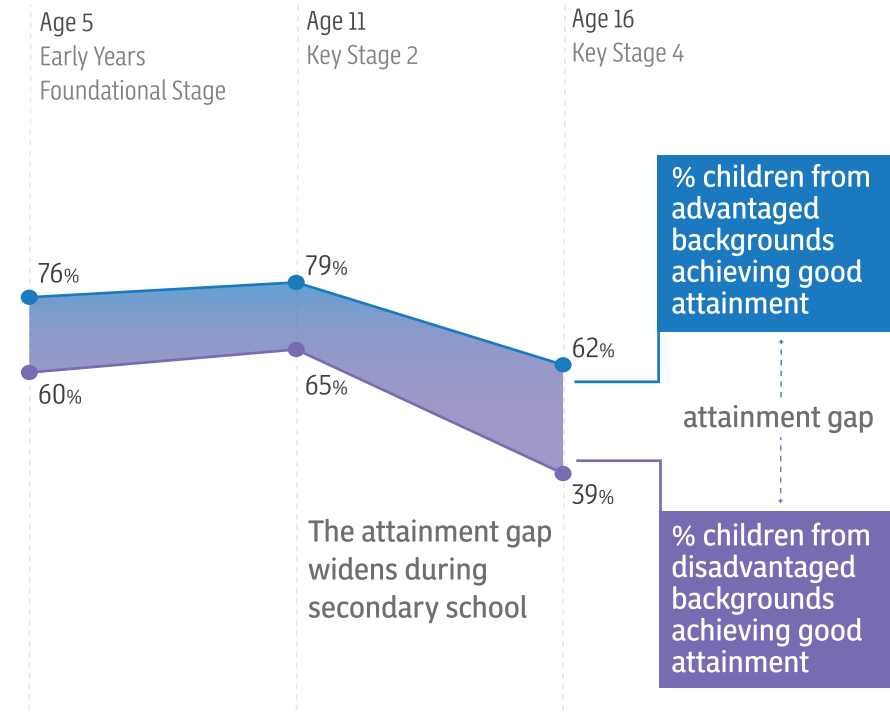
“If I’m going to work, half of my salary will go to childcare...”

“Childcare is not affordable”

Camden children aged 3-4 are less likely to be in childcare



Fewer children from disadvantaged backgrounds have good attainment in school compared to their peers



Good Life Camden 

A good life is affordable in Camden

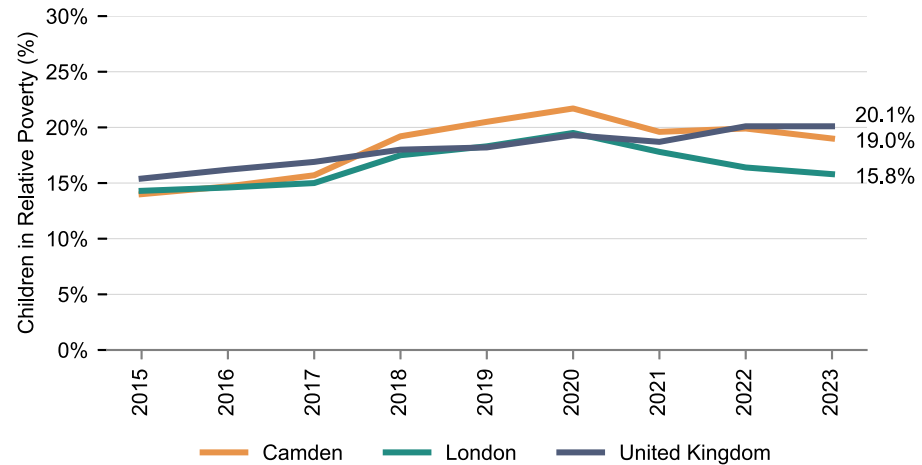
In Camden, two in five children live in poverty, after housing costs are considered

Over the last decade, the rates of child poverty have increased across the United Kingdom. A large proportion of children in Camden are growing up in relative poverty. Relative poverty refers to people living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year. Camden has a lower proportion of children living in relative poverty (before housing costs are considered) than the UK average (20.1%) but higher when compared to the London average rate (15.8%).

In 2023, there were almost 1 in 5 (19.0%) living in relative poverty, slightly down from 19.9% in 2022.¹ When housing costs are factored in, Camden has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country. Nearly 15,691 children, almost 2 in 5 (39%), are living in poverty after housing costs, making Camden the borough with the fourth-highest rate in London². One of the driving forces behind this is the borough’s high housing costs, with house prices and rents exceeding the national average.

Child poverty varies significantly across areas in Camden. In the south of the borough, the rates of relative poverty (before housing costs) are significantly higher, with Holborn and Covent Garden (43.4%) and St Pancras and Somers Town (38.2%) seeing some of the highest levels. In contrast, in the northern wards such as Hampstead Town (3.3%) and Frognal (4.3%) rates are much lower.

Figure 1.1: Proportion of children living in relative poverty before housing costs, 2015-2023



Source: Children in Low Income Families, DWP, 2023

For many families, these financial pressures force difficult trade-offs in their daily lives. The strain of high living expenses extends beyond food to other essentials, like heating. Another parent at the focus group shared how their family copes with soaring energy bills:

“ We only heat up the living room in our house, so the corridor, the kitchen, and everywhere else is cold. We keep the living room door closed—that’s our warm space. The bill is getting quite crazy at the end of the month.”

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

One mother praised the level of engagement in her area, noting how well-connected families were to services:

The 6 WMC ambitions

“ I think with this community especially, they are very forthcoming with health visitors, leaflets, and the children’s centres here and in Somers Town. But I do have family and friends that live in Camden, but in different areas, that don’t have this much access.”

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

Another parent noted:

“ This [centre] has a lot of activities and has good ratings online compared to the other ones, and I think it’s due to the engagement with the parents and getting involved with the things they have to offer.”

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

Her insights highlight the importance of strong community networks and active engagement in providing children and families with the support they need. But as these discussions reveal, not everyone in Camden has similar experiences. These inequalities in education and early years mirror the broader economic disparities across the borough, with an impact on children’s opportunities later in life.

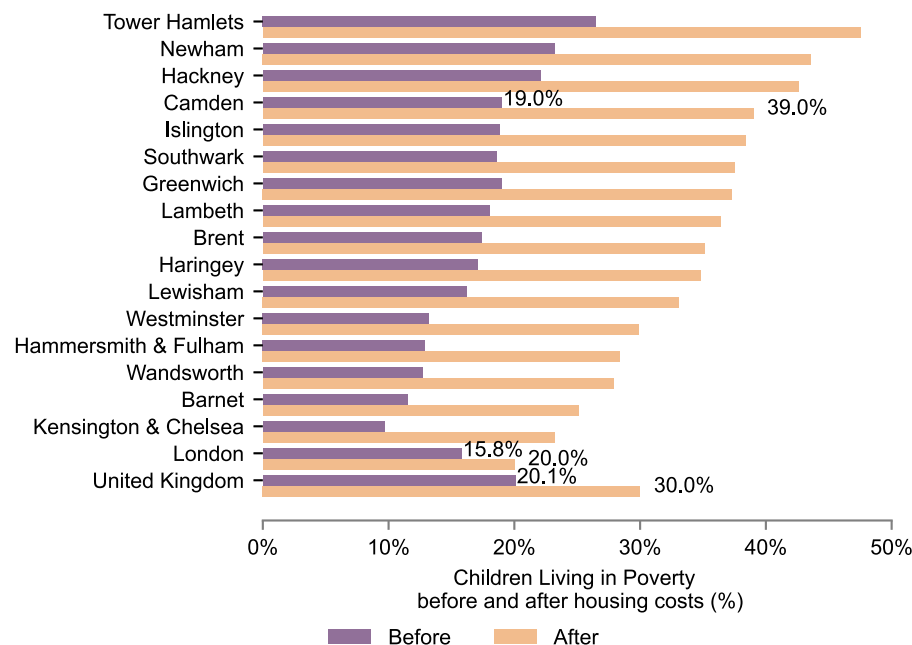
For parents in Camden, the impact of income inequalities are clear. One mother, speaking at a focus group, reflected on the differences she had noticed between communities in different parts of the borough:

“ The disparity between the school in Kilburn and the school in West Hampstead is quite large.”

- Female, Focus group discussion with parents at Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre

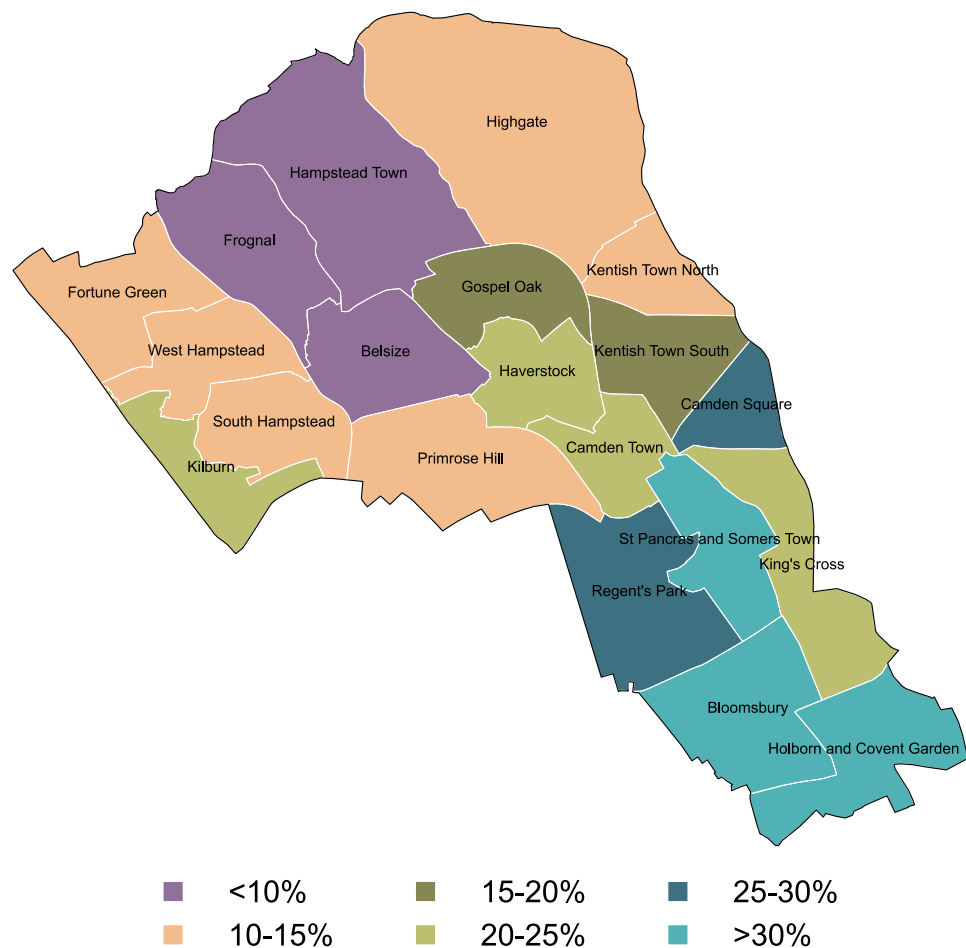
This divide extends beyond schools to early years, as another group of parents discussed during a focus group. Stories like these illustrate the realities of living in a borough where high housing and living costs leave little room for anything beyond the bare necessities. Families are forced to make tough decisions—whether it’s rationing heating to control energy bills or compromising on their own nutrition to ensure their children eat well.

Figure 1.2: Proportion of children in poverty before and after housing costs 2022-23



Sources: Local indicators of child poverty, Loughborough University, 2022/2023; Children in low income families: local area statistics, DWP, 2023

Figure 1.3: Proportion of children living in relative poverty (60% or below median household income) by Camden wards (2023)



Source: Children in low income families, DWP, 2023

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Full-time childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds can cost around £15,000 a year; and uptake of a place in early years education is lower in Camden than London or England

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Early years education is important because it provides important opportunities to learn and develop. Early learning paves the way for learning at school and throughout life, and what children learn in their first few years of life can have long-lasting effects on their success and health as children, teens, and adults.

For parents in Camden, the availability of early years services has made a significant difference. A mother who attended a focus group at Regent’s Park Children’s Centre shared how valuable local nursery and childcare facilities have been in supporting her as a new parent:

“ You do get a lot of help from them [the nursery and childcare facilities]. You can ask for what you need. My health visitor told me about it—especially as a new mother, it’s harder to find places to go.”

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

This sentiment is echoed by another parent who reflected on the support she had received at Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre:

“ Absolutely brilliant. Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre has wonderful services such as breastfeeding support, Stay and Play, and really knowledgeable, kind staff. I feel so lucky to live here in this sense.”

- 35-44, Female, SOTB parents and carers survey

For families in Camden, access to early years services is more than just a convenience—it plays a key role in shaping their children’s future. A participant in a community-led research project by Camden Giving highlighted how these resources contribute to long-term development:

“ Having access to a lot of amenities and services, especially for young children, the youth, babies—all these things really shape who you are as adults. I’m very fortunate to have all of these things on their doorstep.”

- Somerstown Researcher, A Blueprint for Change research by Camden Giving

Despite the key role of early years education, the high cost of childcare remains a barrier for many families. In 2024, nursery fees in Camden cost £8 per hour, at the median, matching the London median rate.³ According to the children’s charity Coram’s *Childcare Survey 2024*, the cost of childcare across the UK has continued to rise, with London being the most expensive region.⁴ On average, sending a two-year-old to nursery part-time (25 hours per week) costs £8,194 per year, while full-time childcare (50 hours per week) for three- and four-year-olds can reach £15,000 annually. While there are some schemes offering funded childcare hours, these do not cover full-time childcare and are usually only during term time (38 weeks a year), and have different criteria for eligibility.

For many parents, these high costs make accessing childcare difficult, limiting their ability to work or pursue employment. Parents shared the tough financial decisions they face:

“ I can’t access the free hours of childcare because my husband works full-time. They said, if I’m working, they might take me, so now I am trying to find a job so my son can go to nursery. If I’m going to work, half of my salary will go to childcare. I cannot work part-time, I have to work full-time, so I can let him go to nursery. Childcare is not affordable.”

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

“ I am really scared of going to find a job and trying to pay...but obviously it’s worrying because I don’t have any support family-wise...so that’s just a worry.”

- Focus group discussion with parents at Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre

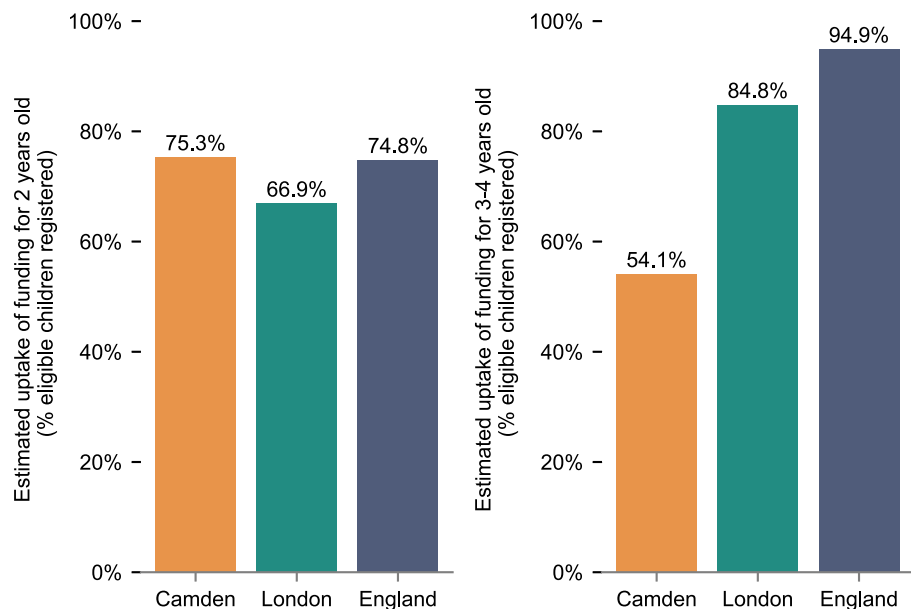
Beyond affordability, a lack of awareness about available childcare support prevents some parents from accessing help. Information about eligibility and application processes is sometimes hard to access, leaving some families unaware of the options available to them. Another mother reflected on how this lack of communication meant she missed out on support:

“ For me, when I first became a mum with my first one, I didn’t know about the two-year-old [funding] scheme and I didn’t find that out till he was three. I didn’t know it existed, I thought we had to wait to access it. At the time, nobody told me, and I didn’t find out.”

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

The uptake of early years education in Camden has been in decline since 2018. In 2024, Camden had a significantly lower overall participation rate in early years education (56%) compared to London (82%) and England (93%). While Camden’s uptake rate for two-year-olds (75%) is higher than the national and London averages, participation drops sharply for three- and four-year-olds, with only 54% enrolled—well below England’s 95% and London’s 85%.⁵

Figure 1.4: Children registered/take-up rates for 2-year-olds and 3 and 4-year-olds in Camden, England and London



Source: Department for Education, 2024

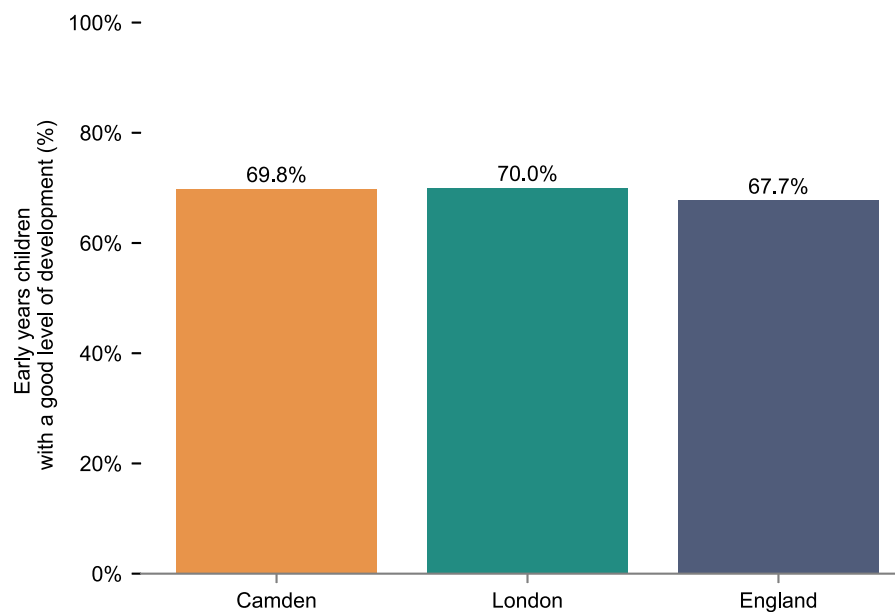
In 2024, 99% of Camden’s early years settings were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted and 70% of children achieved a good level of development, higher than the national average

Despite the high costs and the lower uptake, since 2018, Camden has consistently had a high proportion of high-quality early years education. In 2024, 99% of Camden’s early years settings for 2–4-year-old children entitled to 15 hours, were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, well above the Inner London (92.1%) and England (92.4%) average. For those

children registered for the 30-hour entitlement, at 98.1%, again Camden was above the averages of Inner London (93%) and England (95%).

In 2024 more than 2 in 3 children, at 69.8%, achieved a good level of development in early years education in Camden, higher than the England average (67.9%), but just slightly lower than average for the rest of London (70%). In Camden, the 2024 result shows a consistent upward trend from 67.2% in 2022 to 68.4% in 2023. As a result of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) reforms introduced in September 2021, it is not possible to compare assessment outcomes with earlier years.⁶

Figure 1.5: Percentage of children in early years education with a good level of development, 2024



Source: Department for Education, 2023/2024

The 6 WMC ambitions

School demographics

Schools in Camden at a glance

As of school census day, Autumn 2024

| Type of school | Number of schools | Number of students |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Mainstream schools | | |
| Nursery * | 1 | 106 |
| Primary ** | 35 | 9,319 |
| Secondary | 9 | 8,970 |
| Other settings | | |
| Special | 3 | 332 |
| Pupil referral unit | 2 | 46 |
| Free Schools / Academies / AP *** | 5 | 1,690 |
| Independent schools / colleges | 31 | 9,374 |

* Nurseries attached to primary schools are included in primary school figures

** 29 primary schools have nurseries attached to them

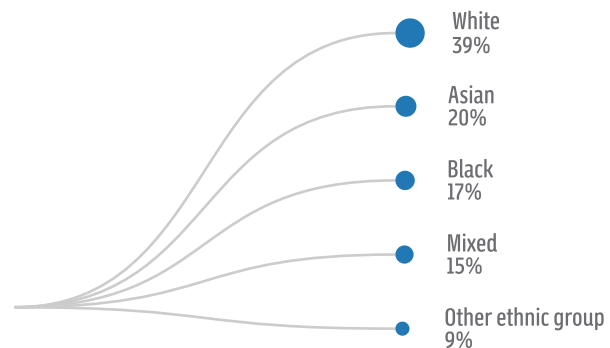
*** AP = Alternative Provision

Student demographics

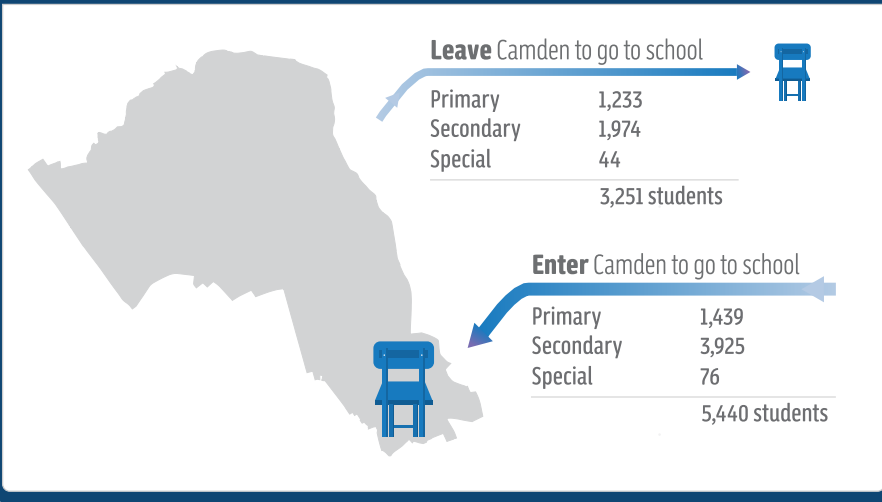
99

languages are spoken by students in Camden schools

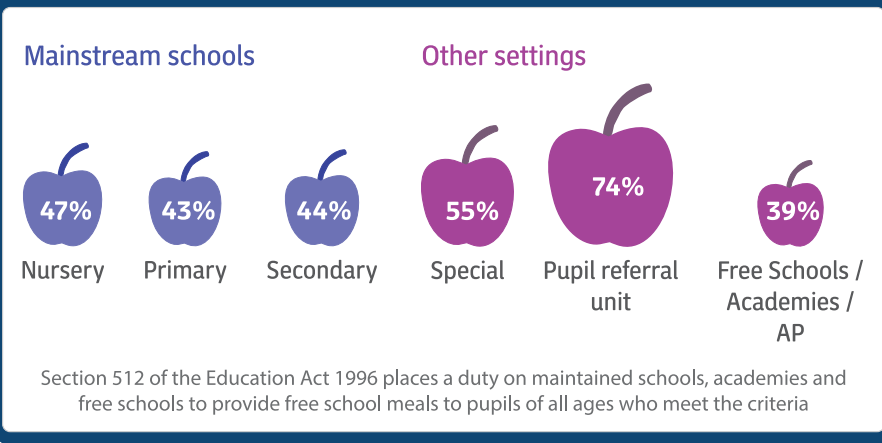
Ethnic background of students at Camden schools (%)



Number of students commuting out of / into Camden for school



% of students eligible for Free School Meals



The 6 WMC ambitions

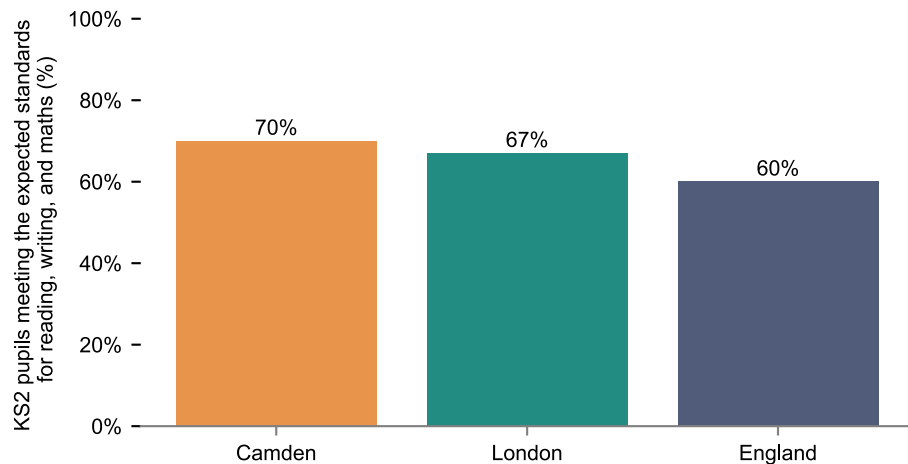
Good Life Camden 

◆ Young people have good opportunities when they leave school

Children achieve good levels of educational attainment at Key Stage 2 and 4

At the end of the academic year 2023/24, 98% of Camden’s schools were rated ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted and the attainment of children leaving both primary and secondary education is better than the national average.

Figure 1.6: Percentage of pupils meeting expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 (KS2), 2024



Source: Department for Education, 2023/2024

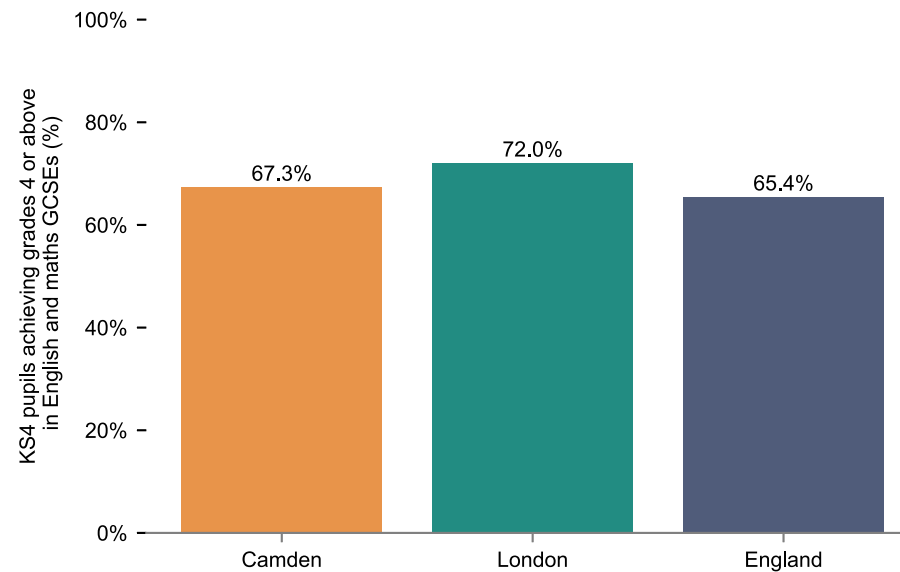
In 2024, at key stage two (KS2), 72% of pupils in Camden achieved the expected standard in combined reading, writing and maths, which is an increase on 70% the previous year. This represents a higher proportion of pupils in Camden who met the expected standard at

KS2 than both the London (69%) and England averages (61%)⁷. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic, particularly at the end of year 2 and in year 3.

At Key Stage 4 (KS4), 50.7% pupils in Camden achieved a ‘strong pass’, or grade 5 or above in English and mathematics in their GCSEs in 2024 (50.3% last year). Camden has higher rate of strong passes in English and mathematics than the average for England (46.2%), and similar levels to London (50.8%).⁸

! Important to note: data is based on school pupils in Camden, not Camden residents. Some Camden school pupils live outside the borough and some Camden residents go to school outside of the borough.

Figure 1.7: Percentage of pupils achieving grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs in 2024



Source: Department for Education, 2023/2024

The 6 WMC ambitions

The gap in attainment between disadvantaged and advantaged students in Camden remains narrower than London and England across all education stages

Looking beyond average attainment is helpful to understand inequality in the borough. Having access to additional resources, such as after-school classes, tutoring, and adult supervision can have an impact on educational and later life outcomes. The Department for Education assesses the gaps in outcomes between pupils considered disadvantaged and those who are not. Disadvantaged pupils are defined as pupils who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point during the previous 6 years, along with any adopted children, looked-after children and children with parents in the armed services.⁹

Nationally, disadvantaged pupils achieve lower levels of attainment at all stages compared to their peers, although disadvantaged pupils in Camden performed better than their counterparts nationwide. Additionally, the attainment gap between the two groups is smaller in Camden compared to the national average across all key stages.

In 2024, 60.2% of children eligible for free school meals achieved good levels of development at the Early Years Foundation Stage, exceeding both the national and London averages. The attainment gap of disadvantaged children with their peers was 15.7 percentage points (ppts) which was narrower than the gap nationally (20.5 ppts) and just slightly wider than the London gap (15.4 ppts).¹⁰

At Key Stage 2, 65% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard in Camden, compared to 79% of their advantaged peers. Camden’s disadvantaged pupils score well above the national average (46%), and the attainment gap of 14 ppts between disadvantaged pupils and their peers remains narrower than the national and London gap (22 and 18 ppts respectively).¹¹

At Key Stage 4, the proportion of Camden’s disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and Mathematics in their GCSEs (39%) is above national (26%) and London (38%) averages. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Camden (23 ppts) is narrower than the gap nationally (27 ppts), and the gap in London (24 ppts).¹²

Figure 1.8: The gap in percentage points between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at key stages of development in Camden, London and England (2023/24)



Source: Department for Education, 2023/24

Nearly one in four (24%) of Camden secondary school pupils missed more than 10% of sessions in 2023/24

Missing school can have an impact on children’s educational, emotional and social development. Absence rates are linked to attainment - students with lower educational attainment also miss school more often. The pandemic had a significant impact on attendance that pupils

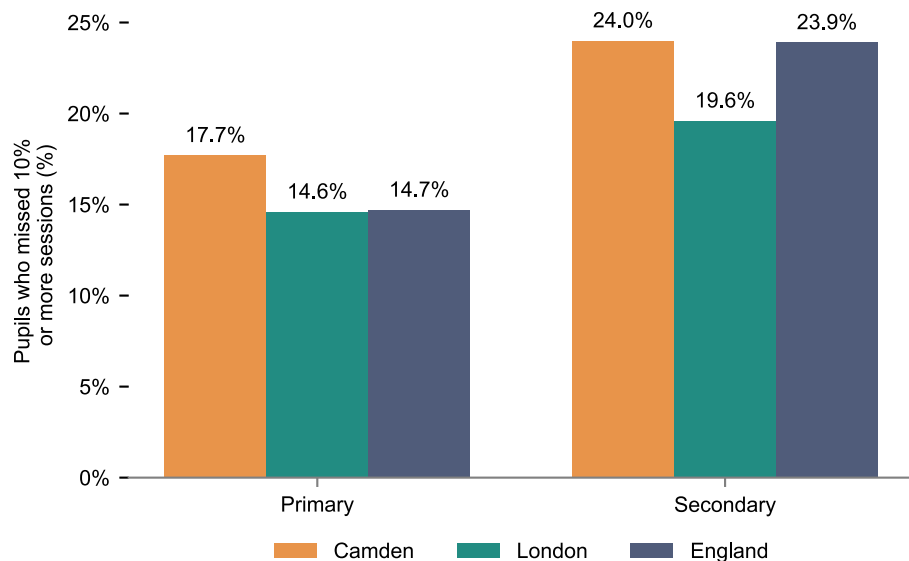
The 6 WMC ambitions

and schools are still recovering from, and attendance rates haven't yet recovered, although there are signs of improvement.

Attendance at Camden's primary schools was higher in 2023/24¹³ than in 2022/23 (94.4% compared to 93.3%) but remains lower than the 2018/19 pre-pandemic rate of 95.8%. This is also just lower than comparable rates for London and England, which were 94.7% and 94.8% respectively¹⁴.

Secondary school attendance in 2023/24 is in line with 2022/23 attendance (91.2% compared to 91.1% last year), but lower than the comparable rate for London and England rate (93.3% and 92.0% respectively). Secondary overall attendance also remains below the 2018/19 pre-pandemic rate of 94.9%.

Figure 1.9: Pupils who missed 10% or more sessions 2023-24



Source: Department for Education, 2023/24

Persistent absence is pupils missing 10% or more of sessions. Autumn/Spring data for 2023/24 indicates that 1,505 primary school children in Camden were classified as being persistently absent. This represents 17.7% of Camden primary school children, higher than the London rate of 14.6% and a national rate of 14.7%.¹⁵ At secondary schools, there were 1,894 persistently absent secondary pupils in Camden in 2023/24. This represents 24% of secondary school pupils and again is higher than the comparable London rate of 19.6% and national rate of 23.9%.

In 2023/24, Camden issued 546 fixed penalty notices,¹⁶ of which 464 were for unauthorised leave in term time and 83 were for persistent absence. Overall, this is a reduction on the 646 issued in 2022/23.

Good Life Camden ☺

📍 Young people can afford a good life in Camden

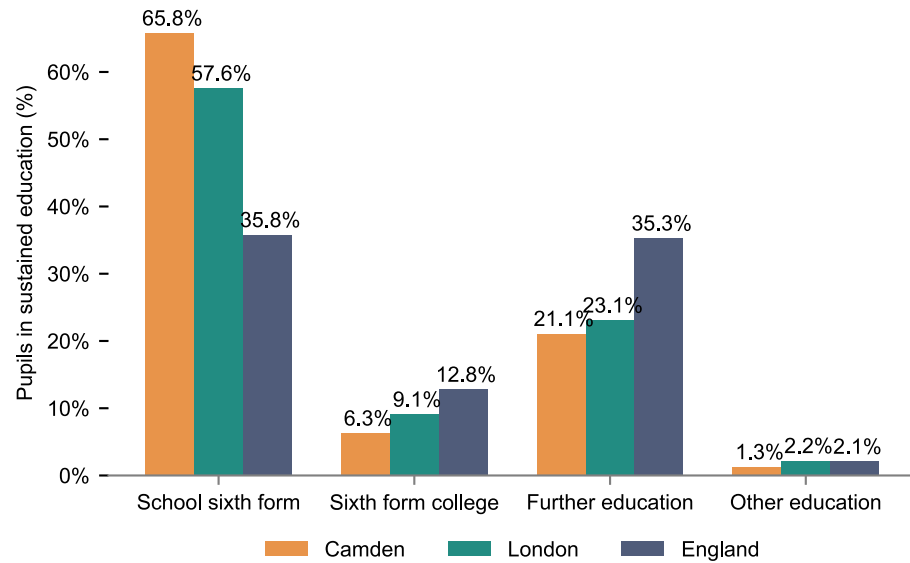
94.5% of Key Stage 4 Camden pupils progressed to sustained education destinations in 2022/23

After Key Stage 4 or GCSEs, 95.6% of pupils from Camden's mainstream and special schools progressed in 2022/23 into further education, work or apprenticeships, the highest of all the Inner London Boroughs

94.5% of pupils in Camden went on to sustained education destinations (uninterrupted participation for at least 6 months) in 2022/23, which was higher than national average (86%) and the London average (92%) and an increase from last year (93.0%).

66% of the cohort went on to a school sixth form (all secondary schools in Camden have a sixth form), which is much higher than the national (36%) and London averages (58%). This means that far fewer students in Camden went onto FE colleges (21%) or a sixth form college (6%).¹⁷

Figure 1.10: National and regional comparison of sustained education 2022/23



Source: Department for Education, 2023/24

Good Life Camden ☺

📍 Schools are safe, inclusive and accessible

% of students with SEN support or an EHCP

As of school census day, Autumn 2024

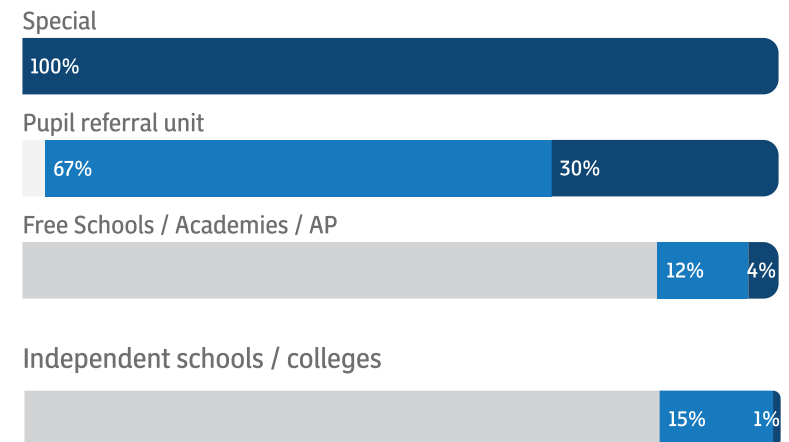
% students with

- Special Education Needs (SEN) support
- An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Mainstream schools



Other settings

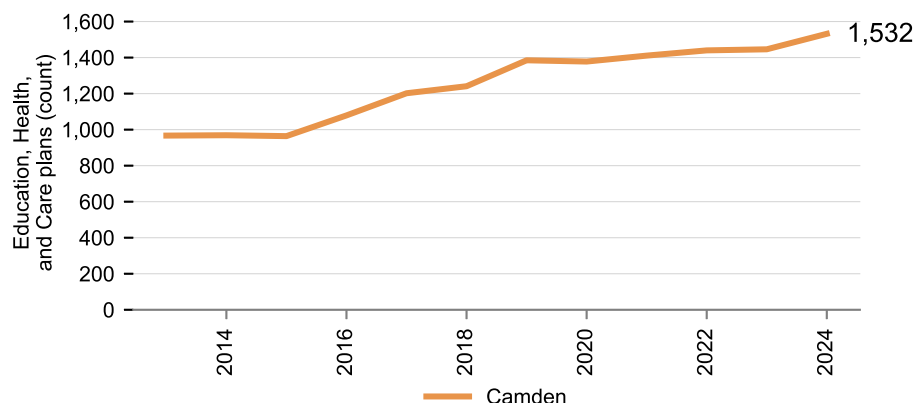


The 6 WMC ambitions

In 2024, there were 1,532 children who are Camden residents and had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, and 1,065 pupils with EHC plans in Camden schools (not all of whom are also residents)

An EHC plan is a legal document which describes a child or young person’s special educational needs, the support they need, the outcomes they would like to achieve and the placement they should be in. The data on children with EHC plans in Camden is available both for children who are in Camden schools (but not necessarily residents) and children who are residents (but not necessarily in Camden schools).

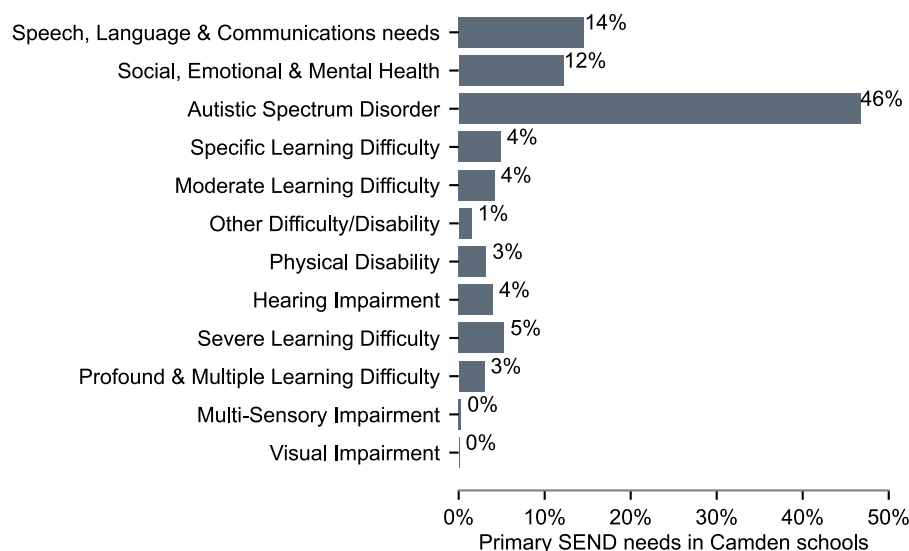
Figure 1.11: Number of EHCPs in Camden (residents) 2013-2024



Source: Department for Education, 2013-2024

In January 2024 in Camden state funded schools (nurseries, primaries, secondaries, special, pupil referral units (PRUs) and in alternative provision), there were 4,109 children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Of those, 1,065 pupils had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Another 3,044 pupils were receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) support in school. Overall, both groups made up 19% of the total number of the Camden school population.¹⁸

Figure 1.12: Proportion of Primary SEN need in Camden schools 2024



Source: Department for Education, 2024

47% of Camden’s school children with EHCPs have Autistic Spectrum Disorder recorded as the primary need. This is broadly in line with the rates seen within School Census data both locally and nationally.¹⁹

Not all Camden school students live in Camden – 17% of the pupils who have an EHC plan or are receiving SEN support live out of the borough. Similarly, not all Camden residents with SEN attend Camden schools – some attend schools in other areas, some attend independent schools (including some residential).

In January 2024,²⁰ there were 1,532 children with EHC plans living in Camden, whether in Camden schools or others. Over the last decade there has been a steady increase in EHC plans in Camden.

Some 72% of Camden children with EHC plans are boys, partially explained by the fact that girls are generally assessed later than boys. In terms of ethnic groups, 34% of Camden students with EHC plans are White, 19% are Asian or Asian British, 18% are Black or Black British, 12% of Mixed ethnicity and 6% other ethnicities.

The 6 WMC ambitions

In 2024, 45% of Camden children with SEND attended mainstream schools with another 5% in resource bases in mainstream schools, 27% attended special schools and 14% were in further education. There has been very little change in this split over the past 5 years.²¹

Families of children with additional needs often face challenges in accessing adequate support. One parent spoke about long waiting times for assessments:

“ I have children with additional needs and have had to wait an excessive number of years on waiting lists for access to SEN assessments [...] There are not enough SEN services for children in the borough.”

- Female, SOTB parents and carers survey

Another parent expressed frustration over the lack of after-school support for children with SEND, explaining how it was harder for single parents to find a community:

“ School finishes at 3pm, and there is still a long afternoon ahead. My son has special needs, so that’s a struggle to find after-school clubs because he needs 1:1 support. I don’t want to drop him off and leave—I’d like a space where kids can play, do homework together. As a single parent, it’s a long day, and it would be nice to have a space where I feel like I belong in the community.”

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

Beyond SEN provision, schools also have a role in fostering inclusivity for students from diverse backgrounds. Parents we spoke with have highlighted the importance of representation and celebration of different cultures within schools. A South Asian mother at a focus group at Regent’s Park Children’s Centre reflected on how primary schools promote inclusivity:

“ With primary schools, it was more multicultural [than secondary schools], so they celebrated Eid, Diwali, and they made sure all kids were involved in all celebrations, which was nice for kids to understand why people do certain things and how they celebrate.”

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

Another parent felt that schools could do more to ensure a broader representation of cultures, with one Sri-Lankan parent suggesting:

“ My daughter is six. They [schools] do have Culture Day, but they should celebrate different countries. Say Sri Lanka—they should ask people who are Sri Lankans to come to the stage and do activities, what they are famous for... Then other people get to know and learn about different cultures.”

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

Beyond cultural representation, Camden schools have also been praised for their sensitivity in accommodating religious practices. A parent shared an example of how a school supported fasting students during Ramadan:

“ When one of the students in my child’s class was fasting, the school was respectful—they brought the parents into the school before the school started and talked about how they can work out the lunch hours.”

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

This highlights the value of inclusion not only in the curriculum but in everyday school experiences, ensuring that all students—regardless of ability, background, or faith—feel supported and respected.

Good Life Camden ↻

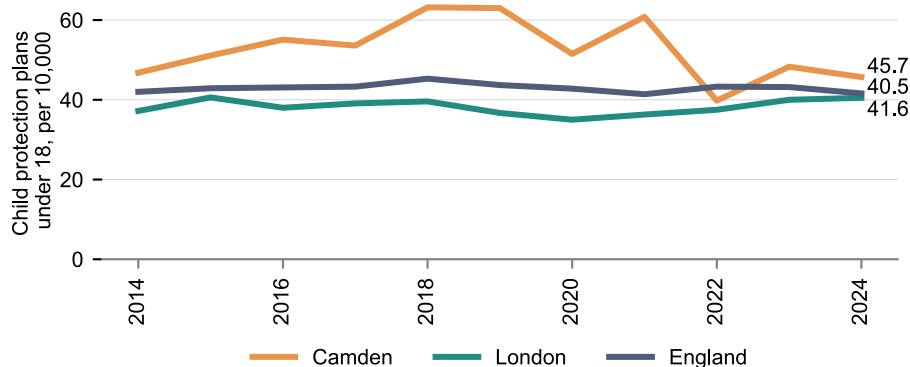
◆ People are safe in their homes

Camden has a higher rate of children with a child protection plan than national and London levels (45.7 per 10,000 children), and rates of Children Looked After (at 59 per 10,000) are lower than the national average

The safeguarding of the most vulnerable children is one of the most important responsibilities of a local authority. Child Protection Plans are an important tool put in place by the local authority’s social care service to help keep children safe from harm and support families.

At the end of March 2024, there were 166 children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Camden, down from a peak of 329 in 2019, a reduction of 49%. That figure represents a rate of 45.7 per 10,000 children, higher when compared to London (40.5) and national averages (41.6).²²

Figure 1.13: Rate of Child Protection Plan (per 10,000 children), 2014-2024

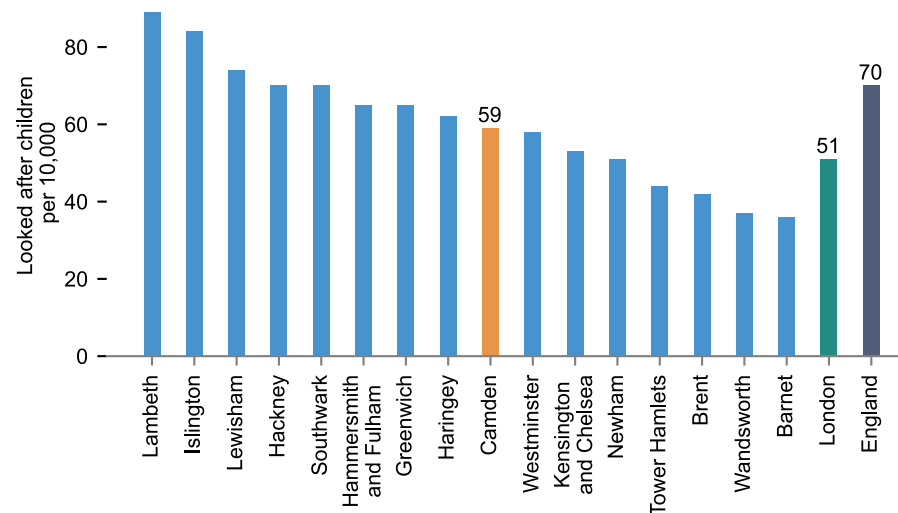


Source: Department for Education, 2014-2024

Sometimes local authority social care teams need to take children into their care to prevent serious harm. At the end of March 2024, there were 214 Children Looked After (CLA) in Camden’s care. Since 2014, the number of CLA has remained relatively stable, between 185 and 220 children, although there has been an increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) becoming looked after during this period.

The Camden CLA rate per 10,000 of the under-18 population at the end of March 2024 was 59, lower than the national average rate (70) but higher than the London average (51). This is a reduction from 54 per 10,000 in 2023.²³ At end of March 2024, a third (33%) of Camden CLA were aged 16+, though that has reduced from more than half (54%) in 2018/19, and while still higher than the national average, it is more or less in line with Inner London.

Figure 1.14: Looked after children (per 10,000) across Inner London and Camden neighbours, 2024



Source: Department for Education

The 6 WMC ambitions

There were 38 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after by Camden (18% of Camden’s CLA cohort) at the end of March 2024. Due to the trauma experienced by those children and young people, cases are becoming increasingly complex. Meeting their needs involves navigating legal procedures, addressing language barriers and providing specialised mental health and safeguarding support to help them rebuild stability.

As part of the ‘A Place to Call Home’ project, Camden Council conducted research to further understand the challenges faced by young people in complex housing situations. This research explored how best to ensure that by 2040, all young people in Camden—especially those in vulnerable circumstances—have stable accommodation and the support they need to thrive.

As one young person experiencing homelessness said:

“Because of the housing situation I couldn’t go to uni this year, I had to delay it for next year. I feel like I just want to start a new life.”

Another young person said:

“Because of my anxiety I don’t go out much. [Someone] said I should decorate [my room] to make it feel like a home...some funding could help young people to get a TV, that would be great.”

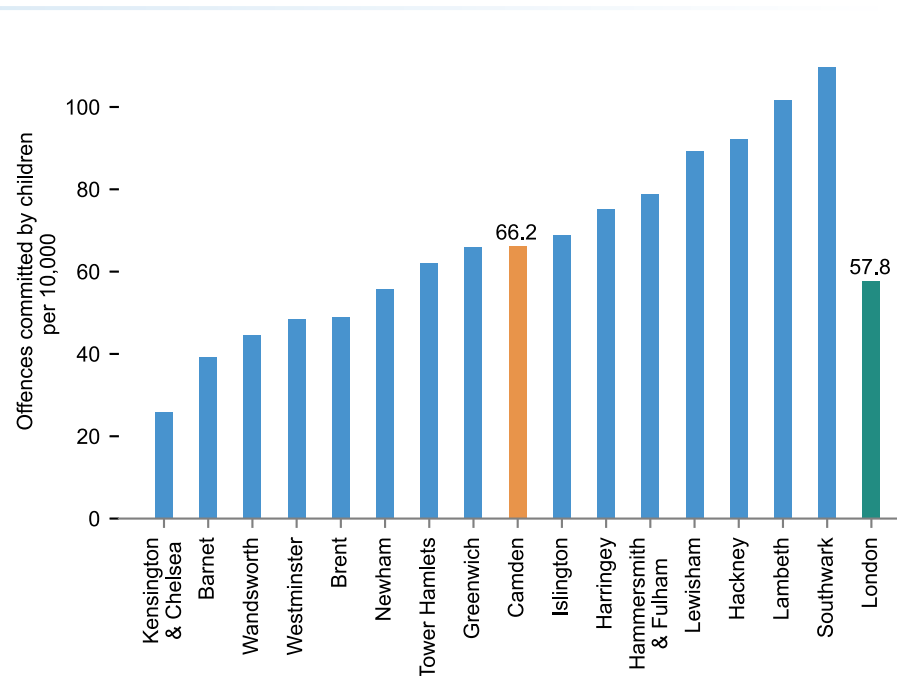
And another said:

“That’s the best thing you guys could do: ... something where you could put information on how you are as a person [and it] sends you to a place where you can meet like-minded people and build community.”

There were 110 proven criminal offences were committed by children (aged 10-17) in Camden in 2023/24, or a rate of 66.2 offences per 10,000 children

When children engage in criminal behaviour, it not only endangers their own well-being but can also impact on other children. In 2023/24, there were 110 proven criminal offences committed by children (aged 10-17) in Camden, or a rate of 66.2 per 10,000 children. The number of offences is a 12% increase on the year before (98) and is above the overall London rate (57.8 per 10,000).

Figure 1.15: Number of offences committed by children in Camden, 2013/14-2022/23



Source: Youth Justice Statistics, 2023/2024

The 6 WMC ambitions

The top offences committed by children in Camden in 2024 included violence against a person (38% up from 22% last year), theft and handling stolen goods (15%) and drugs (13%). The total number of crimes committed by young people in Camden has gone down by 74% since 2016/17, when there were 425 proven criminal offences.

The number of children receiving a caution or sentence has steadily declined since 2016/17, along with the number of those receiving custodial sentences requiring time in a young offenders' institution. In 2023/24, out of 69 youth cautions or sentences given to children in Camden, none resulted in a custodial sentence. This decrease is likely, in part, due to an increase in the use of diversionary outcomes in recent years – an alternative outcome that does not result in a criminal record, avoids escalation into the formal youth justice system and the associated stigmatisation.

Of the Camden cohort of children who were cautioned or sentenced, 96% were boys, 29% were white, 27% black and 18% mixed; and 92% were aged 15-17.²⁴

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2023>
- 2 For after Housing costs - Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University for End Child Poverty (2024) <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2024/> https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Faaf1a18515da0e792f78-c27fdabe952dfc357fe25ebf5c8897ee.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com%2F2010%2FChid%2Bpoverty%2BAHC%2B2015-2023_Local%2BAuthorities%2Band%2BConstituencies.xlsx%3Fv%3D1716657555000&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK
- 3 Childcare and early years provider survey <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2024?subjectId=7d026147-3a35-4fd4-b167-08dd12e1837b>
- 4 Coram <https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/Childcare%20Survey%202024.pdf>
- 5 Registered/Take Ups <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/data-set/43f1e8f7-e4d5-430c-b66a-76fae32532ad>
- 6 GLD <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results>
- 7 KS2 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-2-attainment>
- 8 [Key stage 4 performance, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)
- 9 Disadvantaged children definition [Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils](#)
- 10 EYFS <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results>
- 11 KS2 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-2-attainment>
- 12 KS4 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance/2023-24>
- 13 Data is based on Autumn/Spring terms combined, rather than annual data which was not available at the time of drafting for 2023/23. Annual data for 2023/24 is released by DfE in March 2025.
- 14 Attendance <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>
- 15 Pupil absence <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>
- 16 If a child is missing school without a good reason councils can serve the parents a fixed penalty notice - a fine of £80, rising to £160 if they do not pay within 21 days. If they get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160 with no reduction. For a third or subsequent offence the case can be prosecuted in the magistrates' court where a parent/carer could receive a fine of up to £2,500 per parent per child and a criminal record.
- 17 Destinations <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-destination-measures>

- 18 School SEND <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/data-set/22558fb0-0e88-4d92-9a29-13b3fcd252e8>
- 19 School SEND <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england/2023-24>
- 20 Based on the SEN2 survey conducted by the Department for Education <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>
- 21 SEN <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans/2024>
- 22 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-in-need>
- 23 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions>
- 24 YJS <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024>

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

Inclusive Local Economy

Camden's local economy should be strong, sustainable and inclusive – everyone should have a secure livelihood to support them to live a prosperous life



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The 6 WMC ambitions

Camden has the highest number of businesses in London after Westminster. In fact, Camden's business landscape continues to show growth, with 36,920 businesses operating in 2024, representing a 4% increase from 2023. There were 432,000 jobs in Camden in 2022, meaning 2.8 for every working-age resident.

However, for many Camden residents, securing employment – or finding a job that covers the borough's high cost of living – is not always straightforward. One resident at Kilburn Grange Children's Centre described the challenges of navigating employment options and financial stability:

"It's hard to find a job [...] I want someone to sit down with and talk about the different options I have and how my finances would look if I got a part-time or full-time job."

- Female, Focus group discussion with parents at Kilburn Grange Children's Centre

In this chapter, we try to understand Camden's economy from the perspective of residents and businesses. For businesses, we explore the nature of businesses in Camden and how they compare to the rest of London and other Inner London boroughs.

From the perspective of residents, we delve deeper into insights on employment and economic activity in the borough. The labour market presents some challenges, as only 74.6% of Camden's

183,200 working-aged residents are economically active—notably lower than the London average of 79%. Despite this gap in economic activity, household income distribution in Camden is increasingly shifting toward higher income brackets, continuing a trend observed in previous years.

We also look at how much residents are earning and how that is changing over time. A concerning development is that median annual pay in Camden has fallen below the London average for the first time in 15 years, albeit marginally.

Youth engagement remains a bright spot, with 96.9% of 16-17-year-olds in Camden participating in Education, Employment or Training (EET) in 2024. Yet recruitment difficulties persist, with 42% of Camden businesses reporting vacancies, and more than 60% of these positions being hard to fill.

Good Life Camden

This chapter includes signals from the **Income and Affordability** and **Education and Lifelong Learning** themes:

- ◆ A good life is affordable in Camden
- ◆ People have opportunities to gain skills and go back into employment at any age
- ◆ People in Camden get paid fairly
- ◆ Young people have good opportunities when they leave school
- ◆ Access to online and offline learning opportunities is for all ages, including those digitally excluded

Key insights

Number of businesses in Camden in 2024

36,920

▲ +4% since 2023

The median income for people...

Working in Camden



Living in Camden

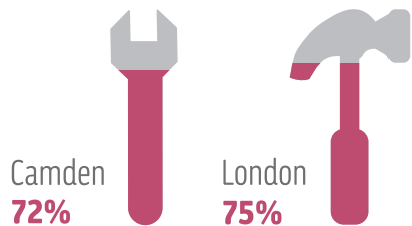


“I can think of a few cases where people are in employment, and they’re really struggling as well ... everybody’s been told that work is the pathway out of these things, but if you’re in work and you still can’t really see a clear path forward...
...that impact on mental and physical health is huge.”

There are 2.8 jobs per every working age person

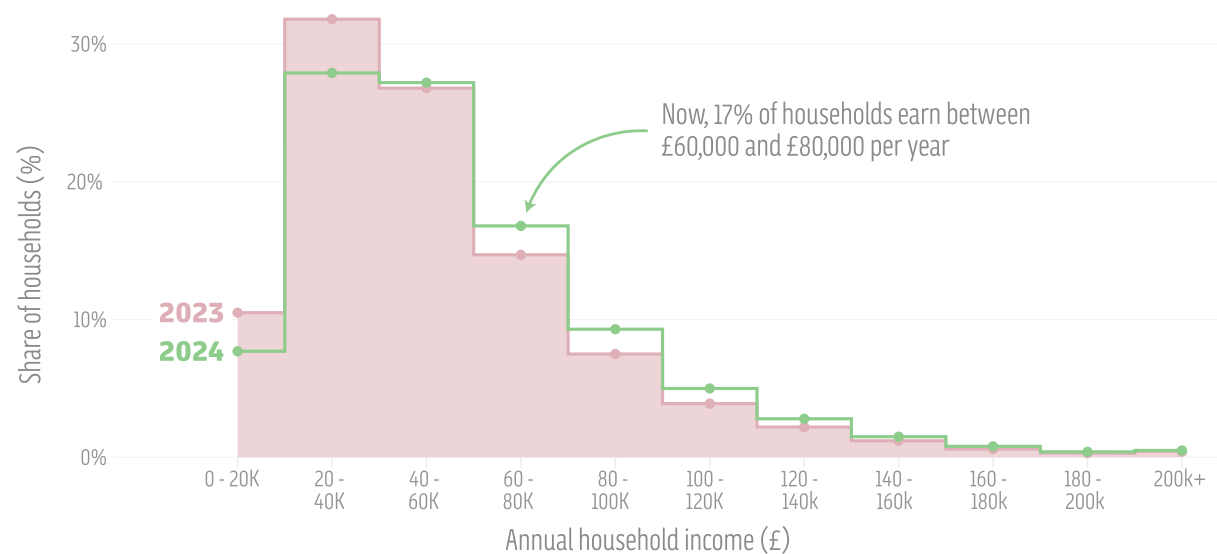


However, the employment rate of working age residents in Camden is lower than the London average



The share of households earning less than £40,000 per year has **shrunk by 7%** since 2023

Now, 64% of households earn more than £40,000 per year



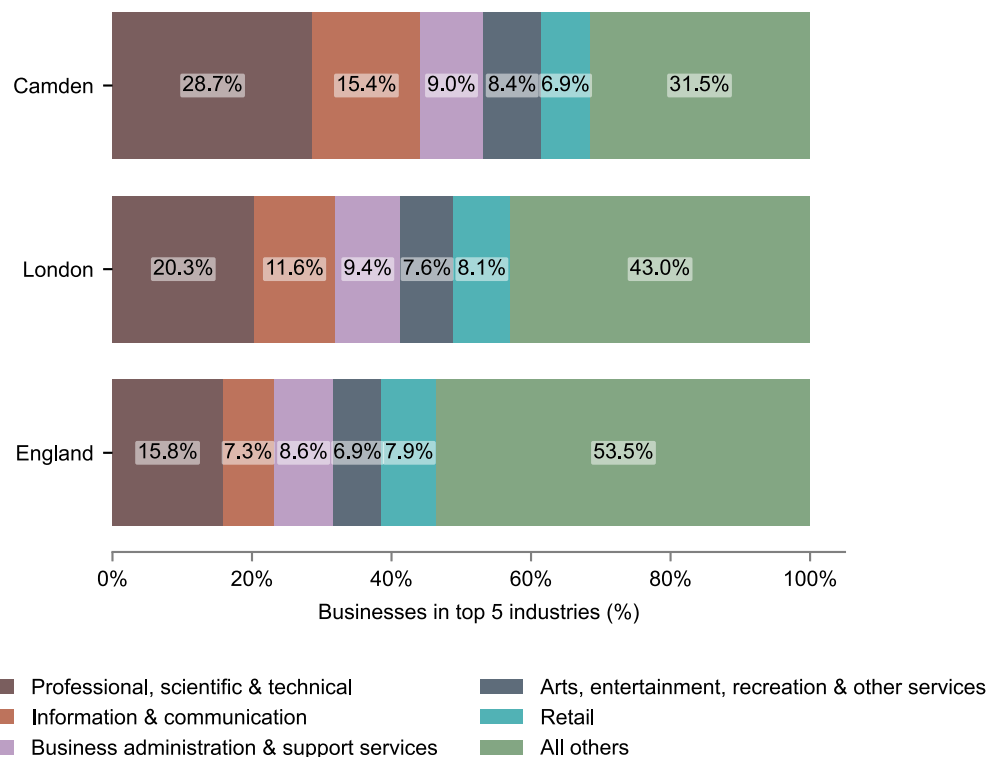
Businesses

In 2024 there were 36,920 enterprises operating in Camden, and 215 of those had over 250 employees. 3,445 new businesses have opened, and 2,860 closed

Based on VAT and PAYE registration, 36,290 businesses were active employers in Camden in 2024, which is 4% higher than 2023. A total of 3,445 new businesses have opened, and 2,860 businesses have closed over the year.¹

Camden has a strong knowledge economy, and many businesses are service oriented rather than production. Based on Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) data, over a quarter of these businesses in Camden were in the Professional, scientific & technical industry (29% compared to 20% in London), and 15% were in the Information & communication industry (compared to 12% in London). In London and Camden both, 9% of businesses are in Business administration and support services, and 8% are in Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services. However, it is worth mentioning that the SIC codes are outdated for some of the more advanced industries which have emerged in recent years. There has been significant growth in life sciences in Camden, as well as University spin-out activity which is not suitably captured in the SIC codes. Additionally, these figures do not account for the size of the businesses.

Figure 2.1: Share of enterprises in Camden, London, England by Industry – top 5 industries, 2024



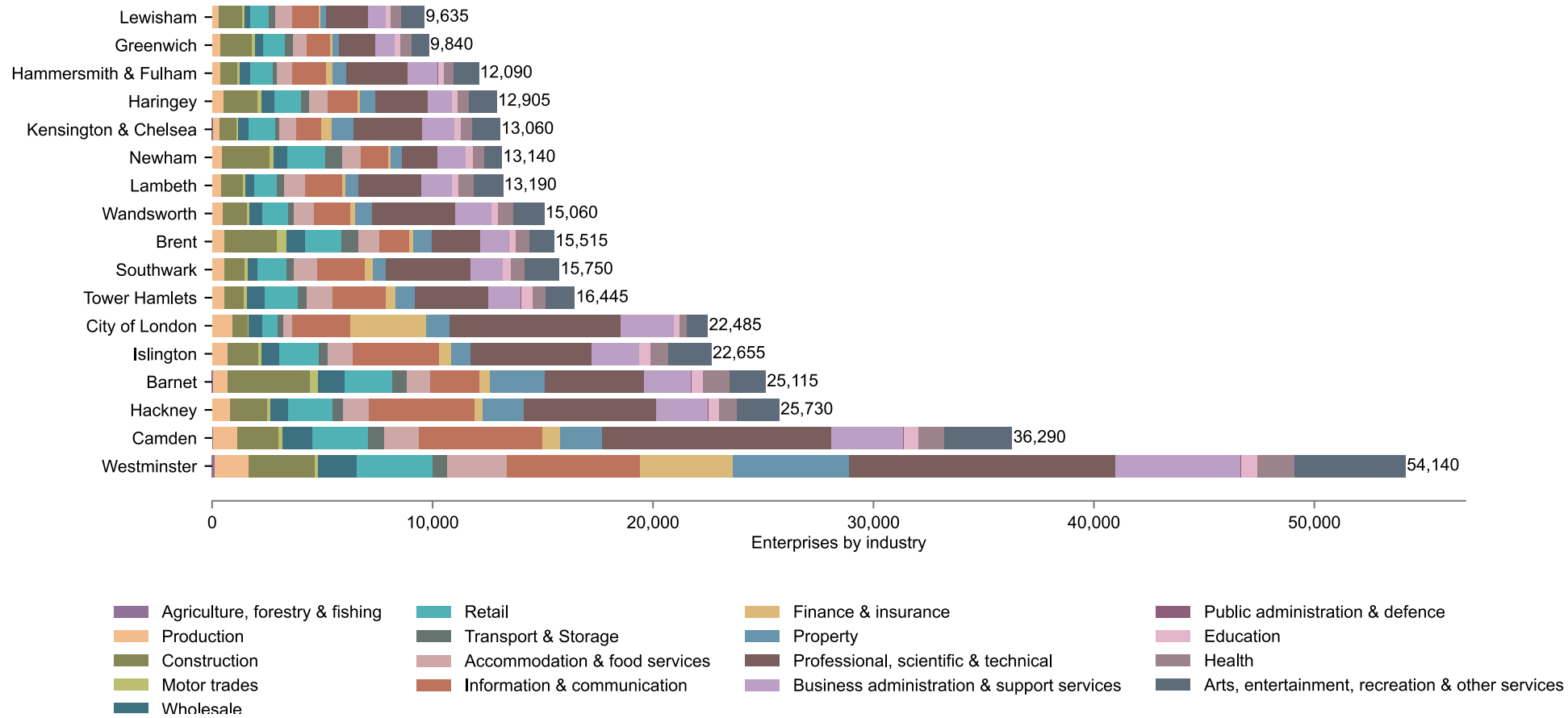
Source: UK Business, activity, size and location, ONS, 2024

Camden is home to a high number of businesses across the borough comparison group, with the second-highest number of businesses after Westminster.

The distribution of businesses across industries is similar across Camden and Westminster, though Camden has a higher concentration in the professional, scientific and technical industry and information & communication sectors.

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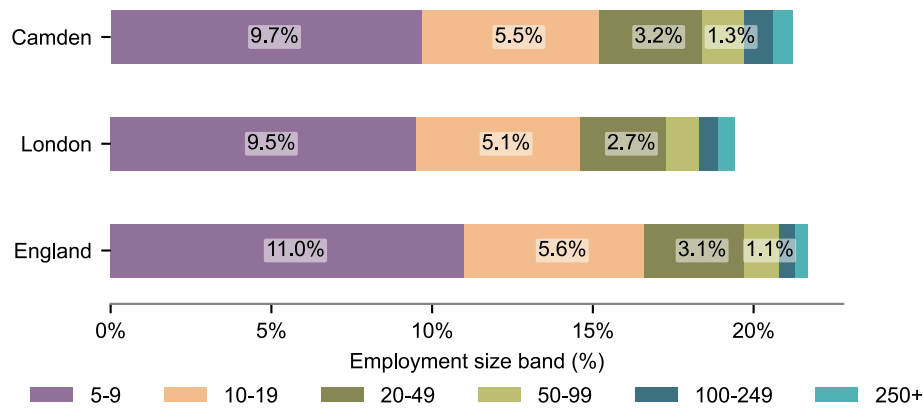
Figure 2.2: Number of enterprises by industry, borough comparison group, 2024



The business landscape in Camden is diverse, consisting primarily of micro-businesses – nearly 90% of businesses in the borough have fewer than 10 employees, which is consistent with London and national trends. On the other hand, Camden also has the third highest number of businesses with more than 250 employees in London, demonstrating its role as a hub for both and major employers.

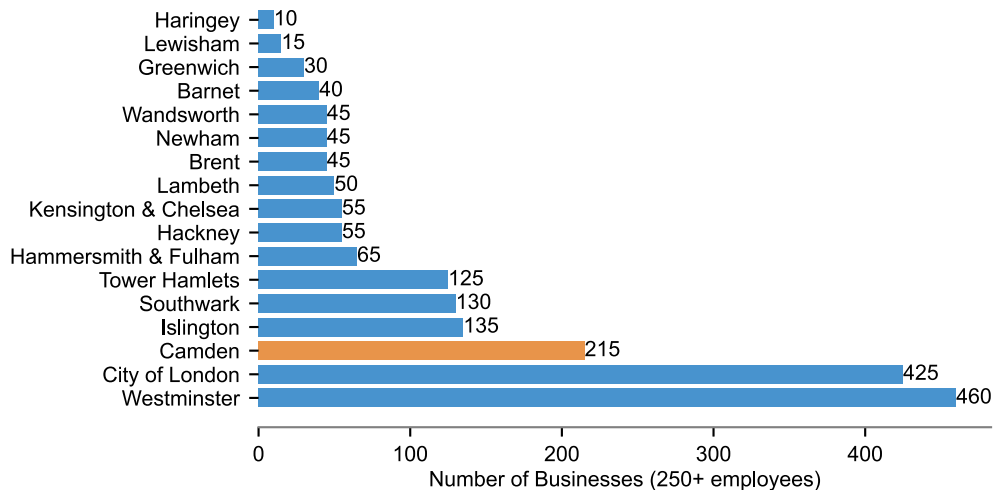
The 6 WMC ambitions

Figure 2.3: Number of businesses by employment size, Camden, London and England, 2024



Source: UK Business, activity, size and location, ONS, 2024

Figure 2.4: Businesses with more than 250 employees, borough comparison group, 2024



Source: UK Business, activity, size and location, ONS, 2024

Learnings from: Camden Giving – A Blueprint for Change

To better understand the structural barriers and opportunities with Camden’s economy, Camden Giving (in partnership with BRAP) conducted research as part of its [Blueprint for Change](#) project, which explored economic inequality and employment challenges faced by local communities. Insights from the research highlight how strategic investments have created opportunities in some areas, while gaps remain in ensuring that local residents benefit from economic growth.

One resident described how developments such as the Francis Crick Institute and Eurostar’s investment in Regent High School have directly benefitted the area by improving local infrastructure and creating opportunities:

“Investments have benefitted Somers Town and have brought a lot to the local community, including opportunities. The Francis Crick Institute, as part of their contract with Camden Council, has to provide opportunities for the community and must have a community engagement team. I feel like they have done well with this. Due to the Eurostar, Regent High School has been refurbished and, in parts, completely rebuilt since they provided investment to the local community.”

- Somerstown Researcher, A Blueprint for Change research by Camden Giving

The report also highlights residents’ perspectives on the need for stronger local employment initiatives, particularly in ensuring that businesses hire locally and contribute to a more sustainable economic cycle. One resident said that:

“Local employment initiatives should be promoted, where a network is created and local people are employed, which should help in the medium to long term with company investment – economic cycle created.”

- Kilburn resident, A Blueprint for Change research by Camden Giving

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In 2022, 42% of Camden businesses reported having vacancies; more than 60% of them being hard-to-fill

In 2022, Camden Council conducted a business survey, covering a representative sample of 1,000+ businesses across sectors and sizes. Despite the lower employment rate in Camden compared to other inner London boroughs, 42% of businesses reported having vacancies. The general skills gap across the new recruits and existing workforce was a challenge voiced by many businesses and is also visible in the high percentage of vacancies (61%) being hard-to-fill.

According to the ONS,² in August 2024 there were 4.3 jobs advertised online per 100 working-age residents in London, higher than the UK average of 3.4. Sales accounts and business development managers were the most commonly advertised jobs in London, at 3%, followed by programmers and software development professionals at 2.6% of all live job adverts in London in Q2 2024.

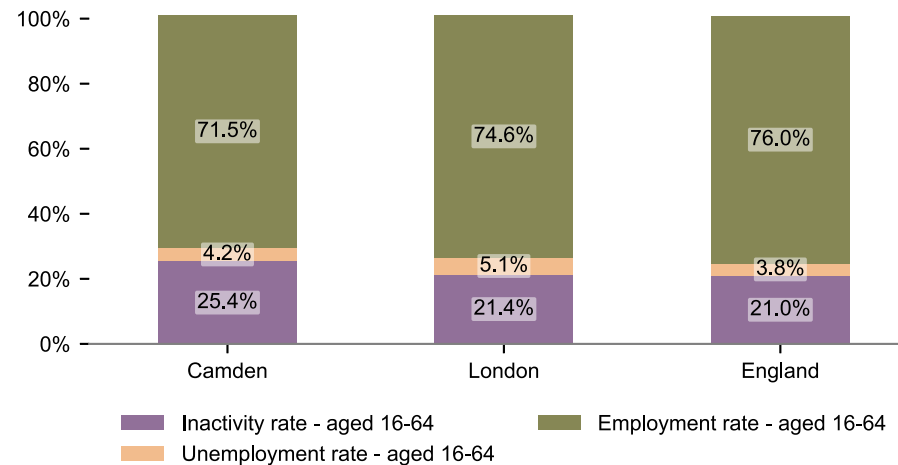
Good Life Camden [↪](#)

◆ A good life is affordable in Camden

There are 183,200 working-aged residents (16-64 year olds) in Camden in 2023 – almost 3 in 4 (74.6%) of them are economically active, below the London rate of 78.6% and the England rate of 79%

In 2023, there were 183,200 people constituted the working-age population of Camden (i.e. residents aged 16-64 years old).³ Of these, around 75% are economically active, meaning they are either employed or unemployed and looking for work. This is lower than both London and England, both at around 79%.

Figure 2.5: Employment rate, unemployment rate and economic activity, Camden, London and England



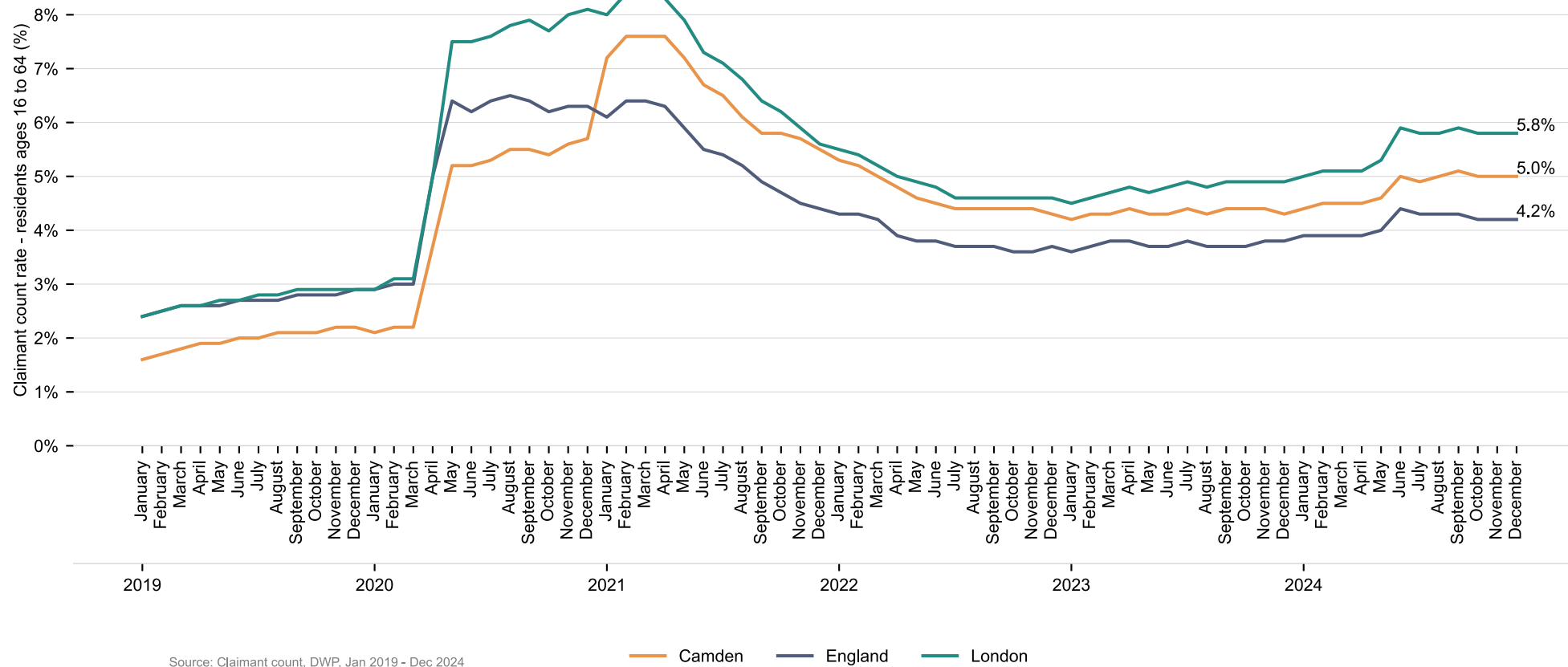
Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS, Jan-Dec 2023

The employment rate in Camden in 2023 was 71.5% as a share of the working-age population, lower than the London rate of 74.6%, and the England rate of 76%. While economic inactivity, the inverse of economic activity, is relatively high in Camden, a significant share of that is due to the large student population in the borough. Students constitute 45% of economically inactive people in the borough, while a little over 20% of economically inactive people are experiencing long-term sickness.⁴

The claimant count in Camden has increased substantially since the pandemic, following a similar pattern in London and England. As of December 2024, 5% of the working-age population were receiving unemployment benefits in Camden, slightly less than in London (5.8%) but more than England (4.2%).

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Figure 2.6: Claimant count for Camden, London and England, 2019-2024

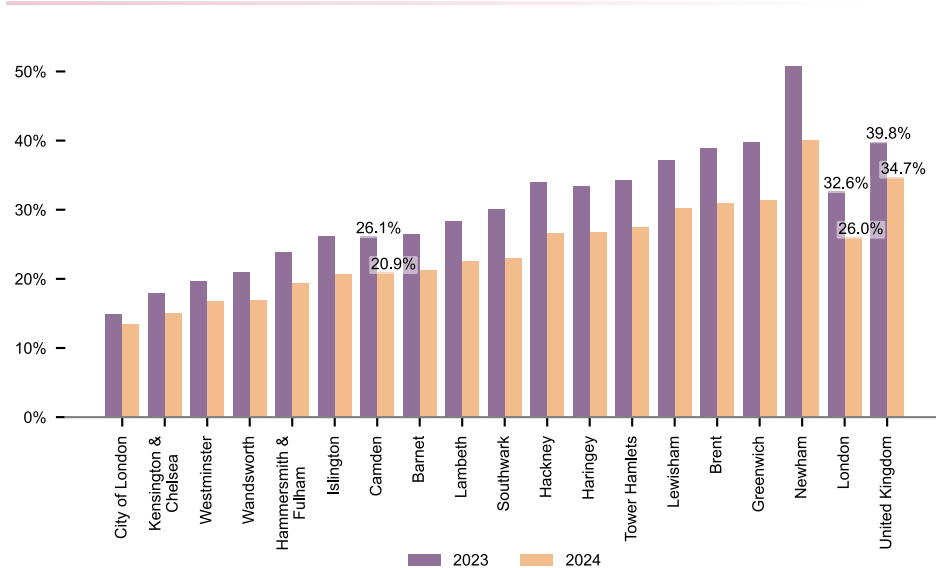


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About one in five households in Camden have an income below £30k annually, a smaller share than last year

Compared to last year, there has been an upwards shift in the incomes of low-income households, with the share of households with low income getting smaller overall. In Camden, 20.9% of households have income less than £30k in 2024, compared 26% in the previous year. It is also lower than the London average (26%) and UK average (34.7%) which have also followed a similar downward trend, reducing by 7% and 5% respectively. All the London boroughs have undergone a similar reduction in the share of households in annual income less than £30k.⁵

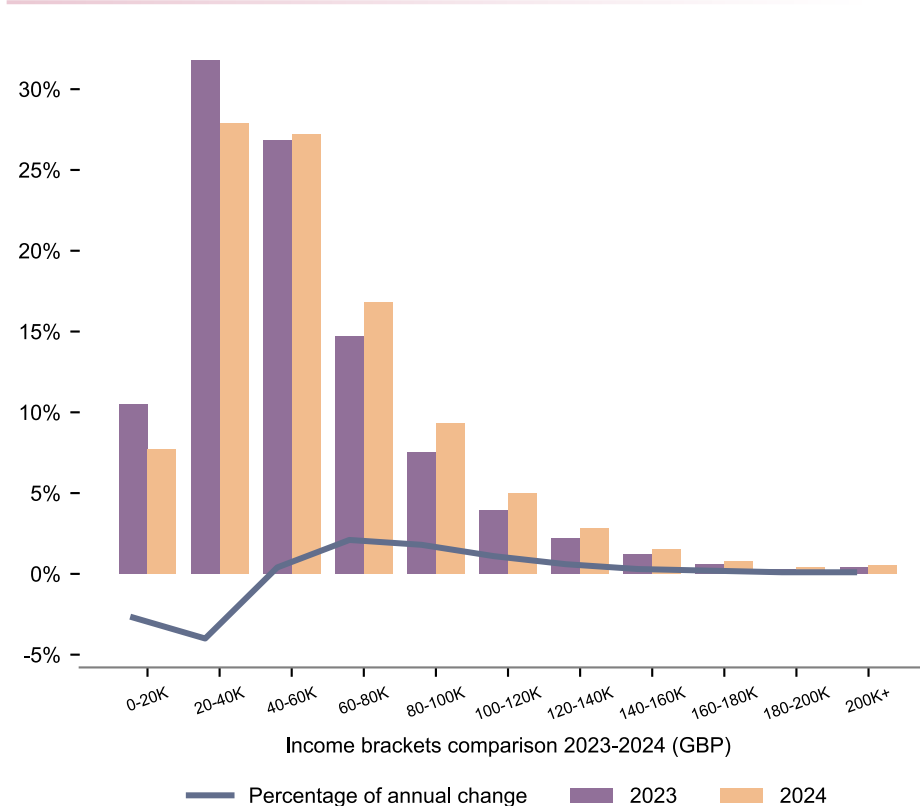
Figure 2.7: Percentage of households with income less than 30k, Borough comparison group, 2023-2024



Source: CACI, Paycheck Equivalised Income, July 2024

This decline can be most significantly attributed to a 4% drop in households in the £20 – 40k income bracket. The percentage of households has increased across all income brackets above £50k.

Figure 2.8: Income Distribution of Camden households (share of households in each income bracket), 2023 - 2024



Source: CACI, Paycheck Equivalised Income, July 2024

Despite the shift in income distribution towards higher -income brackets, a lack of disposable income has been a recurring theme in conversations with residents. The combination of lower salaries and high living expenses presents for difficulties for many Camden residents.

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A parent described the difficult trade-offs required to cover everyday expenses:

“ This borough is definitely not affordable. I think Camden Council do a good effort with the free fruit, free vitamin D, the vouchers for food that mums get for kids under 5 – so for someone who can’t get anything, this does help. But for us, gas and electric, I’m not going to go without and make my kids sit in cold, so I’m figuring it out when the bill comes. Going without means the kids get sick, which means the home isn’t happy and the bill is still high. The bills are becoming unimaginable [...] This has been the worst state I’ve ever seen bills in.”

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

Beyond essential expenses, some working residents feel that having a job does not always guarantee financial stability. In a focus group with members of the Camden Federation of Private Tenants, one participant highlighted how financial strain continues even for those who are employed:

“ I can think of a few cases where people are in employment, and they’re really struggling as well. So, you know, everybody’s been told that work is the pathway out of these things, but if you’re in work and you still can’t really see a clear path forward, then obviously, that impact on mental and physical health is huge.”

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

To further understand how residents are coping with financial hardship, Camden partnered with Word on the Curb, who conducted 12 months of ethnographic research on the experiences of those most vulnerable

to poverty and hardship. The research identified six key challenges that disproportionately affect vulnerable residents: finances and debt; housing and living conditions; employment struggles; food insecurity; mental and physical health concerns; and social isolation and strained relationships.

For some Camden residents, the high cost of living can influence employment decisions—particularly when it comes to balancing work and childcare costs. A mother from Kilburn Grange explained how childcare expenses forced her to leave her job:

“ I had to quit my job... it’s going to cost me £3,000 to have her at nursery Monday to Friday. I’m not bringing in £3,000 a month.”

- Female, Focus group discussion with parents at Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre

In some cases, residents who experience temporary financial hardship—such as job loss—find it nearly impossible to sustain themselves:

“ People are just saying it’s impossible to live on Universal Credit. Somebody came in the other day, she’s a professional, temporarily distressed, because she hasn’t been working for a few months, and she’s struggling to find a job. She lives in a very nice part of Camden—Belsize ward—but basically, she’s now having to survive on Universal Credit. The benefit and the discretionary housing payment don’t cover the rent and other living costs.”

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

Beyond employment, affordability challenges also affect older residents. Some pensioners in Camden struggle to cover basic costs, particularly as state pensions fall short of rising living expenses. A private tenant from the Camden Federation of Private Tenants described their frustration:

“ The basic state pension is much less than most people are paying in rent—what are they [older residents] supposed to eat? There are remedies, there are ways to get help from the council. But you expect the state pension at least to be enough to pay the rent. It’s the worst state pension in Europe.”

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

Learning from: Citizens Advice Camden

Citizens Advice Camden plays an important role in our community by providing practical advice to people to navigate their life circumstances. The cost-of-living pressures that ensued post-pandemic have continued to be a key area of advice requested. Citizens Advice Camden has seen an increase in people needing charitable support & foodbank referrals, as well as help dealing with council tax arrears, energy bills, energy debts and claiming Personal Independence payment.

Similar to the national trend across geographies served by Citizens Advice organisations, Citizens Advice Camden has seen an increase in clients having negative budgets. Higher numbers of people living with high costs of long-term ill-health, unable to afford essentials and unable to make ends meet, are looking at ways to increase their income.

Most of the people reaching out to Citizens Advice Camden in the past have required support for more than one issue, but the complexity of needs has gone up since the pandemic. While people requested assistance with an average of 3.4 issues pre-pandemic, it has doubled since then with year till date average of 6.5 by September 2024.

Good Life Camden ☺

◆ People have opportunities to gain skills and go back into employment at any age

In 2024, 96.9% of 16–17-year-olds in Camden were in Education, Employment or Training (EET)

In 2024, there were 3,161 young people in Camden aged 16-17 (96.9% of that age group) who were in education, employment or training (EET). Just 1.9% of the cohort were not in employment, education or training (NEET); and the status of the remaining 1.2% was unknown.

Camden has a higher rate of young people in EET than the England (94.6%) and the London (96.6%) averages.

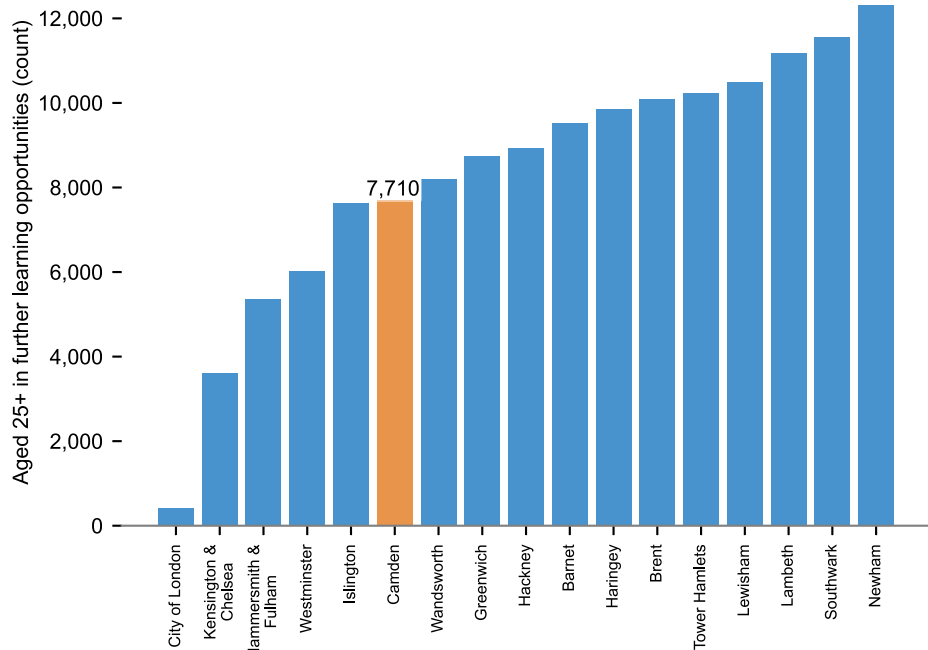
Since 2018, the rate of young people in EET has gradually increased from 93.4% to 96.9%.⁶

In 2023/24, 7,710 people aged 25+ participated in further education and skills opportunities, a slight reduction from the previous year’s 7,840

In 2023/24, there was a small reduction in the number of people aged 25 and over who took part in further education and skills learning opportunities, from 7,840 to 7,710. These include 820 people aged 25+ who were pursuing apprenticeships in Camden, a reduction from 860 in previous year. 3,770 people took part in community learning, which was the highest number across London boroughs.

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Figure 2.9: Number of 25+ year olds taking part in further learning opportunities, 2023/24



Source: Further education and skills, DFE, 2024

Learning from: University College London

An increasing number of young people are choosing entrepreneurship as a pathway. Since 2016, 400+ start-ups have been started from UCL, with an increasing number each year. The number of start-ups has increased each year, from 29 start-ups in 2016-17 to 93 start-ups in 2022-23. On the demand side, 4,899 student, staff and local people were supported in 2023-24, up from 3,995 in 2022-23.

Good Life Camden ☺

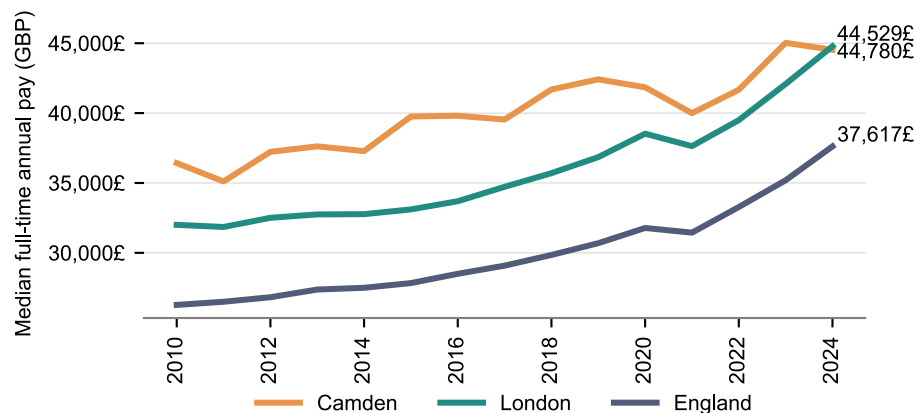
People in Camden get paid fairly

Median annual pay in Camden is lower (marginally) than London, for the first time in 15 years

In 2024, the median annual pay for Camden residents in (for full-time work) was £44,529. This is the first time since 2010 that it has been, lower than the London average, which was £44,780. Camden is one of the only two Inner London boroughs where the median annual pay has reduced, even if marginally; it has dropped approximately 1% from £45,026. As in previous years, the median annual pay in Camden continues to be higher than the England average (£37,617).

The median weekly earnings for people living in Camden in April 2024 was estimated to be £767.⁷ During the same time period, the median weekly earnings for those *working* in Camden were estimated to be £952.⁸

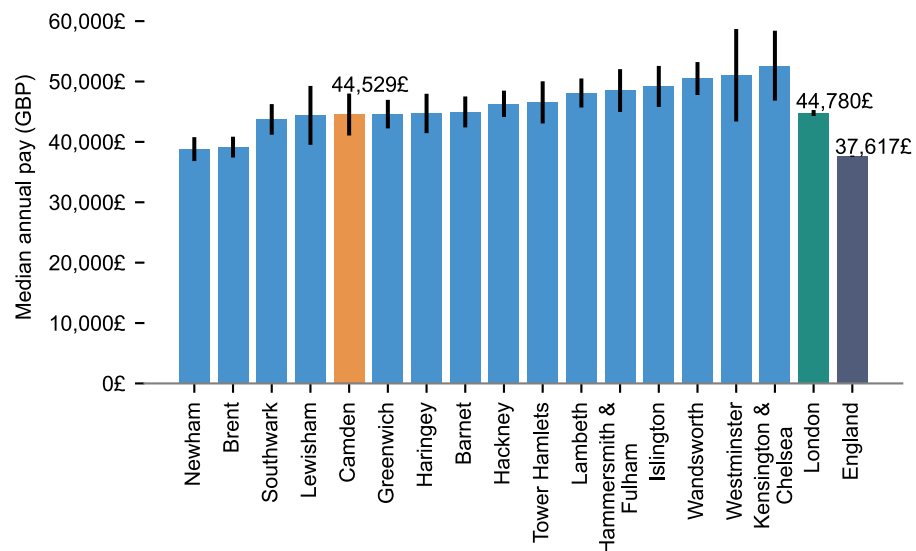
Figure 2.10: Comparison of median annual pay for Camden, London and England (2010 – 2024)



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2024

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Figure 2.11: Comparison of median annual pay in Inner London Boroughs, 2024



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2024
 Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

Good Life Camden

Access to online and offline learning opportunities is for all ages, including those digitally excluded

Access to lifelong learning opportunities is important, particularly for those who may be digitally excluded. Digital literacy and access is increasingly necessary for accessing services, staying connected, and participating in everyday life. Official statistics for digital inclusion at the Camden level were unavailable, but in a recent initiative (the Digital Inclusion (DI) community engagement pilot), residents spoke about barriers to digital access, including lack of confidence, affordability, and accessibility. For many older residents, learning digital skills has helped

foster independence. One resident shared how support from a local initiative transformed her confidence:

“ I had the app a long time ago, but I was never able to make calls and respond to calls. I needed to practice more, which is what the digital champion helped me do. I’m thankful that I’m now confident to do that on my own.”

- Community Engagement Report Phase 2, Feb-July 2024

Beyond practical skills, digital learning also offers a sense of community and social interaction. A resident attending digital classes at SHAK described how these sessions provided both learning and a supportive environment:

“ I started off on Jobseeker’s Allowance and I came here [SHAK] to do a course which I was put on by the Job Centre. It’s been one of the few things they did which was a very positive thing. I’ve really appreciated all the time and help from the staff and the rest of the students. I’ve made friends here, I look forward to coming here, it’s relaxed and it’s so easy to do and it’s helped me [digitally]. I’ve got a tablet, I’ve got a lot of information about that from the staff and it’s definitely enriched my life. It’s so important, particularly for older people who don’t grow up with new ways of doing things.”

- 70, Male, White British, Focus group discussion at SHAK

For some residents, the shift toward digital healthcare services has created challenges. One resident from Kilburn Grange described struggling with online systems when trying to access healthcare:

“ My GP is OK. My only issue is using online. I don’t like online. The assumption is that everyone can go on [and that] everyone has a smartphone.”

- Female, Focus group discussion with parents at Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre

Endnotes

- 1 [UK business: activity, size and location - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 2 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/whichskillsareemployersseekinginyourarea/2024-11-05> (accessed 6 March 2025)
- 3 [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics, https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157246/report.aspx?town=Camden](#)
- 4 [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)
- 5 CACI Ltd (Licensed data)
- 6 NEETS <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-neet-age-16-to-17-by-local-authority/2023-24>
- 7 <https://explore-local-statistics.beta.ons.gov.uk/indicators/gross-median-weekly-pay>
- 8 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2024>

Safe and Strong Communities

Camden actively tackles injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong and open communities where everyone can contribute



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More people in Camden than London overall agreed that they were proud to live in their local area 52

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Most people in Camden agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together 52

People representing the borough's diverse population are engaged in local decision making 53

People feel they can be part of making things better 53

In Camden, most people said it was important to them to feel they could influence decisions, more than a third wanted to be involved, but only 1 in 5 agreed they could influence decisions affecting the local area 54

People are active, creating change for their community, representing the diversity of the borough 55

Informal and formal volunteering occur at similar levels in Camden compared to London and England 55

Camden has a slightly higher level of civic activism and engagement in consultations than London and England 55

Voter turnout in the 2024 general elections was lower in both constituencies than in previous elections 57

Living in safe and vibrant communities is essential for flourishing and wellbeing. This chapter presents data relating to community safety and cohesion, focusing on the prevalence of discrimination and crime in the borough as well as people’s levels of participation in civic life and within the voluntary and community sector.

For residents, social connection and communication play a critical role in fostering a sense of belonging and reducing tensions. One long-term Camden resident reflected on how social interactions have contributed to positive changes over time:

“There used to be a problem in 1994, 1995. There was racism and now you can walk without being shouted at. It’s communication which is the main thing. You have to speak to one another—make friends, show people who you are. It doesn’t matter if you’re white or black. Doesn’t matter about your religion, or where you’ve come from [...] so having opportunities to learn is really important.”

- 45, Female, Bangladeshi, Community Kitchen drop in

Data from Met Police showed that crime rates have continued to rise over the last decade, reaching 201 offences per 1,000 people in 2024, with theft being the primary driver of this increase. While hate crime offences have declined by 8% overall compared to 2023, antisemitism-related incidents continued to rise despite already seeing a substantial 400%+ increase in 2023. Domestic abuse remains a serious concern with nearly 2,000 recorded offences in Camden, including 502 violent incidents resulting in injury.

Community cohesion indicators show Camden residents have similar feelings of belonging compared to London and England averages, with approximately half of residents believing their neighbours work together to improve the area. Though Camden residents report lower levels of neighbourhood trust than the England average (similar to London overall), 90% feel confident they would receive help if needed. Camden residents express greater pride in their local area than Londoners generally, and most agree their area successfully integrates people from diverse backgrounds. While civic engagement is slightly higher in Camden than London and England averages, with most residents valuing the ability to influence local decisions, only 20% feel they can actually impact local affairs despite over a third wanting greater involvement. Voter turnout in both Camden constituencies was lower during the 2024 general elections compared to previous electoral cycles.

Good Life Camden

This chapter includes signals from the **Safety, Social Connections** and **Empowered Citizenship** themes:

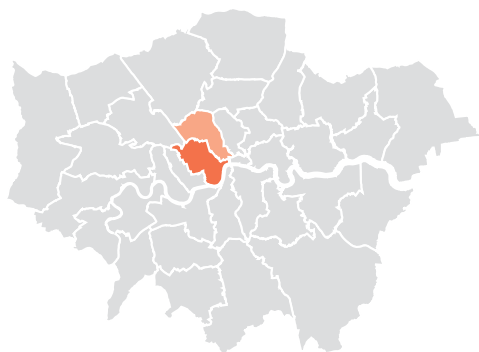
- Everyone in Camden feels safe
- People are safe in their homes
- People feel part of their neighbourhood, trust their neighbours and can ask them for help
- People interact with people from different communities and are tolerant and inclusive
- People representing the borough’s diverse population are engaged in local decision making
- People feel they can be part of making things better
- People are active, creating change for their community, representing the diversity of the borough

Key insights

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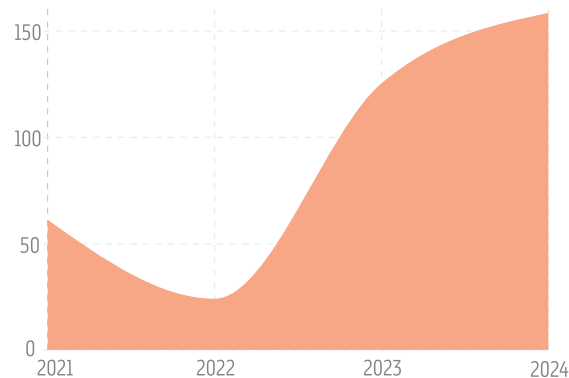
Camden has the second highest crime rate in London, after Westminster

This is driven by an increase in thefts.



Overall, hate crime is down 8% since 2023. The exception to this downward trend is **antisemitism**, which has continued to rise.

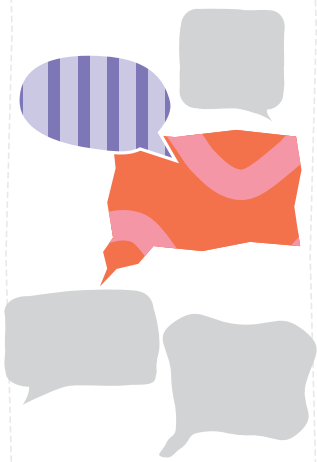
Number of reported antisemitic hate crimes



Key findings about social cohesion, community engagement, and social action

From the 2023-2024 Community Life Survey, a national household survey of adults aged 16+

2 in 5 participated in civic engagement in the last 12 months



1 in 3 agree that many people in their neighbourhood could be trusted



1 in 2 believe people pull together to improve the neighbourhood



84% agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together



Good Life Camden ↻

Everyone in Camden feels safe

Through our engagement with residents across various community spaces in Camden, safety emerged as a deeply personal issue, with mixed perspectives on whether Camden is becoming safer or more challenging to navigate. While some residents spoke positively about visible security, improved lighting, and a strong sense of community, others raised concerns about crime, personal safety at night, and antisocial behaviour.

At the *Community Kitchen*, conversations about safety highlighted different experiences across Camden. One attendee reflected on feeling reassured by visible security and street lighting, which contributed to a sense of safety in the bustling areas of Camden Town:

“ Camden is a really safe place. There is always security guards in Camden Town, and if there are any problems, I can tell the security guards. There are lots of lights in Camden, so I feel safe.”

- 25, Male, Bangladeshi, Community Kitchen drop in

For others, some saw improvement in certain areas but still felt that more needed to be done to address persistent issues like drug activity and loitering. A resident attending the Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods event reflected on these concerns:

“ There’s an improvement, but still there is work to be done. I’d like to see more policing and more monitoring of drug dealers. There is a lot of loitering, and I’m scared to walk by myself.”

- Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods focus group discussion

Similarly, a member of the Adult Social Care Co-Production Group described how personal safety strategies, such as avoiding poorly lit side roads, helped them navigate Camden more confidently:

“ Safety is not too bad a concern in Camden. I live off the main road. I don’t walk at night or by myself, you have to be safety conscious. I stick to the main roads, especially if you have a disability. I don’t go through any side roads.”

- 65+, Disability, Focus group discussion with Adult Social Care co-production group

The crime rate has continued to increase in Camden and was 201 offences per 1,000 people in 2024, driven by a continuing rise in the number of thefts

While some residents described feeling comfortable in their neighbourhoods, others, particularly those who have experienced or witnessed crime, expressed a growing sense of unease. Conversations at focus groups with tenants and private renters revealed that frequent reports of break-ins and thefts were affecting people’s day-to-day sense of security.

“ I don’t feel that safe. There are lots of break-ins and burglaries. After 2pm in my area, there is so much going on, I’m always looking behind my back. Lots of people with machetes, can’t get your phone out [in fear of it getting stolen]. There are cycles coming from everywhere with the bicycle lanes. It has changed a lot, and not in a good way.”

- 38, Female, Mixed White Hispanic, Community Kitchen drop in

For some, the experience of crime directly impacted their children’s ability to play outside safely. A Bangladeshi resident attending the Community Kitchen reflected on how Camden’s safety had changed over the years:

The 6 WMC ambitions

“It’s not very safe, you have to have two people walking together. I was born here, it used to be safe. I took the phone out of my pocket, and someone tried to steal it. It’s hard for children to go out and play as it’s not safe for them. People knock on the door even when we don’t want them to.”

- 45, Female, Bangladeshi, Community Kitchen drop in

This growing concern about public safety is reflected in Camden’s crime statistics, which show a 10% rise in recorded crimes from 2023 to 2024, largely driven by a rise in thefts. Between January and December 2024, Camden recorded 201 offences per 1,000 people, marking the second-highest percentage increase in crime rates across London (behind Hillingdon). This increase means that Camden’s overall crime rate has now surpassed the pre-pandemic peak of 183.2 offences per 1,000 people in 2019, after a decline of 37.5% between 2019 and 2021. At present, Camden has the second-highest crime rate in London, behind only Westminster.¹

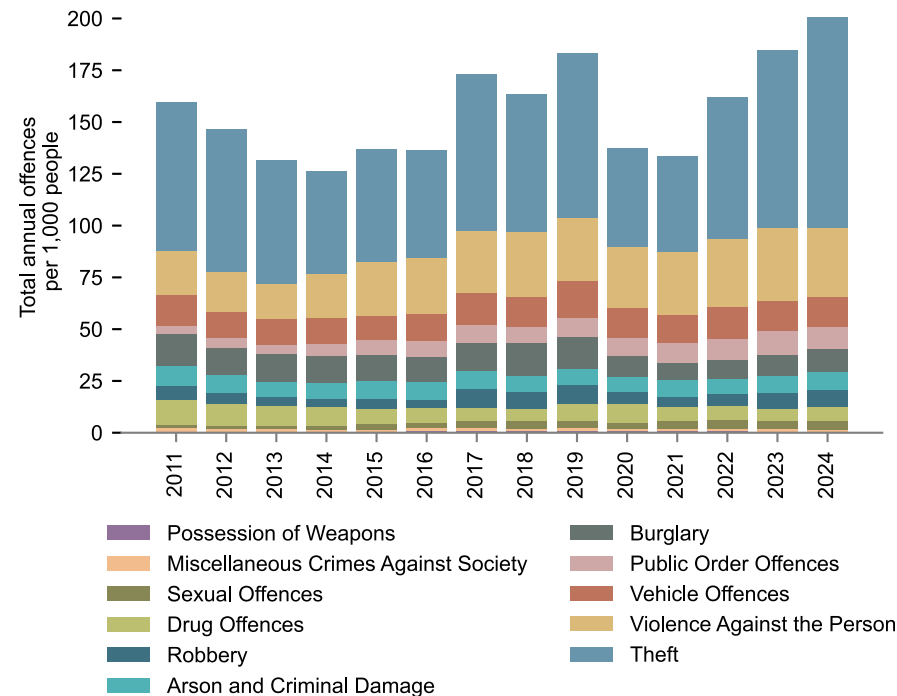
Figure 3.1: Rate of Crime in Camden since 2011, per 1,000 population



Source: Metropolitan Police Service via London Datastore, 2024

Theft is the most common type of crime in Camden, accounting for roughly half of all recorded crimes, with a current rate of 101.7 offences per 1,000 people. Theft, as well as similar crimes including robbery, have seen large increases from the previous year, increasing 18.8% and 13.6% respectively. It is the increasing volume of thefts which has been most significant in driving the overall increased crime rate.²

Figure 3.2: Type of offences in Camden, % of total offenses, 2011-2014



Source: Metropolitan Police Service via London Datastore, 2024

Hate crime offences have declined 8% in 2024 compared to 2023, although antisemitism offences continued to increase in 2024, despite a 400%+ increase in 2023, while all other forms of hate crime have declined since the previous year

Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person’s actual or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.

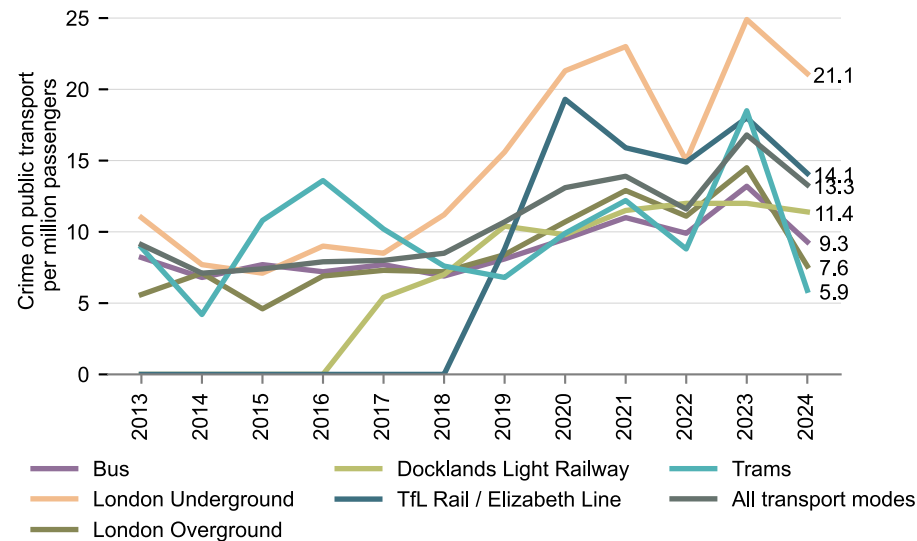
In 2024, hate crime offences declined for all categories except antisemitic offences. Overall, there was an 8% decline, with the largest decline for transphobic and homophobic hate offences (44% to 22 offences and 24% decline to 164 offences). Antisemitism offences continued to rise in 2024 by 26% to 158 offences in 2024, despite a 421% increase in 2023.

The overall volume of crime on public transport in London decreased in 2024

The crime rate on public transport in London as of March 2024 was 13.3 incidents per million passengers. Of the modes of public transport that run through Camden – underground, overground and buses, crime is highest on the London Underground (21.1 incidents per million passengers) and lowest on overground services (7.6 incidents per million).

After increasing steadily since 2014, crime on public transport peaked in 2023 at 16.8 incidents per million passengers, before decreasing slightly in 2024 to 13.3 incidents per million passengers.³

Figure 3.3: Incidents of crime per million passengers, London, 2013-2024



Source: Transport Crime in London, London datastore, 2024

For some residents, feeling safe goes beyond crime rates – it is also tied to a sense of community and stability. At a focus group with private tenants, residents described how frequent moves and temporary housing arrangements made it difficult to feel truly secure in their surroundings.

“ Even this comes down to security. Lack of security. People who move every year—how on earth are they ever going to feel part of a community, how are they going to ever represent themselves as a group?”

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

The 6 WMC ambitions

Another participant highlighted how constant relocation disrupts the sense of familiarity that contributes to safety:

“If you’re living in the same area for a long time, you feel at home. But when you change address regularly, you’ll be endlessly finding yourself in new places and therefore feel that degree more unsafe or uncertain. Familiarity breeds a sense of safety.”

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

Good Life Camden 

◆ People are safe in their homes

In 2024 there were almost 2,000 recorded domestic abuse offences in Camden, of those 502 were violent with injury

Overall domestic abuse cases in Camden increased from 2,156 in 2021 to 2,347 in 2022 (an 8.9% rise), then remained relatively stable with 2,336 cases in 2023. However, 2024 saw a substantial decline to 1,984 cases, representing a 15% decrease from the previous year and the lowest total across the four-year period. For the more severe category of domestic abuse violence with injury, the numbers remained relatively consistent between 2021 and 2022 (531 and 525 cases respectively), before climbing to a four-year peak of 601 cases in 2023 (a 14.5% increase). This was followed by a significant decrease to 502 cases in 2024 (a 16.5% reduction), bringing the figure below the 2021 baseline and suggesting potential improvement in the most recent year of available data. However, domestic abuse is not well reflected in crime statistics as we know many cases do not get reported to police – it is estimated that less than a quarter of domestic abuse gets reported.⁴

Concerns about safety were mentioned by young women and girls at highlighted in the Youth Assembly on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), which took place in November 2024. Young people at this

event shared insightful recommendations on how Camden could create safer spaces. One young woman reflected on feeling safe in structured environments like youth centres but vulnerable in crowded public spaces:


“I feel the most safe at my youth centre because there are adults there. I feel the least safe in the high street because there are lots of people.”

- 15, Female, Youth Assembly on Violence Against Women and Girls

For women in Camden, safety can depend on the context, while many feel comfortable in familiar spaces during the day, there remains a reluctance to be out at night alone.

“I now live in Holborn and St Pancras, and in the day I feel very safe. However, late at night, I don’t go out. I don’t feel very safe as a woman at night in my locality.”

- Female, SOTB general survey

Good Life Camden 

◆ People feel part of their neighbourhood, trust their neighbours and can ask them for help

Community ties are a source of strength for many residents, offering support and a sense of belonging, although some residents highlighted feelings of isolation, particularly among older residents and new arrivals.

Voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and community centres play a vital role in fostering social networks - these spaces serve as crucial hubs for social engagement. For some residents, community centres can offer stability and routine:

“I come here [to the Community Kitchen], I met a lot of friends. If there are activities, I’ll go with my friends. I see older ladies in zimmer frames at the bus stop, and we start chatting. My Irish neighbour is not well, and I take meals for him.”

- 65, Female, Indian, Community Kitchen drop in

For others, specialised community services—such as women-only fitness programmes—have provided safe spaces to connect, relax, and support wellbeing:

“ There is a women’s-only gym nearby, where they also have women to look after your kids in the crèche for two hours. They’re amazing, they have different classes. It’s free. It’s for mums to have a release. There is a mixture of classes.”

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

At the focus group held at SHAK (South Hampstead and Kilburn Community) residents described how these spaces build a sense of belonging:

“ It’s like a second family here at the [community] centre.”

- 50, Female, White European, Focus group discussion at SHAK

“ Having this [community] centre to come to is very valuable – to get help with benefits, to meet people, to have a laugh, there is a big social focus.”

- 50, Female, White European, Focus group discussion at SHAK

For another resident, accessibility and mobility challenges made community centres, such as SHAK, even more essential:

“ I have been let down very badly by physiotherapy and walking was my life, so to be cooped up all the time is incredibly frustrating. But this centre [SHAK] is invaluable. You learn a lot, and if there are questions you have, they are answered. Even small things like making photocopies—without this centre, that would be impossible for me.”

- 81, Female, Disability, Focus group discussion at SHAK

Learnings from: Kentish Town Community Centre

The [Kentish Town Community Centre](#) ran a survey throughout a 3-month period in the summer of 2024, in which 200 people who live, learn, work or socialise in Kentish Town participated. Considerable effort was made to ensure the survey pool represented the diversity of the community. Findings from the survey were grouped into themes – community strengths, areas for improvement and themes for change. For each theme, the following findings were identified:

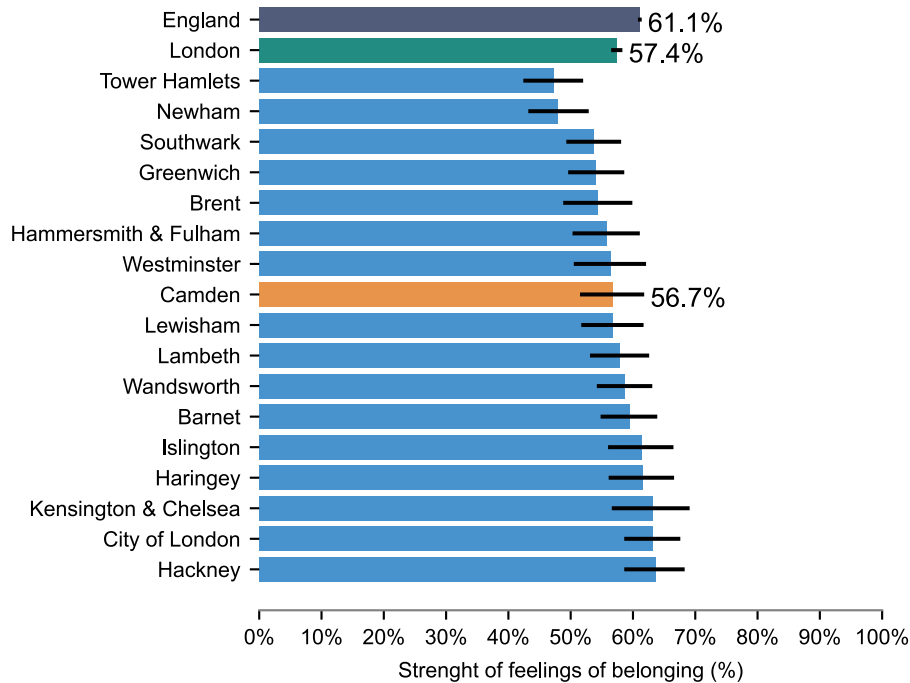
- Community strengths: respondents said that what they liked most in Kentish Town was ‘the people’. Many also said when prompted for what they would change in the area ‘nothing’. Some people also highlighted that the green spaces were what they liked most, and in particular when surveyed at Talacre park.
- Areas for improvement: people mentioned most commonly cleaner air and streets as areas for improvement, as well as having cheaper supermarkets selling healthy food, and public toilets. Some mentioned antisocial behaviour and crime.
- Themes for Change: many respondents highlighted the rising costs of essentials as a cause for concern. Some also mentioned air pollution and the decline in local shops and amenities.

Overall, feelings of belonging in Camden appear similar to London and England, and about half of people in Camden agree that people in their neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood

The Community Life Survey 2023-24 collected data on people’s feelings of belonging to their local area. In Camden, the percentage of respondents who said they felt a “very” or “fairly” strong sense of belonging was 56.7%. When accounting for the margin of error (the

level of uncertainty based on the survey method) Camden is very similar to England, London and our comparator boroughs.⁵

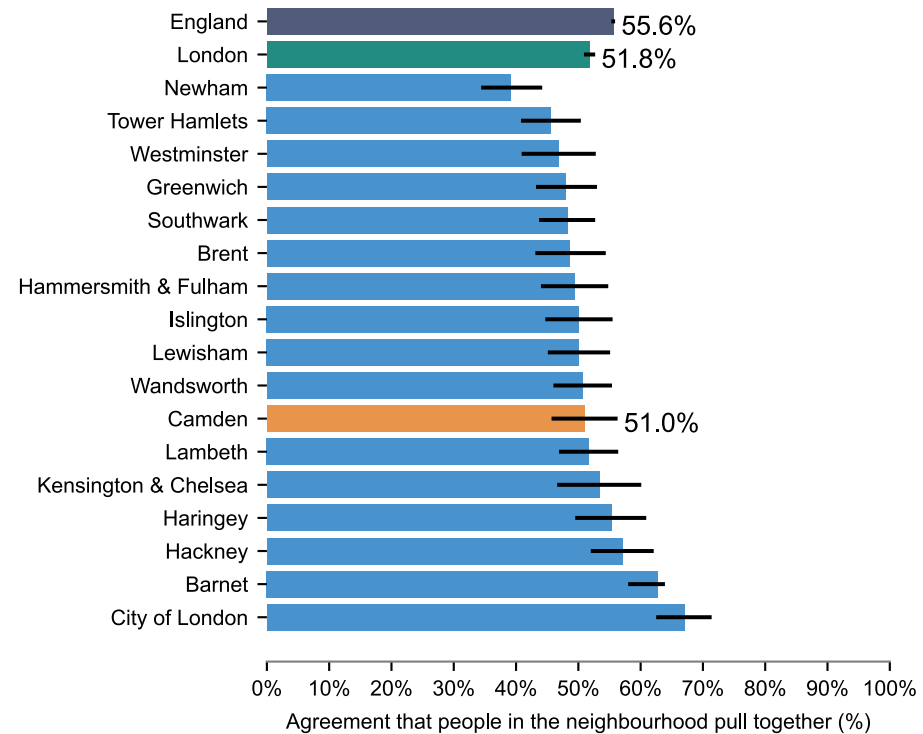
Figure 3.4: Percentage feeling “very” or “fairly” strong sense of belonging to local area



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

In Camden, the percentage of respondents who “definitely” agree or “tend to” agree that people in the neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood was 51%. This was very similar to the London average of 51.8%, and the England average of 55.6% was inside the margin of error for Camden.⁶

Figure 3.5: Percentage of people who agree people in their neighbourhood pull together to improve things



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

While some residents expressed pride in Camden’s diversity, culture, and sense of community, others felt a decline in neighbourhood cohesion:

“All of Camden is amazing. It is vibrant, there is nightlife, iconic Camden Lock, the canal, the people.”

- Somali Cultural Event

The 6 WMC ambitions

“ I have lived in Camden for more than 50 years and feel sad that the community coherence in our street is not there anymore.”

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

For some, frequent changes in their neighbourhoods—such as redevelopment projects or high levels of transience in housing—were key reasons for weakened community ties:

“ There’s not much of a community in the blocks—now they are developing block after block, all high rises. There are no bungalows. There is a disconnect with the council and what’s happening on the ground.”

- 75+, White, Focus group discussion at Gospel Oak Living room

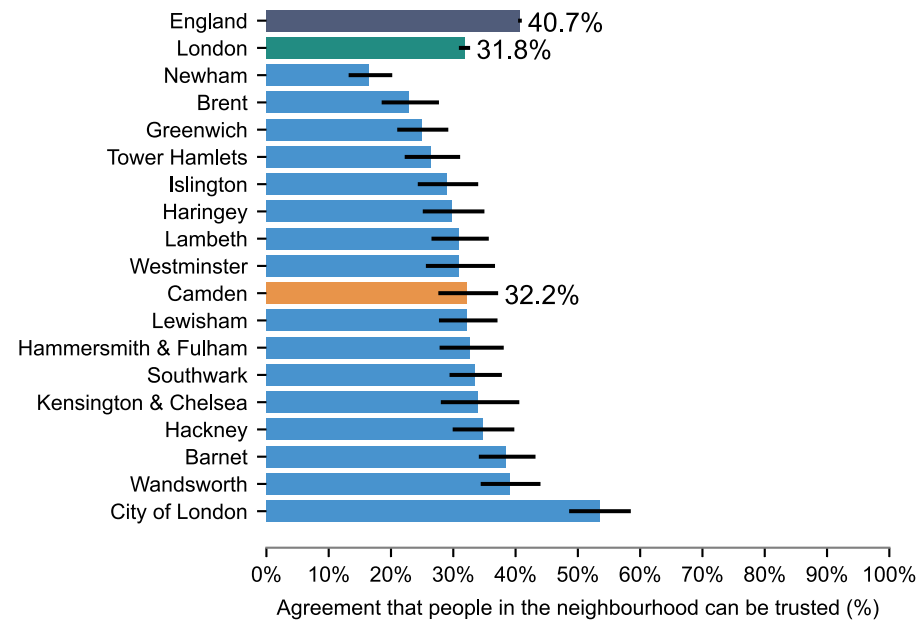
“ My neighbours don’t want to know me. I’m the oldest resident. They are much younger than me. They look at me like I’m a boat refugee, but I’m not. My first language is English.”

- 65+, Disability, Focus group discussion with Adult Social Care co-production group

In Camden and in London, fewer people agree that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, compared to England, although 9 in 10 people agreed that if they needed help there would be people there for them

In Camden, 32.2% felt that many of the people in their neighbourhood could be trusted, (as opposed to some, a few, or none). This was close to the London average of 31.8%, but below the national average of 40.7%.⁷

Figure 3.6: Percentage of people who agree people in their neighbourhood can be trusted



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

Despite lower levels of neighbourhood trust, Camden residents tend to feel supported by their communities. The percentage of respondents who “definitely” agree or “tend to” agree that if they needed help there would be people there for them was 89.9%, but with very wide confidence intervals for this measure, it is not possible to say how true this is for the population compared to other boroughs or London (93.2%).⁸

This sense of community support is often supported by local initiatives and shared spaces, where residents build informal support networks and connections. At the [Gospel Oak Living Room](#) drop-in, a weekly gathering designed to create a welcoming space for elderly residents,

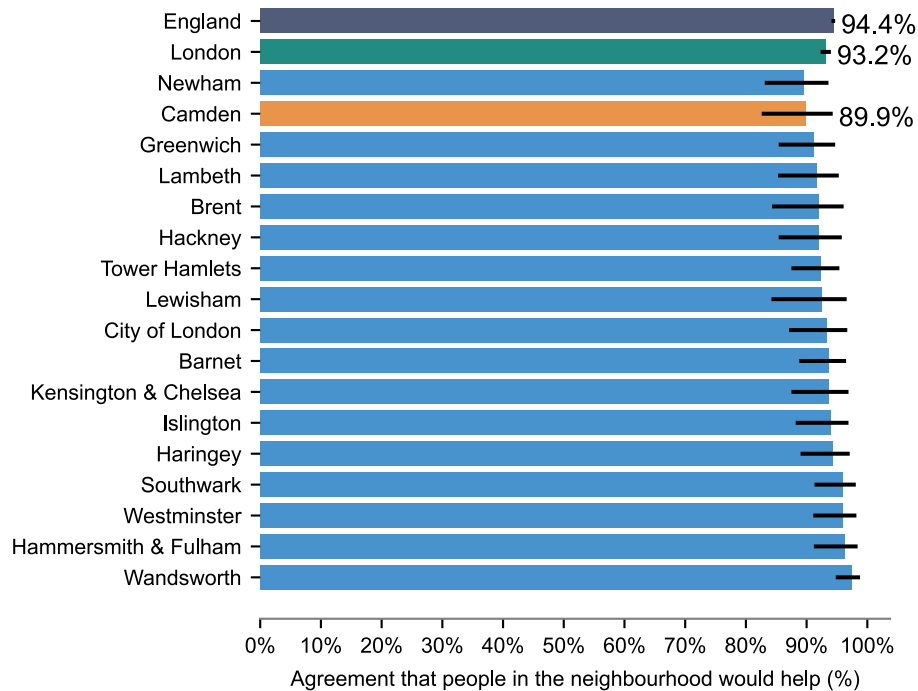
The 6 WMC ambitions

particularly those from local social housing blocks, attendees spoke about the importance of social connection and routine in maintaining a sense of belonging. One attendee highlighted how these community spaces create networks of care and support:

“ On Wednesday afternoon, I go to Bingo at the community centre. On Friday, I go to Bingo at the TRA. It’s nice to go out and meet people. People check in with me—my friends might say, ‘are you alright? Your lights weren’t on.’”

- 75+, White, Focus group discussion as Gospel Oak Living room

Figure 3.7: Percentage of people who agree that if they needed help there would be people there for them



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

More people in Camden than London overall agreed that they were proud to live in their local area

In Camden, the percentage of respondents who “definitely” agree or “tend to” agree that they are proud to live in their local area was 63.8%. This is above the London average (56.2%) and similar to England average (59.4%).⁹

One Camden initiative that has had an impact on community connectedness is the Community Champions programme, a resident-led approach to health and wellbeing. Launched in March 2020, the programme focuses on housing estates in Regent’s Park, Kentish Town, and Kilburn. In Regent’s Park, residents reported stronger social connections and increased feelings of safety:

“ I didn’t think I would enjoy being a Community Champion as much as I have done. Until I joined the group, I didn’t know many of my neighbours, although I have lived in the estate for 13 years. Now I know so many more people and feel much safer.”

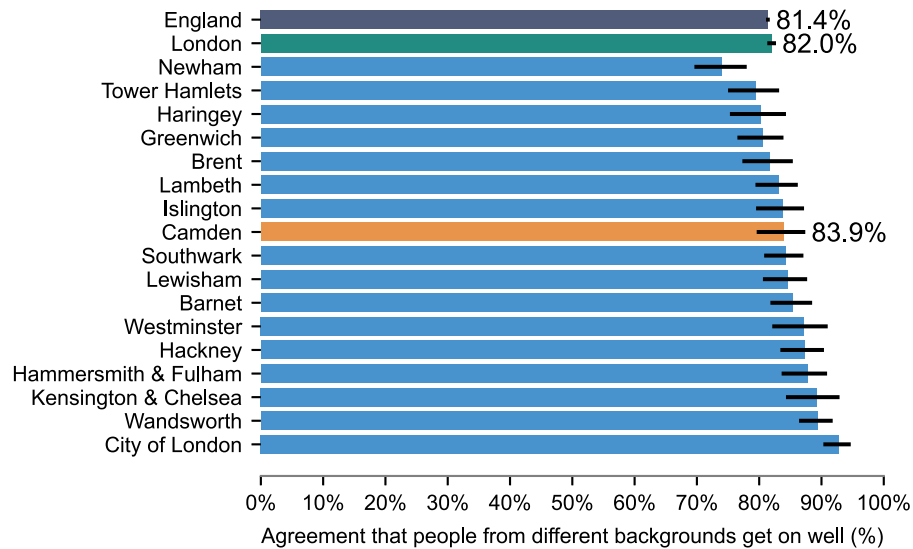
Good Life Camden

People interact with people from different communities and are tolerant and inclusive

Most people in Camden agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

In Camden, the percentage of respondents who “definitely” agree or “tend to” agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together was 83.9%, broadly similar to our comparator group and London (82%) and England (81.4%).¹⁰

Figure 3.8: Percentage of people who agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together



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

Camden’s multicultural identity and history make it a welcoming and vibrant place to live. A young Polish resident reflected on the excitement of being surrounded by different cultures:

“After I moved to the UK from Poland, Camden has so much culture, artistic history, it’s exciting—it’s so vast! And it’s good to hear opinions from different backgrounds because I haven’t had that before.”

- 21, Female, Polish student, Community Kitchen drop in

Others noted how Camden has become more inclusive over time, particularly in contrast to earlier experiences of racism. A mother who wears a hijab, who has lived in Camden for more than 30 years, described how the sense of community and belonging has strengthened:

“I love Camden, I’ve been here over 30 years and I feel it’s a part of me. I’ve seen things develop and, as years went by, the community feels nicer now. When I moved in, in the early 90s, it was horrible, there was a lot of racism and now I feel we are together and we can be together.”

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

These reflections highlight Camden’s progress toward greater inclusivity, as well as the importance of shared spaces in strengthening community cohesion.

Good Life Camden ☺

- People representing the borough’s diverse population are engaged in local decision making
- People feel they can be part of making things better

Community engagement is an important driver of wellbeing, both at a personal and at a community level. In engaging with residents on local decision making, we gathered reflections and experiences. At the Youth Assembly on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), young people reflected on how engaging in these assemblies allows them to contribute to meaningful change:

“I feel most heard at youth club. I feel my opinions are valued, and I can make change.”

- 16, Female, Youth Assembly on Violence Against Women and Girls

“When I take part in Youth Assemblies, it allows my voice to be heard and valued.”

- Youth Assembly on Violence Against Women and Girls

However, some feel that more can be done to ensure wider awareness of opportunities to get involved. A member of the Camden Federation of Private Tenants raised concerns about residents not always being informed about available resources:

“Camden has a fund that people can apply to if they need small amounts of money [...] We processed applications [and] people said they didn't know about it before, so they're obviously not aware of what's going on within the local authority.”

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

Similarly, another resident acknowledged the efforts of the council in engaging tenants but noted that some groups remain isolated from decision-making processes:

“The council works so hard with the council tenants, and we see this. All the feedback is taken, but we [private renters] are in an isolated space. I'd like to see that change.”

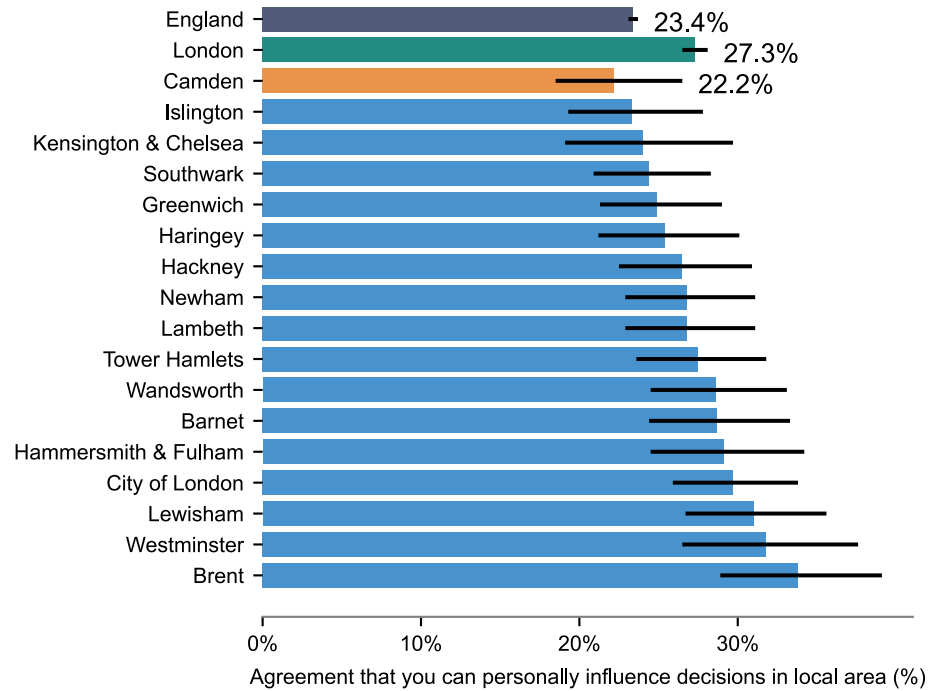
- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

In Camden, most people said it was important to them to feel they could influence decisions, more than a third wanted to be involved, but only 1 in 5 agreed they could influence decisions affecting the local area

In Camden, the percentage of respondents who said it was either “quite” or “very” important to them to personally feel that they could influence decisions in their local area was 58.2%, which is similar to London (55.2%) and above the national average (49.6%).

When asked whether they would like to be involved in decisions the council makes that affect your local area, 38.2% of respondents in Camden said “Yes”. This was above the national average (27.6%) and similar to London (33.2%).

Figure 3.9: Percentage of people who agree that they can personally influence decisions affecting the local area



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

However, the percentage of respondents who “definitely” agree or “tend to” agree that they can personally influence decisions affecting the local area was 22.2%. This was the lowest out of our comparator group, but almost all the comparator boroughs and the national average (23.4%) fell within our margin of error, (indicated by the black lines in the graph) making it difficult to say if there is any substantive difference between these localities on this question. The lowest estimate for the London average was the same as the highest estimate for Camden (26.5%) making it likely that we are lower than the London average on this question.¹¹

Good Life Camden [↻](#)

People are active, creating change for their community, representing the diversity of the borough

Participants in the Community Champions Programme reported that it had strengthened their sense of belonging and empowerment, allowing them to play a more active role in shaping their communities and involving diverse voices across the community. One resident reflected on how engagement in local discussions has increased awareness, and connectedness:

“ People are now aware of what’s going on around them, they have a place where they can discuss with each other and they feel well-informed and empowered to make more decisions and play an important part in the community.”

Another said that:

“ Before I was a part of the champions programme, I was not very respected by my Muslim community for being a single mother, but after coming here- I feel that I have found a family who values me and gives me the courage to be confident in who I am.”

Informal and formal volunteering occur at similar levels in Camden compared to London and England

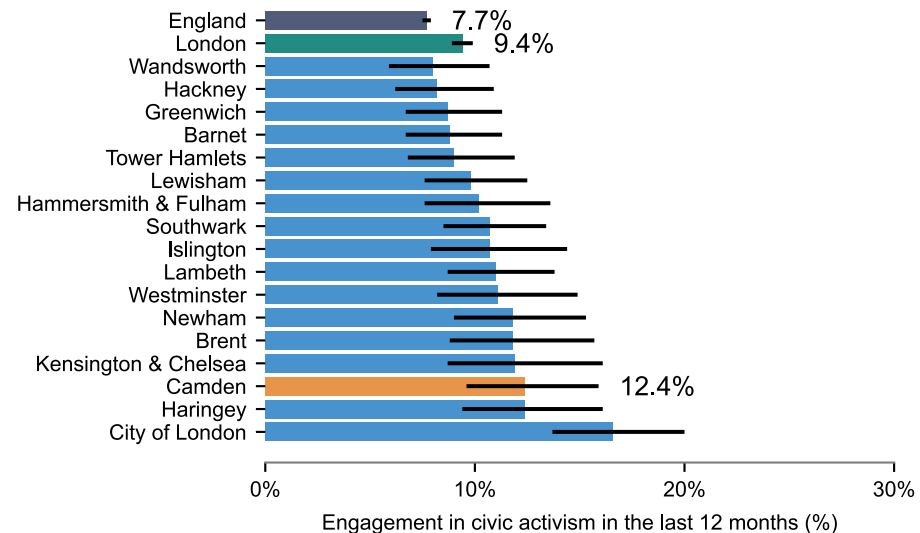
In Camden, 16.5% of respondents reported formally volunteering at least once a month, about the same level as London (15.9%) and England (16.2%). When asked about formal volunteering at least once in the last year, this rose to 31% in Camden, once again similar to London (29.2%) and England (27.8%) averages.

25.5% of respondents in Camden said they engaged in informal volunteering at least once a month, similar to London (23.9%) and England (24.3%). When asked about informal volunteering at least once in the last year, that figure rose to 47.7% in Camden, again similar to London (44.6%) and England (44.4%) averages.¹²

Camden has a slightly higher level of civic activism and engagement in consultations than London and England

In Camden, the percentage of respondents who had participated in some sort of civic engagement in the last 12 months (e.g. contacted a local councillor, attended a public meeting, or signed a paper or online petition) was 39.7%, similar to London (38.3%) but above the national average (33.4%).

Figure 3.10: Percentage of people who said they had engaged in civic activism in the last year

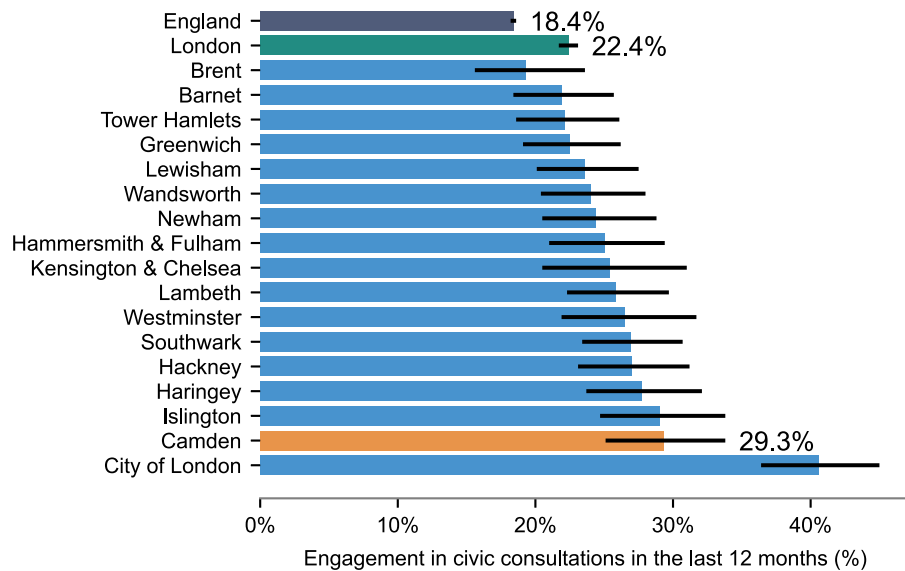


Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
 Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

The percentage of respondents who said they had been engaged in civic activism in the last 12 months – defined as anyone who had been a local councillor, governor, magistrate etc, or been a member of a decision-making group relating to decisions about local services and issues - was 12.4%, most likely (considering error margins) higher than the London average (9.4%) and definitely above the England average (7.7%).

The percentage of respondents who had engaged consultation in the last 12 months (i.e. had completed a paper or online questionnaire, attended a public meeting or been involved in a face-to-face or online group) was 29.3%, which was above the London average (22.3%) and the England average (18.4%).¹³

Figure 3.11: Percentage of people who said they had engaged in a civic consultation in the last year



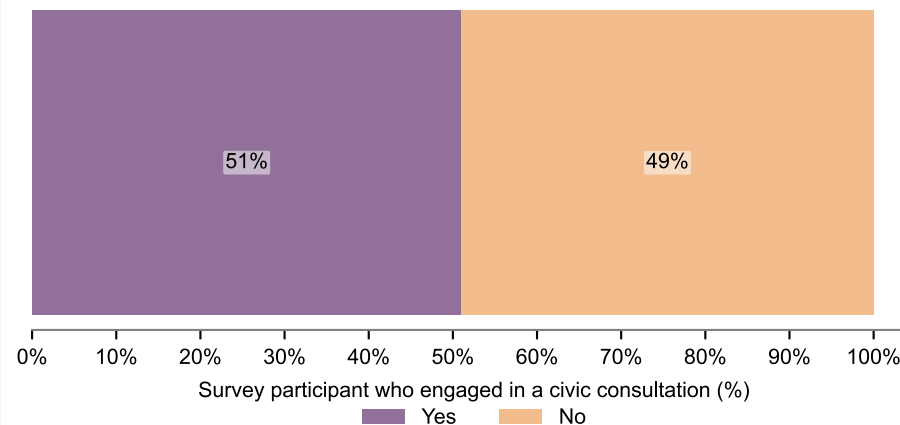
Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
 Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

The Community Life Survey also asked about “social action”: community action efforts including setting up or preserving services, opposing local changes, volunteering, and organising events. 18.2% of respondents in Camden said they had been involved in some form of social action in the last year, similar to London (15.0%) and above the national average (13.0%).¹⁴

Learning from: Camden Giving: survey of grant-making panels alumni

In a survey of their participatory grant-making alumni,¹⁵ Camden Giving asked participants about their civic participation and engagement. The percentage of those who participated in a civic consultation was 51% (compared to 39.7% for Camden residents in a similar question in the Community Life Survey), suggesting the community engagement and political engagement are related.

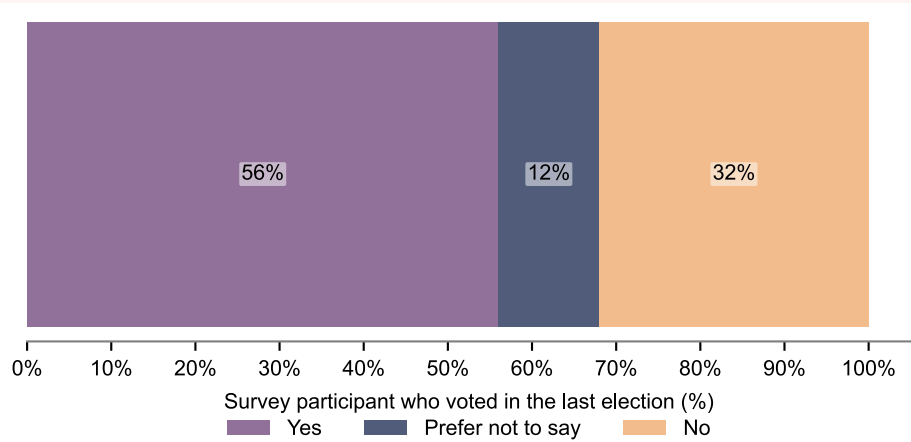
Figure 3.12: Percentage of survey participants who participated in a civic consultation



Source: Survey of grant-making panel, Camden Giving, 2023/2024

On another parameter of participation in the borough’s civic life, 56% of this group voted in the last local and general election. While the survey is not representative of the borough overall, as it was conducted with a group that is already engaged in decision-making in the borough, it does help our understanding of how the ability to influence decisions in the borough through grant-making might be related to more participation in civic life of the borough.

Figure 3.13: Percentage of survey participants who voted in last elections



Source: Survey of grant-making panel, Camden Giving, 2023/2024

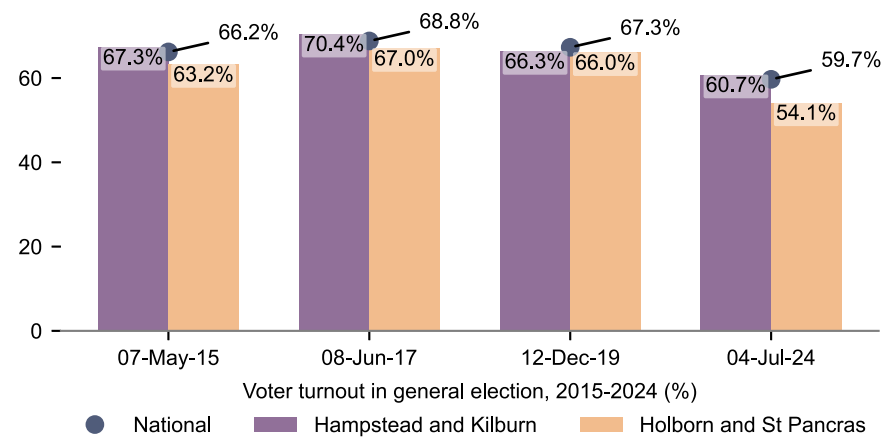
Voter turnout in the 2024 general elections was lower in both constituencies than in previous elections

Since the last report was published, two elections have taken place in Camden: the mayoral election in May 2024 and the general election in July 2024. Voter turnout in the general election was 59.7% across the UK.

In Camden there are two parliamentary constituencies, although these don’t map to the borough boundaries or wards: Holborn and St Pancras, and Hampstead and Highgate. The voter turnout for Holborn and St Pancras was 54.46%, and in Hampstead and Highgate it was 60.99%, whereas in London it was 58.4%. The turnout rates were lower for all compared to the previous general elections.

The London mayoral elections took place in May, and the voter turnout across London was 40.5%. Camden is part of the Barnet & Camden constituency, where the voter turnout was 39.59%.

Figure 3.14: Voter turnout in the general elections, 2015-2024, UK and Camden constituencies



Source: Election results , UK Parliament, 2024

Note: the constituency boundaries were changed in 2023, so the comparison across years is not like-for-like.

Endnotes

- 1 https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/recorded_crime_summary
- 2 https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/recorded_crime_summary
- 3 [Transport Crime in London - London Datastore](#)
- 4 Domestic Abuse Statistics UK <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/> (accessed 4 March 2025)
- 5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication>
- 6 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication>
- 7 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication>
- 8 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication>
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- 13 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication>
- 14 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication>
- 15 Camden Giving received responses from 129 out of 350 alumni members (at the time of the survey).

Good Health and Wellbeing

Camden communities support good health, wellbeing and connection for everyone so that they can start well, live well, and age well



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The 6 WMC ambitions

Living in good physical and mental health is one of the most fundamental aspects of living a good life. Early years form the basis of our healthy development, and drive later life outcomes, such as good education and job opportunities, as well as wellbeing and social engagement. Good health is affected by a range of things, from the natural environment, behaviours, genetics as well as education and socio-economic status. Access to good quality healthcare, as well as to good nutrition and physical activity, are also important to health.

This chapter presents data and evidence about health outcomes for people in Camden. It shows that life expectancy at birth in Camden was 80 years for males, similar to the England average, and 85.5 years for females, two years higher than the England average. However, there is a significant gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas, with a difference of 13.5 years for men and 9.7 years for women. Healthy life expectancy in Camden has been rising over the last decade, now exceeding London and England averages for both genders.

Despite this, some health challenges remain. The percentage of babies born with low birth weight has decreased recently but shows a long-term upward trend, placing Camden above the England average but below the London average.

While smoking rates continue to decline and physical activity levels are higher than in London or England, only one in three adults consume the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables daily and health inequalities remain.

Childhood obesity is a concern, with one in five Reception-age children and one in three Year 6 children being overweight or obese, similar to trends in London and England. More than half of Camden's adults are considered overweight or obese, according to recent data.

Mental health indicators show an increasing rate of new depression diagnoses in adults, higher than in London. Measures of loneliness and social isolation consistently indicate that people in Camden are more likely to feel lonely compared to people in London and England.

The 6 WMC ambitions

One long-term resident, reflecting on the challenges people face, described how financial insecurity and emotional distress often go hand in hand:

“Precarity is the key word. High levels of debt but also emotionally, in the sense that fostering a sense of community and giving one-to-one help is needed. [...] It’s an unhappy situation that people are psychologically or financially bad.”

- Regulated tenant, Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

For some, work and financial stability are closely linked to mental and physical health. One resident shared how employment provides a sense of security and well-being:

“I feel stress. When I am working and you get money, I am feeling satisfied and happy. In the future, I would like to get a job and become healthy.”

- 54, Female, Somali, Community Kitchen drop in

More detailed information about the health of Camden residents is available in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (<https://jsna.camden.gov.uk/>).

Good Life Camden

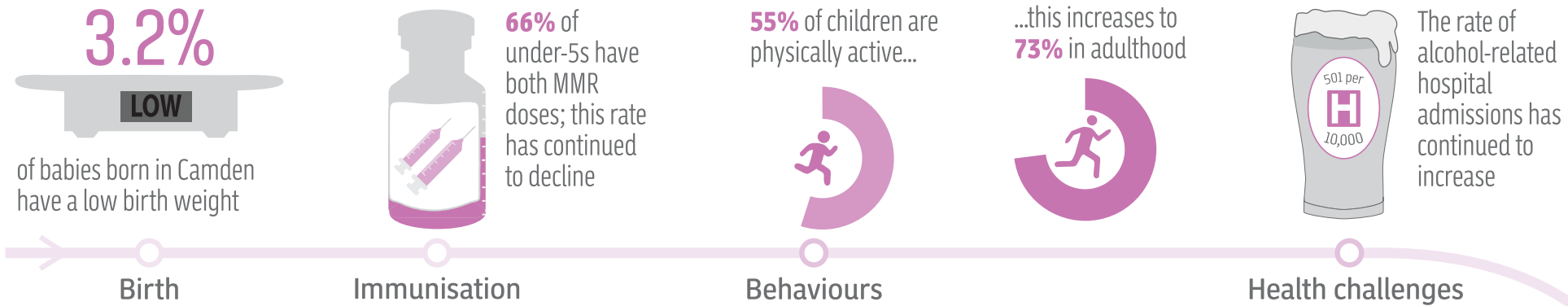
The Good Life Camden framework describes the things that are important for living a good life, and was co-created by residents and staff. This chapter includes signals from the **Health** and the **Equality** themes:

- People live long and healthy lives,
- People have good mental health,
- People have good physical health,
- People are happy and feel satisfied with their lives, and
- Health outcomes are good for everyone.

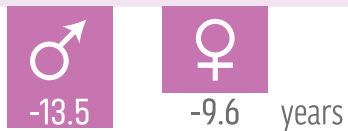
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Key insights

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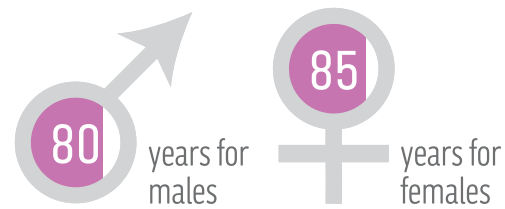


Residents in the most deprived areas are expected to live fewer years, on average, than those in the least deprived areas.



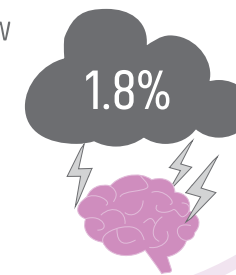
This gap is larger for males.

The average life expectancy at birth is





Life expectancy

The rate of new depression diagnoses in Camden is higher than the national average



Good Life Camden 

-  People live long and healthy lives
-  Health outcomes are good for everyone

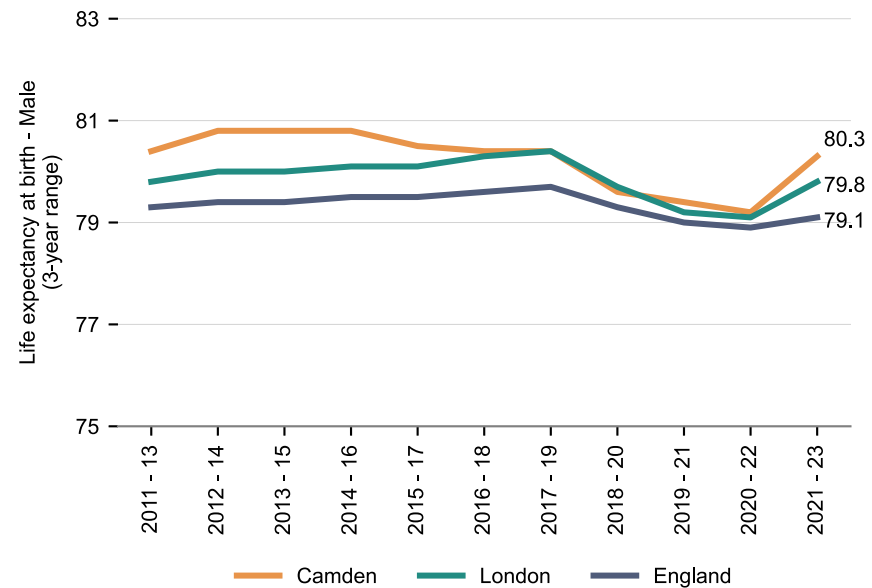
In 2022, life expectancy at birth in Camden was 80 for males, similar to the London and England average, and 85 for females, two years higher than the England average. However, the gap in life expectancy between people living in the most and least deprived areas in Camden is 13.5 years for men and 9.6 years for women

Life expectancy at birth means the average lifespan that a baby born today would be expected to live based on current mortality rates at all ages. It is an overarching measure of the health of the population, and improvements in life expectancy can be down to different things, like rising living standards, better access to health services, improved health behaviours and better education.

Life expectancy at birth for *males*¹ in 2021-2023 was 80.3, close to but higher than both the London (79.8) and England (79.1) figures. It has been consistently higher than London and England over the last decade.

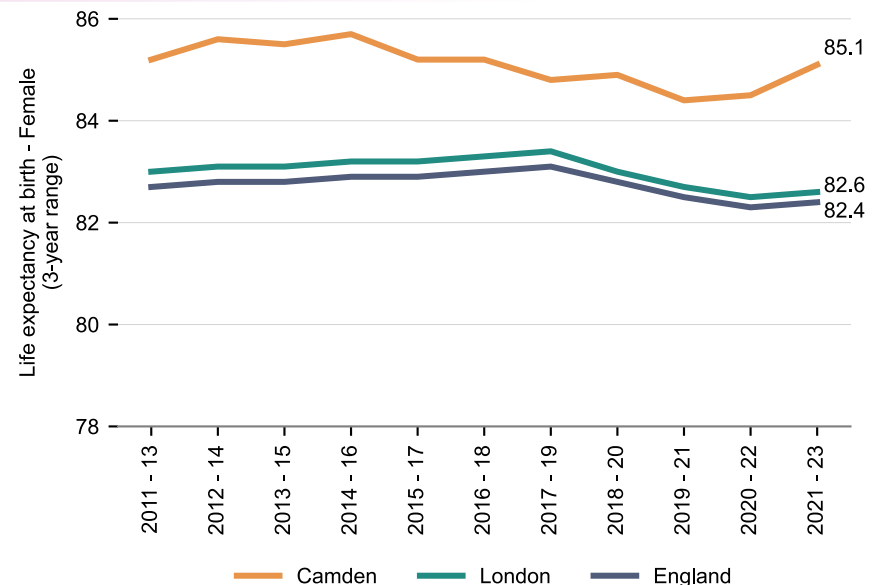
Life expectancy at birth for *females* in Camden was 85.1 years, a year more than the London average and more than two years more than the England average. Over the past decade, life expectancy at birth for females in Camden was consistently higher compared to the average for both London and England.

Figure 4.1: Male life expectancy at birth



Source: Annual mortality extract & Mid-year population estimates, ONS, 2024

Figure 4.2: Female life expectancy at birth



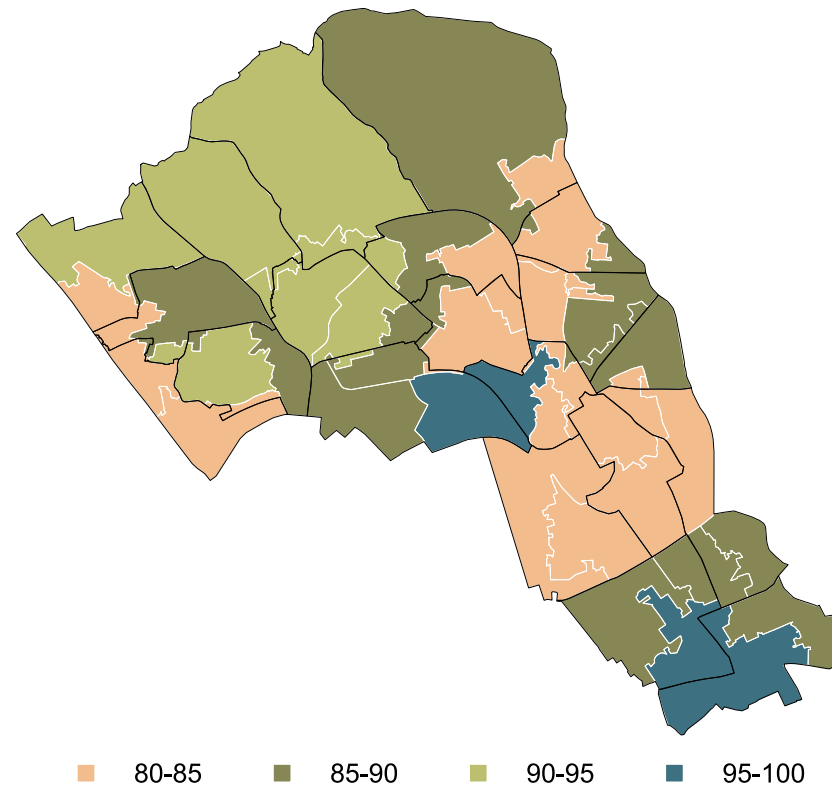
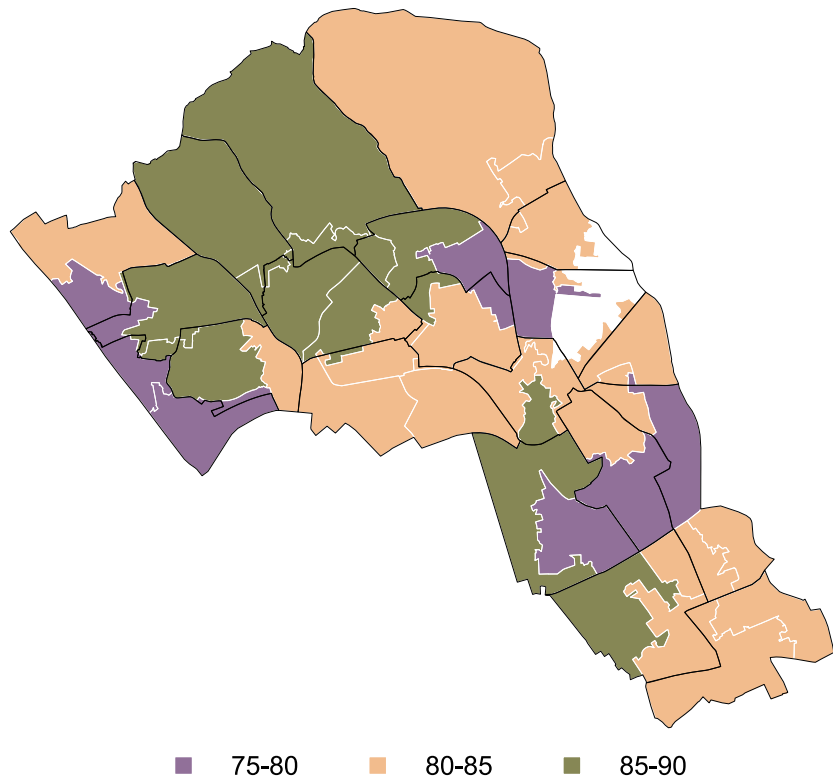
Source: Annual mortality extract & Mid-year population estimates, ONS, 2024

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In some areas in Camden the average life expectancy is higher than in other areas, with inequalities in life expectancy tied to inequalities in socioeconomic living standards, a pattern which is also evident nationally.² The gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas is 13.5 years for males, (compared with 9.7 across England), and 9.6 years for females (compared with 7.9 across England) (2018-2020 figures).³ Life expectancy is higher generally in the North of the borough compared to the central and eastern parts of the borough, with some differences seen between men and women.

Figure 4.3: Life expectancy - males, 2016 - 2022

Figure 4.4: Life expectancy - females, 2016 - 2022



Source: Life expectancy - Males, OHID, based on ONS data, 2016-2020
 Note: Missing values are represented in white

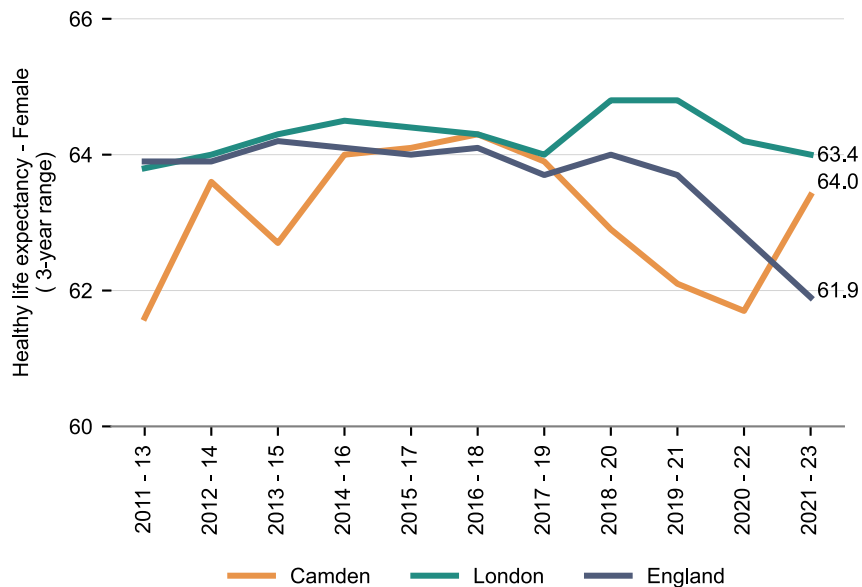
Source: Life expectancy - Females, OHID, based on ONS data, 2016-2020

Health life expectancy in Camden has followed an upward trend over the last decade, and is now higher than London and England averages, for both men and women

Healthy life expectancy is the average number of years a person can expect to live in good health, i.e. without disability or sickness. It is a measure that combines quality of life and its longevity.

In the time period 2018-20, Camden’s healthy life expectancy at birth for *females* was estimated at 66.7 years.⁴ This is higher than the overall London average of 65 years and the England average of 63.9 years. Camden’s healthy life expectancy at birth for *males* was estimated at 64.6 years, higher than the London average (63.7 years) and the England average (63.1 years). From 2009 to 2018, healthy life expectancy at birth for *females* has mostly increased, similar to healthy life expectancy at birth for *males*.

Figure 4.5: Health life expectancy at birth - female



Source: Annual births and mortality extracts & Mid-year population estimates, ONS, 2024

Figure 4.6: Male healthy life expectancy



Source: Annual births and mortality extracts & Mid-year population estimates, ONS, 2024

Health life expectancy at 65 was 13.4 years for females and 15.3 for males

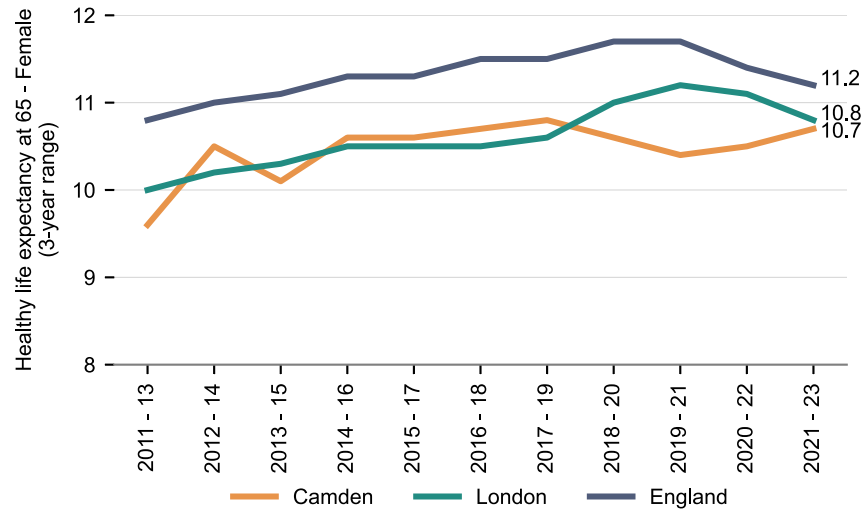
Camden’s healthy life expectancy at 65 for females in the period 2018-2020 was 13.4 years. This is higher than the average for London (11.2 years) and England (11.3 years), indicating that Camden’s elderly female population generally experiences a longer period of good health post-retirement compared to both the regional and national averages.

In comparison to other boroughs, Camden is performing quite well. It’s noteworthy that only a few boroughs such as Kensington and Chelsea (17.2 years) and Wandsworth (14.3 years) have higher healthy life expectancies.

Camden’s health life expectancy at 65 for males in the period 2018-20 was 15.3 years, which is higher than the average for London (10.3) and England (10.5) by 5 years.

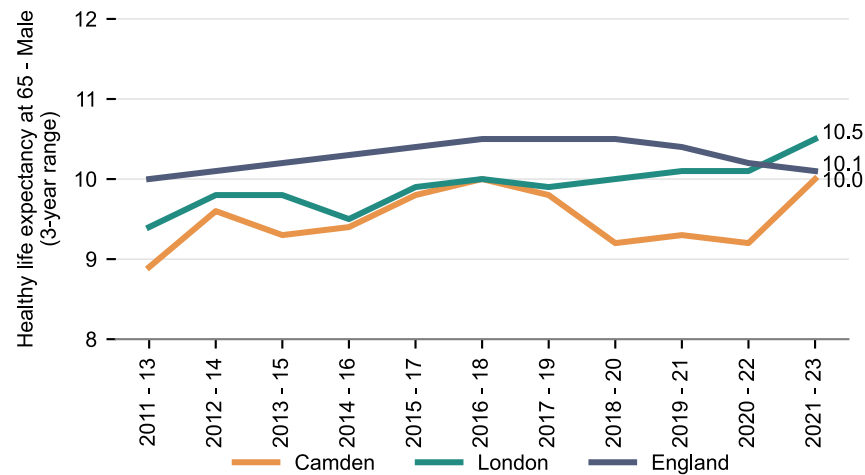
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Figure 4.7: Female healthy life expectancy at 65



Source: Annual births and mortality extracts & Mid-year population estimates, ONS, 2024

Figure 4.8: Health life expectancy at 65 – male



Source: Annual births and mortality extracts & Mid-year population estimates, ONS, 2024

Good Life Camden ☺

People have good physical health

Living in good health is important for children and young people’s development, both physically and mentally. Feeling loved, valued, supported and cared for, enjoying childhood and having good positive experiences are all important for children’s development.

The pandemic and cost of living crisis have had a detrimental impact on people’s lives and wellbeing, and especially on children and young people, who are still growing and developing.

The percentage of babies born with low birth weight decreased this year but the long-term trend is upwards. Camden is above the England average, but below the London average

Figure 4.9: Low birth weight of term babies, 2010-2022



Source: OHID, based on ONS data, 2010-2022

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Low birth weight (defined as under 2.5kg and born at least at 37 weeks) is associated with increased risk of childhood mortality, infection, developmental delays, and poorer health in later life. Low birth weight births can result from premature or multiple births, maternal health and wellbeing and genetic factors.

In 2022, 3.2% of babies born in Camden had a low birth weight, which is higher than the England average of 2.9% but lower than the London average of 3.4%.⁵ Analysing the data from 2012 to 2022, the broad trend is towards an increasing percentage of babies born with low birth weight in Camden.

The percentage of children receiving two doses of the MMR vaccine by age 5 is lower than the London and England averages

Childhood vaccinations are crucial for safeguarding both individual and public health. The NHS emphasises that vaccines are the most effective way to prevent many infectious diseases. They not only protect vaccinated individuals but also help prevent the spread of diseases to others, including those who cannot be vaccinated due to medical reasons. Since vaccines were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio, and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people are either gone or are now very rarely seen. However, if people stop having vaccines, it's possible for infectious diseases to quickly spread again.

The MMR vaccine is a combined vaccination that protects against measles, mumps and rubella, three highly infectious diseases. Camden's coverage for MMR vaccine is considerably lower than both the London and national coverage but it is similar to other boroughs in North Central London.

In Camden, MMR vaccine coverage of children (5 years old) who have had two doses of the MMR in 2023/24 was 65.7%, compared to 73.3% in London and 83.9% in England. Camden's performance in MMR vaccine coverage is down from a peak in 2013/14 of 89.1%. Both London and England have also shown a declining level of uptake over this time period, but a smaller decline. However, more recently in Camden the declining trend has reversed, with an increase in MMR vaccine coverage of 5.9% for both doses by age 5 between 2020/21 and 2023/24, and an increase of 6.5% for one dose by the age of 2 between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

To address the lower MMR vaccine uptake among populations in Camden, particularly Somali-speaking residents, engagement activities were held in 2024, including Somali GP-led coffee mornings at the British Somali Community Centre (BSCC). These sessions provided parents with information about the vaccine schedule and disease symptoms, followed by a Q&A session where concerns were addressed. One parent emphasised the importance of informed decision-making, stating:

“ Let us make a choice, I can trust so long as I know the benefits and risk.”

Despite increased confidence among attendees, some remained concerned about a potential link between autism and the MMR vaccine. In response, a session with Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust's MOSAIC autism diagnostic service was organised. After discussing autism symptoms, the diagnostic process, and research disproving any vaccine-autism link, the percentage of attendees who strongly believed in the connection dropped from 33% to 0%.

The rate of emergency hospital admissions for asthma in under 19-year-olds has been on a downward trend and is lower than in London and England.

Asthma is the most common long-term condition among children and young people and is one of the top ten reasons for emergency hospital admission in the UK. Emergency admissions related to asthma are largely preventable with improved management and early intervention. They are also strongly associated with deprivation, despite the prevalence of asthma being evenly distributed, meaning that children and young people living in deprived areas are more likely to require emergency admissions. This may be explained in part by higher rates of outdoor and indoor pollution and tobacco consumption in these areas.

In 2022/23, Camden saw a total of 35 hospital admissions for asthma in individuals under 19 years. With a rate of 89.3 admissions per 100,000 population, Camden’s performance was better than both the England average (122.2) and London (135.3). Over time, there has been a steady reduction in Camden’s asthma admission rates – from a peak of 190.8 in 2017 – which tracks a similar trend for England and London.

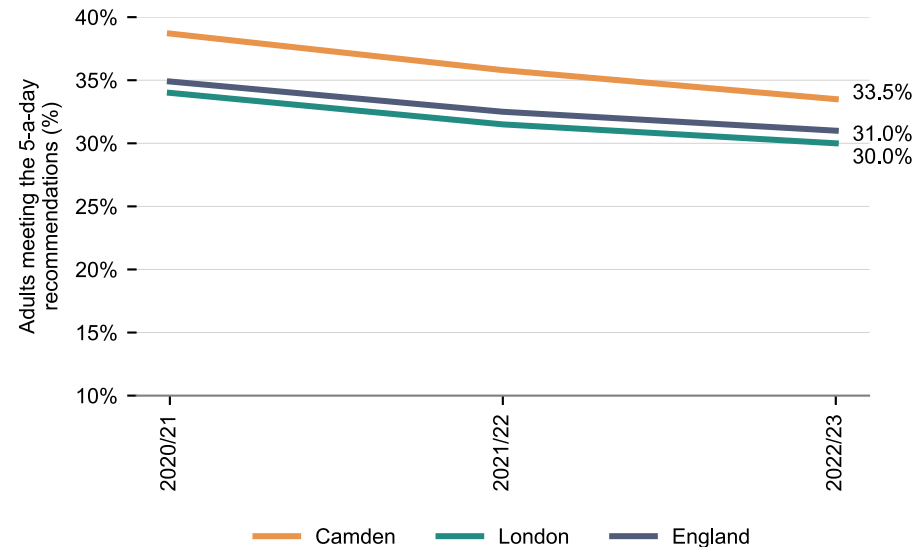
Healthy behaviours: smoking rates have been declining, while physical activity levels for adults and children as well as eating five fruit and veg a day are higher than London and England. Yet health inequalities remain, with smoking more common for the most deprived

Eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day is based on advice from the World Health Organization (WHO), which recommends eating a minimum of 400g of fruit and vegetables a day to lower the risk of serious health problems.

The latest data from the Sport England Active Lives Survey⁶ shows that one in three (33.5%) of adults in Camden are eating the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day in 2022/23, compared to 35.8% the previous year. This remains a higher proportion than is reported for

London (30.0%) and England (31%) but matches the direction in London and England, as well as across the boroughs.

Figure 4.10: Percentage of adults meeting the ‘5-a-day’ fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations (new method)



Source: OHID, based on Sport England data, 2022/2023

Alongside these trends, some residents shared their personal efforts to maintain physical health through diet, exercise, and monitoring health risks such as diabetes. At the Community Kitchen attendees discussed how they are making lifestyle adjustments:

“ I try to eat more fruit and vegetables. I am trying to lose weight. My doctor tells me I am at risk of diabetes. I am checking my blood pressure regularly.”

- 54, Female, Somalian, Community Kitchen drop in

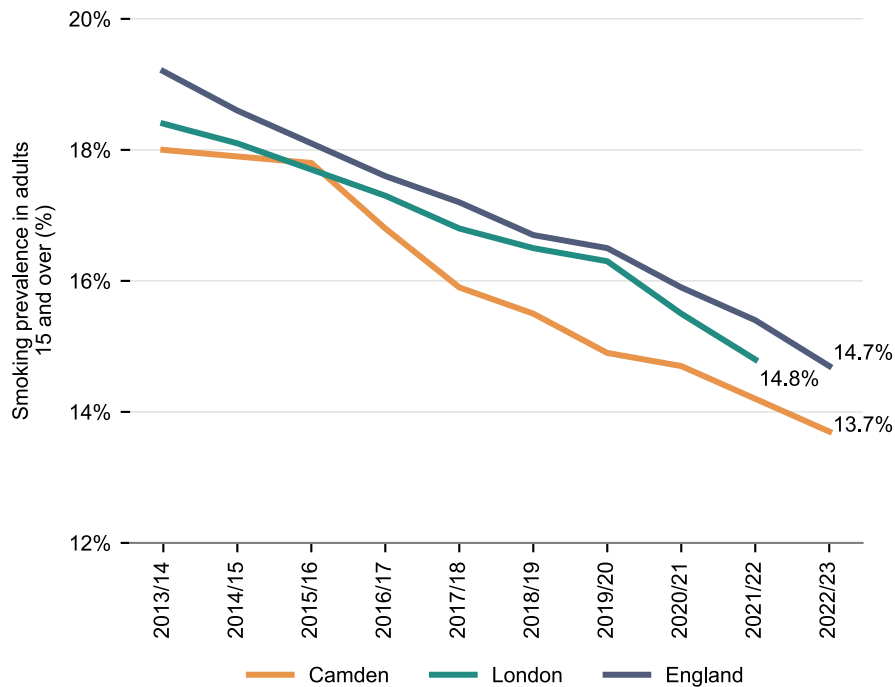
“ I walk to Holborn to and from work. I eat healthy—fruit, vegetables, salad, rice, bread... not too much bread.”

- 45, Female, Bangladeshi, Community Kitchen drop in

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable health issues and early death in the UK, linked to diseases like lung cancer and heart disease. Smoking prevalence in adults has been in decline over the past decade across England.

Fewer people smoke in Camden as a share of the population – around 14% of people aged 15+, compared to 15% in England and slightly less in London (14.8%).⁷ Across the borough comparison group, Camden is fairly in the middle of the pack, with the lowest share of smokers registered in Barnet (12.4%) and the highest in Haringey (16.8%).

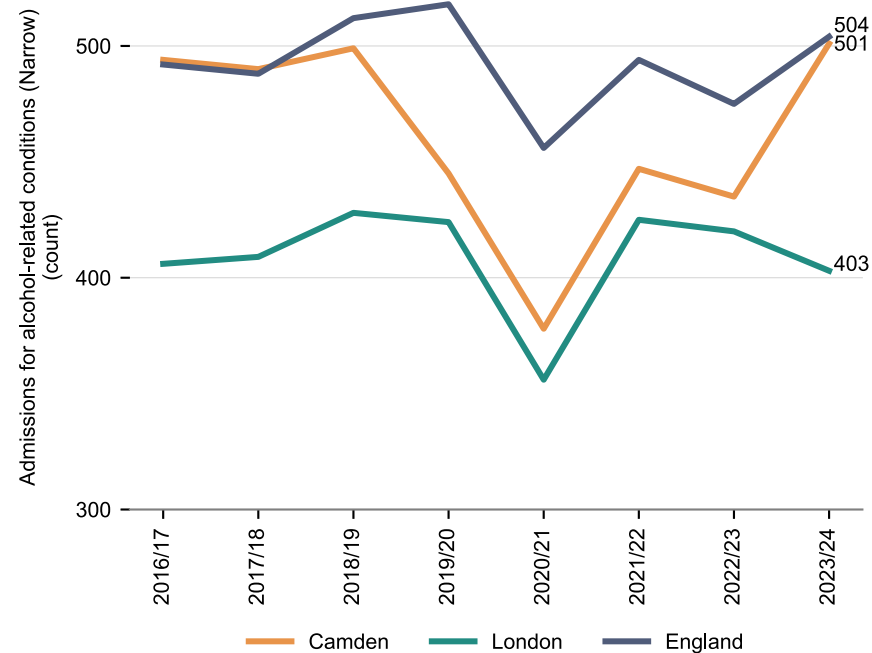
Figure 4.11: Smoking prevalence in adults (aged 15 and over) – share of population



Source: NHS England, 2013-2023

The impact of alcohol consumption remains a significant health burden in the UK, with harm to individuals. In Camden, the rate of alcohol related hospital admissions⁸ has been increasing and getting worse since the lowest level in 2020/21 of 378 per 100,000, to 501 in 2023/24.⁹

Figure 4.12: Admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions (Narrow)



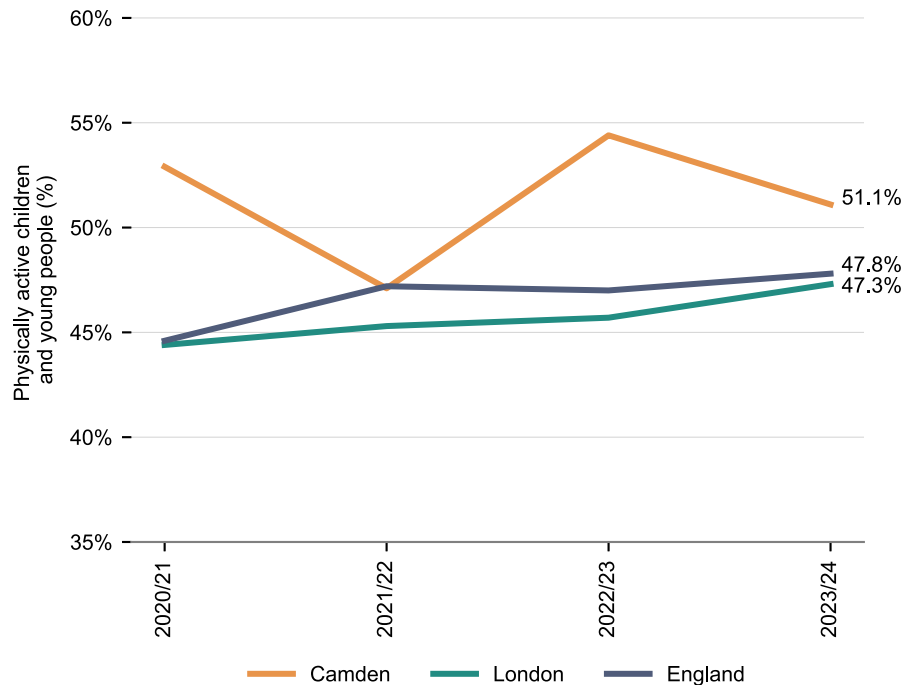
Source: OHID, based on NHS England and ONS data, 2016-2024

This rate is similar to the England rate of 504, and higher than the London rate of 403. Compared to the borough comparison group, Camden's rate is one of the highest.

According to the Sport England Active Lives survey, 73.3% of Camden adults were physically active in 2022/23, higher than London (66.3%) and national (67.1%) average. "Physically active" is defined as doing at least 150 minutes of moderately intense physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more, in the previous 28 days.

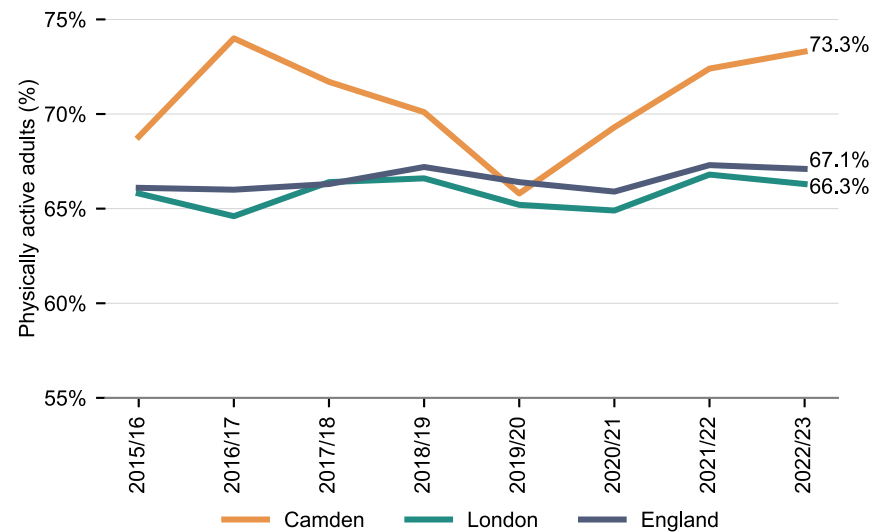
Children in Camden are also more physically active than in London or England, according to the 2022/23 data from the Sport England Active Lives Children and Young People survey. 54.4% of Camden children are physically active, higher than London (45.7%) and national (47%) averages. "Physically active" is defined as doing at least 420 minutes of sport or physical activity in the last 7 days when the survey is completed (fieldwork happens during school term time).

Figure 4.13: Percentage of physically active children and young people, 2020-2024



Source: OHID, based on Sport England data, 2017-2024

Figure 4.14: Percentage of physically active adults



Source: OHID, based on Sport England data, 2015-2023

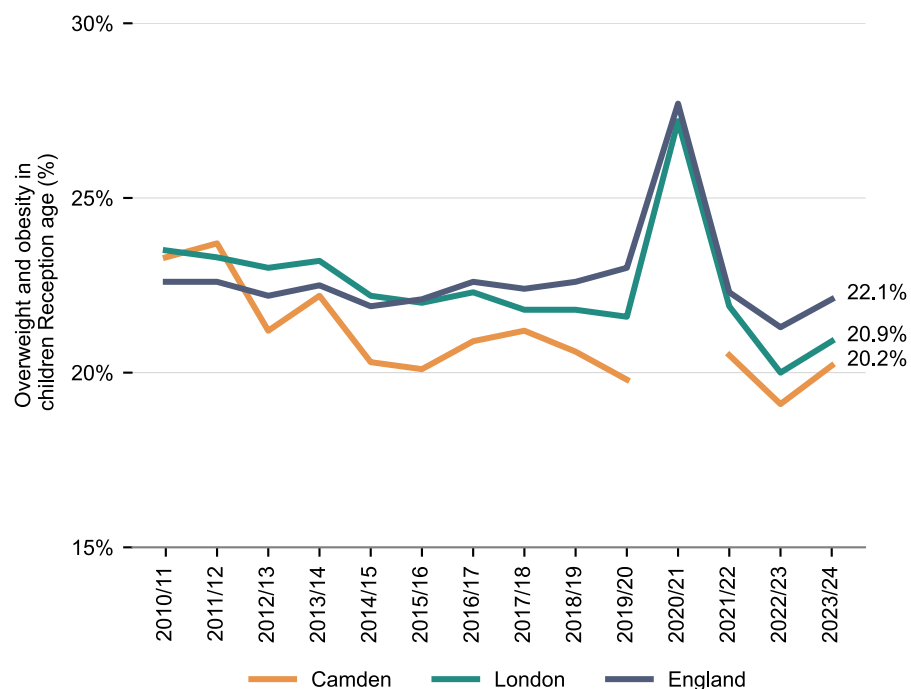
1 in 5 Reception-age school children are overweight or obese, and this rises to 1 in 3 children by Year 6, similar to London and England, and more than half of adults in Camden are overweight or obese

Obesity is a global health concern and has been linked to chronic diseases and reduced life expectancy. There is a growing epidemic of preventable disease and poorer quality of life linked to obesity. People living with obesity may die earlier. They are also more likely to have fewer years of healthy life and more preventable health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory conditions. Obesity is also the second biggest cause of cancers.

Childhood obesity can persist into adulthood, with increasing risks and health consequences as people age. Studies show a higher probability of overweight or obese children becoming obese adults, leading to

various health issues such as diabetes, hypertension, and mental health issues. Across England, obesity rates in the most deprived areas are double those of the least deprived. Weight is tracked in reception (4-5 year olds) and year 6 (10-11 year olds) at schools, and in adulthood it is measured in the NHS Health Survey.

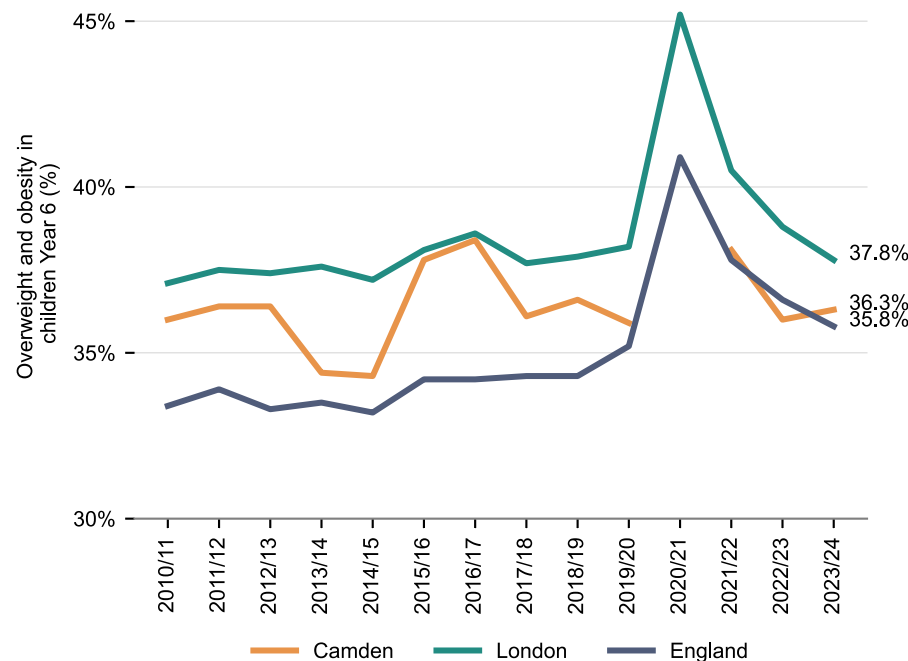
Figure 4.15: Prevalence of overweight and obesity in children Reception-age, 2012-2024



Source: NHS England, National Child Measurement Programme, 2010-2024

Almost 1 in 5 children in Camden are overweight or obese by reception year (20.2%), which is similar to London (20.9%) and lower than England (22.1%).¹⁰ By the end of primary school (year 6) this figure rises to 1 in 3 (36%), following a similar partner to London (37.8%) and England (36.6%).¹¹

Figure 4.16: Prevalence of overweight and obesity in children Year 6 age, 2012-2024



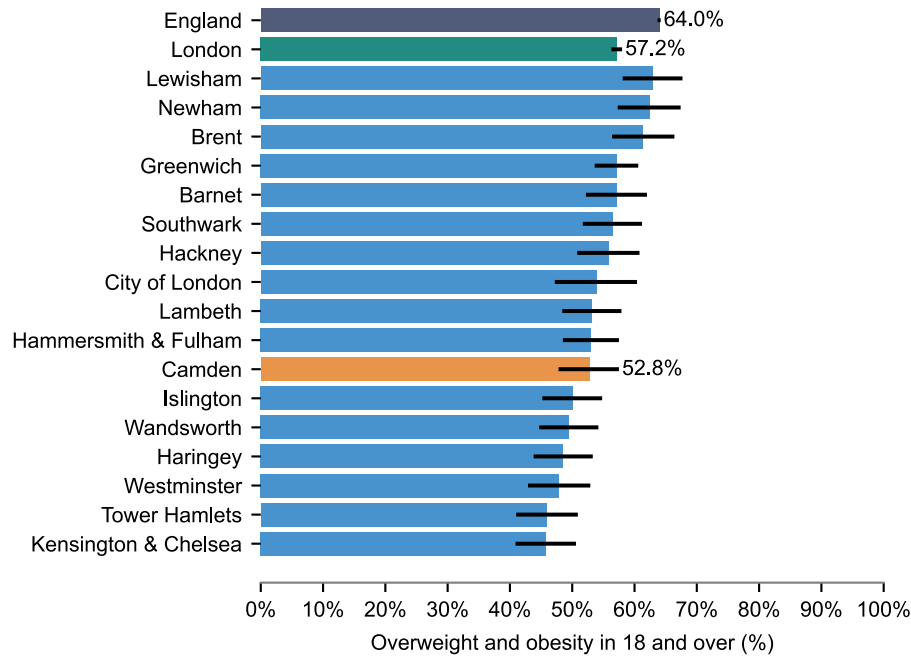
Source: NHS England, National Child Measurement Programme, 2010-2024

The prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults was 52.8% in 2022/23, lower than England’s average value of 64% but similar to other boroughs in London.¹² Overall, London had a lower prevalence than England, standing at 57%.

From 2015 to 2022, there has been an upward trend in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults in Camden, with the rate increasing from 44.1% to 52.8%. Despite the rise, Camden still has one of the lower rates of adult overweight and obesity prevalence among the areas compared.

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Figure 4.17: Overweight and obesity prevalence in adults, 2022



Source: OHID, based on Sport England data, 2022/2023
 Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

The rate of sexually transmitted infections has been rising in Camden, London and England since Covid, and is higher in Camden

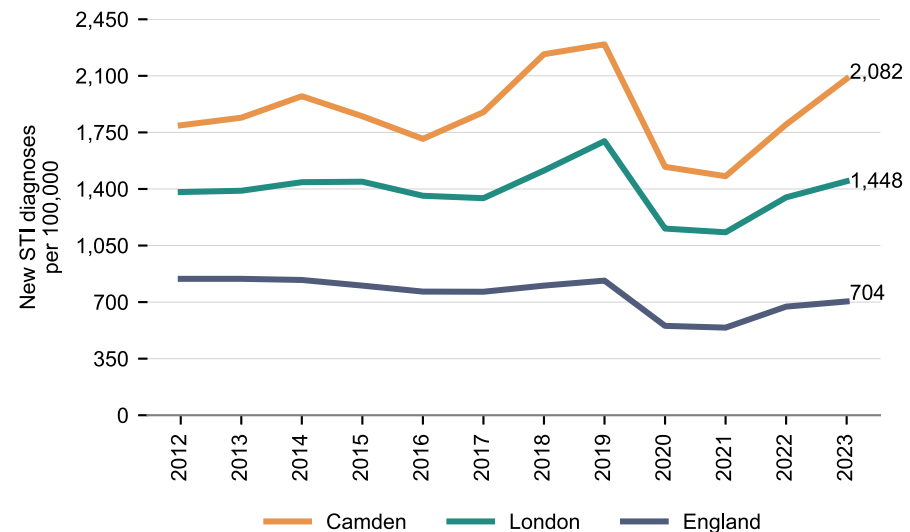
The rate of new STI diagnoses among people accessing sexual health services in Camden in 2023 was 2,081.6, per 100,000 residents,¹³ above the London rate (1,448.3) and the national rate (703.6). The rate has been increasing across Camden, London and England since 2021, after a steep reduction between 2019 and 2020, probably due to the impact of the pandemic on both social mixing and access to health care and diagnostic services.

Amidst rising STI rates, access to accurate sexual health information and services for young people remains important. The *Look after YOU* campaign was coproduced with Camden young people aged 16 to 22. It was developed in response to research – including the *2023 annual public health report* into adolescent health – which found that adolescents’ (young people aged 11 to 19) age affects how they get health care and they do not always know how or where to get the health care they need.

One of the key challenges young people face in seeking health support is feeling uncomfortable or uncertain about how they will be perceived. As a Camden Youth Tell Them representative explained:

“Young people can also be put off getting health care because they feel embarrassed, are worried about costs or their parents finding out. We hope that *Look after YOU* not only helps Camden young people to easily find the free healthcare they need, when they need it, but that they feel comfortable and confident using these services.”

Figure 4.18: All new STI diagnoses rate per 100,000



Source: UK Health Security Agency, 2012-2023

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Good Life Camden ↻

Everyone has access to the services they need

When speaking to residents in the borough, experiences with accessing healthcare services varied. Some praised the availability of medical facilities, particularly the proximity of major hospitals, while others highlighted barriers such as long waiting times, digital accessibility issues, and difficulties securing GP appointments.

A mother reflected on the reassurance of living near University College Hospital (UCH), knowing urgent medical care was close by, but also shared frustrations with delays in receiving treatment:

“ I love Camden, I have been here for eight years. There is UCH next to our house which is good because if it is an emergency, you can go there. I don't like the waiting hours in UCH; sometimes I have to wait five hours to see the doctor.”

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

For some residents, the long-term effects of the Covid pandemic continue to impact their health and quality of life. A resident who contracted Covid in 2020 described the lasting toll on her health and the difficulties in accessing adequate support:

“ I contracted Covid in 2020 so I was in an induced coma for 18 days. To get over that and recover from that took me two years. I'm still recovering, I've got chronic fatigue. I've been let down by the NHS. I need someone to help me at home, but they refused, they said no. They think I am 100% recovered, but I'm not.”

- 50, Female, White European, Focus group discussion at SHAK

Learnings from: Lifeafterhummus

Equitable access to primary healthcare services - e.g. GP surgeries – is an important factor for resident health and wellbeing. In 2023, 'Lifeafterhummus' undertook a community action research project that investigated healthcare access barriers in Regent's Park and St Pancras and Somers Town wards. Researchers interviewed 93 residents which revealed a range of difficulties accessing appointments.

Key obstacles raised by the interviewees included communication issues, staff attitudes (including perceptions of racism and a lack of cultural sensitivity), and reception staff hindering access. The report proposes solutions focusing on improving reception experiences, increasing interpreter services, enhancing face-to-face appointment availability, clarifying complaint processes, and boosting community engagement.

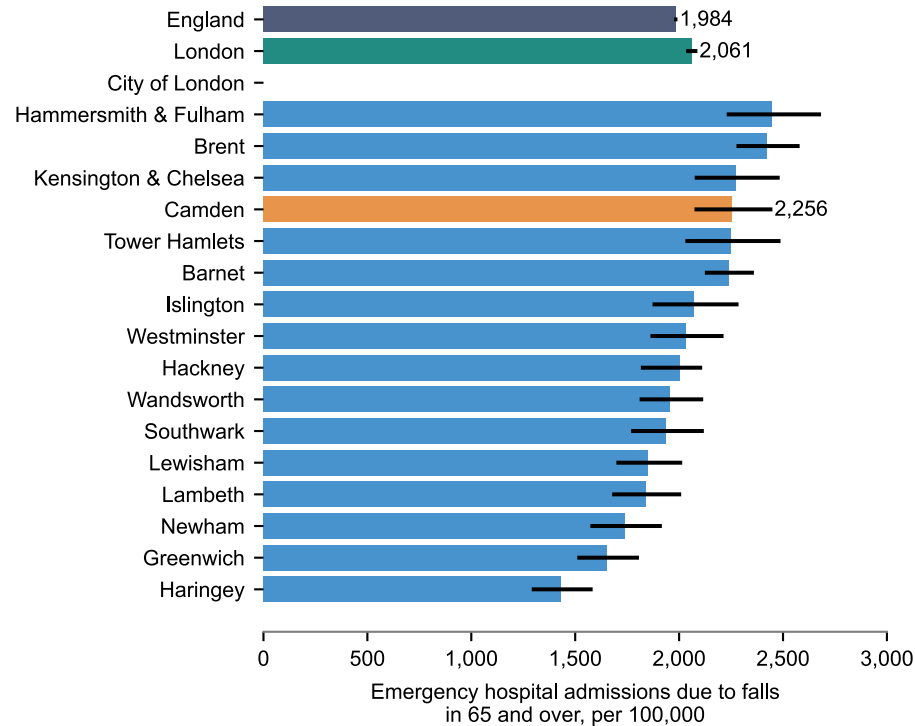
The rate of emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over is higher in Camden than London and England

Falls are the largest cause of emergency hospital admissions for people aged 65 and over, and can have a major impact on long term outcomes such as the ability to live independently.

In the 2022/23, there was a decrease in the number of emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over in Camden. However, despite this positive trend, Camden's performance is worse when compared to the average for both England and London, with a value of 2,386 admissions per 100,000 residents compared to England's 1,933 and London's 2,070.5. This has been consistent in previous years too, with Camden rates higher than London and England since 2012.

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Figure 4.19: Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over, 2022



Source: OHID, based on NHS England and ONS data, 2023/2024

Notes: Error margin bars are displayed in black. Values for Hackney and City of London are combined

Preventable mortality is lower in Camden compared to London and England

Preventable mortality means deaths before the age of 75 from causes that could be prevented through effective public health and primary prevention interventions, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases. It can also be affected by socioeconomic factors and behaviours, such as smoking, and drug and alcohol consumption.

In 2023, Camden’s under-75 mortality rate from preventable causes was 124.4 per 100,000, which was lower than the overall London rate of 129 per 100,000 and significantly lower than the England average of 153 per 100,000.

Compared to other boroughs in the borough comparison group, only Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea had lower rates of preventable mortality.

Around 0.4% of people in Camden have been diagnosed with dementia

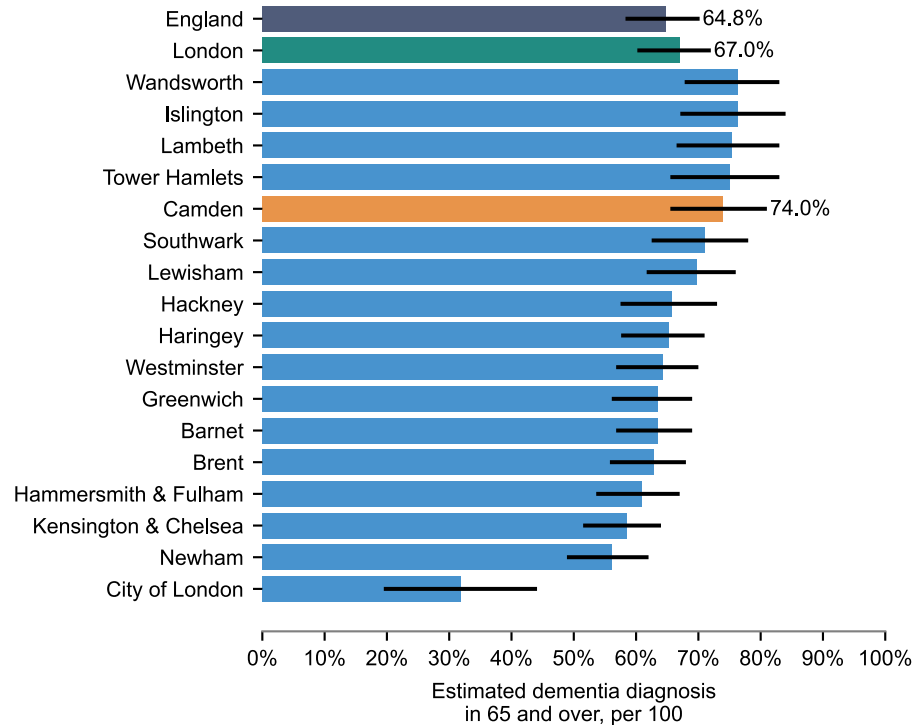
Dementia is a syndrome characterised by a global deterioration in intellectual function and is a main cause of late-life disability. The prevalence of dementia increases with age and is estimated to be approximately 20% at 80 years of age. Alzheimer’s disease accounts for 50 - 75% of cases of dementia.

The annual incidence of dementia of the Alzheimer type rises to 34.3/100 person years at risk in the 90 year age group; and the prevalence is higher in women than in men due to the longer lifespan of women.

In 2023/24, about 0.4% of people of all ages in Camden were diagnosed with dementia. This is lower than the England average of 0.8% but one of the highest across the borough comparison group.

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Figure 4.20: Estimated dementia diagnosis rate (aged 65 and older), 2024



Source: OHID, based on NHS England data, 2024

Notes: Error margin bars are displayed in black.

Good Life Camden [↪](#)

People have good mental health

The rate of new diagnosis of depression in adults has been increasing, and is higher in Camden than London

Depression is a common mental disorder. It involves a persistent low mood or loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time,

and it goes beyond regular mood changes about everyday life.

According to GP data from 2022, the prevalence of depression among adults aged 18+ years was 10.7%, higher than the London average of 9.5% but lower than the England average of 13.3%. The prevalence of depression has continued to increase since 2012, and similarly the rates of new diagnoses. In 2023, there was a significantly higher incidence of new depression diagnoses among adults in Camden (1.8%) compared to the England average (1.4%).

Camden’s Mental Health Needs Assessment, overseen by the Mental Health Partnership Board, highlighted key social factors affecting mental wellbeing, including deprivation, unemployment, housing instability, and social isolation. The report integrates quantitative data (primary care and publicly available Quality and Outcomes Framework data) with insights from individuals with lived experience and input from key stakeholders such as NHS professionals and voluntary sector service providers. Certain groups, such as asylum seekers, ethnic minorities, homeless people, unpaid carers, and young adults, are at higher risk of poor mental health and often face barriers to accessing support. While Camden has a strong network of mental health services, including trauma-informed care, peer-led support, and social prescribing, challenges remain. The assessment found that long waiting times, stigma, and a lack of culturally sensitive services prevent some residents from getting the help they need. Some residents report waiting up to two years, while others struggled with fragmented service pathways and inconsistent quality of care.

Some residents spoke about the pressures that contribute to poor mental health, ranging from immigration status and job insecurity to housing instability. One resident described the stress of navigating the asylum process and struggling to find work:

“ I am applying for asylum now [...] I am looking for work but I can’t find it for a few months which is causing me stress.”

- 25, Male, Bangladeshi, Community Kitchen drop in

The 6 WMC ambitions

For others, the combination of financial insecurity and unstable housing has heightened mental health concerns. A member of the Camden Federation of Private Tenants highlighted the growing anxiety among renters due to rising costs and the fear of eviction:

“*Tenants that get in touch with us—what we’re seeing a lot of—is a combination of mental and physical health issues. Some of these are pre-existing, but quite a lot, I think, is related to their housing situation. At the moment, I think it’s fair to say that people are really scared about the rent they’re being asked to pay. We’re seeing rent increases like we’ve never seen before, along with threats of eviction—and actual evictions—at levels we’ve never seen before. It cuts across the board.*”

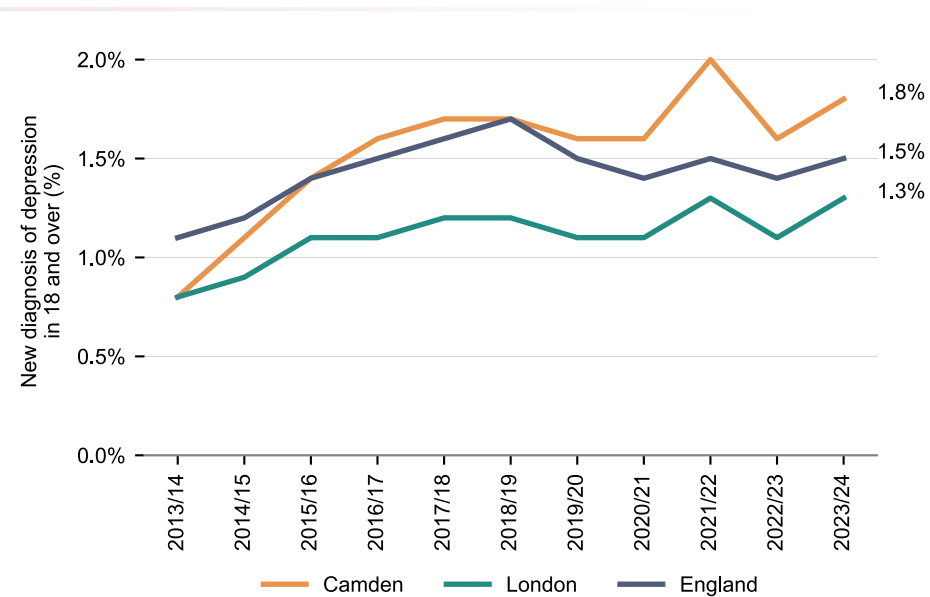
- Private tenant, Focus group discussion with Camden Fed

One resident reflected on how engaging with local services and activities helped their mental health by regaining confidence and managing anxiety:

“*I feel like I’m in a better place now mentally and physically than two years ago because there are opportunities. I am keeping busy and this doesn’t let me worry. I am learning new skills and I’m financially in a better place. I used to hide letters to ignore them. I was scared to go to the shops, I had a fear of people, social anxiety. I now sit back and watch what I say, now I am more observant.*”

- Community Kitchen drop in

Figure 4.21: Patients aged 18 and over newly registered with depression



Source: NHS England, 2013-2024

Measures for loneliness and social isolation consistently indicate that more people in Camden are more likely to experience feeling lonely or isolated than in London and England

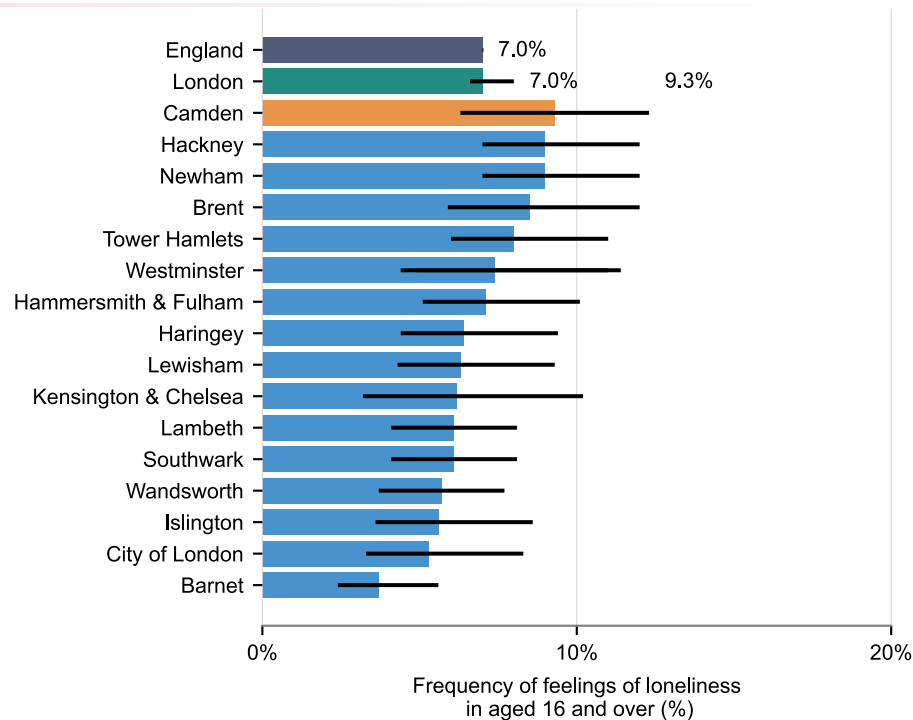
Loneliness has a significant impact on wellbeing, and is correlated with early deaths and health risks, hospital readmissions, and lower performance and productivity in the workplace.

Across several measures in the 2023/34 Community Life Survey, the sense of loneliness and social isolation for people in Camden appeared to be higher than in London or England, although the error margins should be considered as sample sizes were limited. There was a higher proportion of residents who feel lonely “often or always” than the national and London averages.

The 6 WMC ambitions

Camden also ranks highest in the borough comparison group, although the margin of error means that the actual experiences may be very similar. More people in Camden were likely also to say that they lack companionship, feel left out or isolated. Fewer people in Camden agreed (86.3%) that they would have people to call on if they wanted company, compared to 91.4% in London and 91.8% nationally. This picture of higher levels of loneliness and social isolation is also supported by our Adult Social Care Outcomes framework measures on services users and carers who receive as much social contact as they would like. For both these groups, Camden has a lower score than London or England averages.

Figure 4.22: Percentage of people aged 16 or over who say they feel lonely often or always



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

While the data highlights experiences of loneliness and social isolation, residents we spoke to described the vital role of community organisations in fostering social connections and breaking isolation. A participant at the Community Kitchen explained how spaces like this help people meet new people and build networks:

“ I have connected to new people. They are telling me about new jobs. I meet them in community centres and in the mosque.”
- 25, Male, Bangladeshi, Community Kitchen drop in

For some, attending local community hubs has been a transformative experience, providing not only social connections but also improving mental wellbeing. A resident shared their journey of overcoming anxiety and regaining confidence through the Community Kitchen:

“ Prior to coming here, I was a carer for my mum for 7 years [...] It’s an opportunity to get out of the house [...] Being here [Community Kitchen] there are more opportunities and it is inclusive. The social boundaries have been broken.”
- 38, Female, Mixed White Hispanic, Community Kitchen drop in

One resident reflected on the social isolation they experienced in everyday life and how SHAK – a resident led community centre- helped them reconnect with their community:

“ I have been living in this country for 24 years and people don’t tend to talk to you because you are their neighbour. Everyone minds their own business [...] This centre [SHAK] gathers us all together, and we say, ‘Ah yes, I’ve seen you around,’ and then you start a relationship from that.”
- 50, Female, White European, Focus group discussion at SHAK

Beyond providing practical support, spaces like SHAK offer an environment where residents can socialise and find a sense of belonging:

“ You come out [of the community centre] and you feel relaxed. You have a laugh. You come here and talk to people, and you’re looking for work, but you’re having a laugh at the same time.”

- 63, Male, Black British, Focus group discussion at SHAK

As per Census 2021, A person is a provider of unpaid care (or carer) if they look after or give help or support to anyone because of long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. In Camden, 7% of the population identified themselves as carers.

When speaking with the Carers Subgroup, part of the Camden Partnership Carers Board, we heard that while many carers in Camden find deep purpose in their roles, they also face significant emotional and practical challenges. Carers shared their lived experiences, informing how Camden supports unpaid carers through the Carers Action Plan. Some carers spoke about the emotional toll of their responsibilities and how it impacts their sense of connection with others:

“ Everyone’s fed up [with] my moaning and depression and hopeless outlook. They feel sorry for me.”

For some, finding ways to cope was crucial, even if support was limited:

“ Online therapy via YouTube in my lonely hours.”

Balancing care responsibilities with employment and financial security also emerged as a key theme. One carer, who had to leave a long-standing career to look after their mother, reflected on the personal and financial impact:

“ I was a child protection social work manager in a London Borough. I had to give up my job to care for my mother when her health deteriorated. This has had an impact on my finances and also how I feel. I got so much job satisfaction. Now I feel bereft and unvalued.”

Other carers highlighted the strain on personal relationships, as well as the stigma they sometimes face from family members who don’t fully understand their situation:

“ [It’s] difficult to maintain relationships. Can’t see my friends or family as often as I would like. I would like my son to live on his own with support.”

However, not all experiences were negative. One carer expressed a deep sense of fulfilment in their role:

“ As a carer my experience is fantastic. My personal opinion is I love to look after vulnerable people so I really enjoy my job.”

For another carer - who wasn’t a member of the Subgroup - mentioned that connecting with others who have shared experiences was a crucial source of support:

“ My girlfriend has had to do something similar [caring], so we share empathy between the two of us and what we go through. If I read an article, say it’s to do with young carers, I feel like I know what that feels like, the sacrifices they have had to make in their lives to be able to get newspaper, or food.”

- 48, Male, Irish, Carer

Learning from: Camden Carers

Since 2016, Camden Carers has been delivering Health and Lifestyle Checks (HLC) for carers in Camden to address the additional barriers to good health faced by them. Based on the evidence collected by them during HLC delivery, 100% of the participating carers were identified as dealing with one or more of following primary barriers: overwhelm and competing priorities, mental health and emotional stability, depreciated self-worth, money and time, awareness and understanding of health.¹⁴ Additionally, 5% of carers are long-term unwell or disabled, and more than half are juggling work and caring responsibilities.

Good Life Camden 

People are happy and feel satisfied with their lives

Data on subjective wellbeing – how happy or satisfied with their lives people are feeling – is now unavailable at local authority level due to issues with the Adult Population Survey sample sizes. However, we have collated data from residents through our qualitative data collection, including about how they feel in their lives in Camden. Perspectives vary across residents we spoke to, with some describing negative subjective wellbeing linked to care experience:

“ My life is terrible. I can’t get a job, no-one understands about young carers and how it affects their lives.”

- Focus group discussion at Carers Subgroup

Others described good levels of subjective wellbeing in their experience of living in Camden:

“ I feel like I’m in a better place now mentally and physically than 2 years ago because there are opportunities. I am keeping busy and this doesn’t let me worry. I am learning new skills and I’m financially in a better place. I used to hide letters to ignore them. I was scared to go to the shops, I had a fear of people, social anxiety. I now sit back and watch what I say, now I am more observant. I don’t let people take advantage. In my area, they are closing community centres, so it’s nice there are things which you can go to as an under 40 year old.”

- 38, Female, Mixed White Hispanic, Community Kitchen drop in

“ I feel happy - thanks to Camden I’m able to do more.”

- Focus group discussion at Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods

“ Ok, as I do a lot of volunteering in London and Camden, [I am] never bored. Always something to enjoy.”

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

“ I am very happy in my flat because I have many interests. I wish I could get more exercise outside my flat. [I am] unable to find paid or unpaid help to go for a walk.”

- 81, Female, British, Disability, Focus group discussion at SHAK

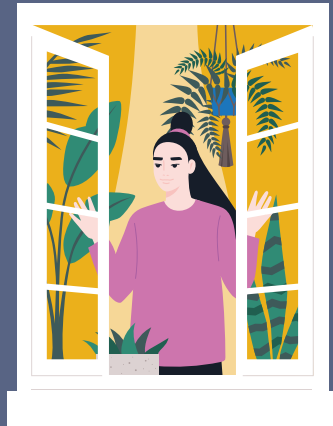
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Endnotes

- 1 Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain: between 2001 to 2003 and 2021 to 2023, Office for National Statistics, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/datasets/lifeexpectancyforlocalareasofgreatbritain>
- 2 The Health Foundation, Inequalities in life expectancy: how the UK compares, 20 Feb 2024 (accessed 09 Feb 2025) <https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/analysis/inequalities-in-life-expectancy-how-the-uk-compares>
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- 4 Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth, Office for National Statistics (ONS), <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/healthstatelifeexpectanciesuk/previousReleases>
- 5 Low birth weight of term babies, OHID, based on Office for National Statistics data https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/4/gid/1000042/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/501/are/E09000007/iid/20101/age/235/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/car-ao-0_car-do-0
- 6 Sport England, Active Lives Survey 2023-24 <https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/data/active-lives>
- 7 Smoking prevalence in adults (aged 15 and over) - current smokers (QOF), NHS England (NHSE), Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF)
- 8 Admissions for alcohol related conditions (narrow) records the episodes where the primary diagnosis is an alcohol-related condition, or a secondary diagnosis is an alcohol-related external cause, and it is age-standardised.
- 9 NHS England (NHSE), Hospital Episode Statistics (HES)
- 10 Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity), NHS England, National Child Measurement Programme <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/overweight#page/3/gid/1/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/502/are/E09000007/iid/20601/age/200/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1>
- 11 Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity), NHS England, National Child Measurement Programme <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/overweight#page/3/gid/1/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/502/are/E09000007/iid/20602/age/201/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1>
- 12 Sport England, Active Lives Survey 2023-24 <https://www.sportengland.org/research/active-lives-survey/>
- 13 It should be noted that the population data used to derive the rate is based on 2022 projections linked to the 2021 Census, and we continue to believe that the population estimates for Camden are likely to be underestimates due to the pandemic's impact on the census process, therefore rate calculations for measures like these may be overestimates.
- 14 <https://carersactionplan.camden.gov.uk/carers-in-camden/carers-in-camden/>

A Place to Call Home

Everyone in Camden should have a place they call home



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Living in safe and decent housing is an essential aspect of a good life. Good housing means meeting basic needs such as shelter, warmth, safety and privacy. Everyone in Camden should have a safe and affordable place they call home.

Camden's housing landscape is characterized by an almost even split in housing tenure, with approximately 30% of residents owning homes, 36% renting privately, and 34% living in social housing. The borough has some of the UK's highest house prices, averaging £797,520 in 2024, with private rents consuming nearly two-thirds of median income (median rent is £2,102 and median pay £3,333). Social housing waiting lists increased by 8% to 8,028 households by March 2024, and rough sleeping rose by 26% to 903 people in 2023/24.

An increasing number of families are in temporary accommodation - in September 2024 there were 968 families accommodated, up from 663 in 2023 and 536 in 2022. There are lower fuel poverty levels than both London and national averages. Housing quality assessments show that 9% of local authority housing and 20% of privately rented homes are classified as non-decent, while nearly 10% of households live in overcrowded conditions. Despite a slight decrease in house prices during 2024, housing affordability remains low when compared to average London incomes, creating ongoing challenges for residents seeking adequate housing within the borough.

In addition to affordability challenges, Camden has seen a sharp rise in street homelessness in recent years. A private tenant advocate described the visible increase in people sleeping rough:

"One of the most striking things is the rise in homelessness, it's dramatically increased in the last five years."

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

This section will present data and stories relating to the current housing situation and the experience of people in Camden.

Good Life Camden

This chapter includes signals from the Good Life Camden Housing theme:

- Homes are affordable
- Housing supply meets demand
- Quality of housing is high

The 6 WMC ambitions

Key insights

The 6 WMC ambitions

Own their homes 30%

"...Housing is one of the major issues in Camden that needs to be addressed...I know that neither of my children, nor my grandchildren and certainly not my great-granddaughter now will ever be able to afford to live in Camden...that is really sad because you lose the sense of community."

Camden
£797,520

London
£519,579

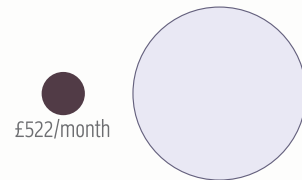
England
£308,781



The average house price in Camden was 2.5x more than the national average in December 2024

Rent social housing 34%

The median social rent was **4 times less** than the median private rent in Dec 2024



There are now **8,028 households** on Camden's social housing waiting list

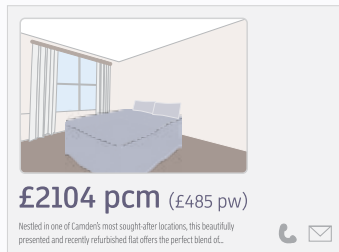


1 in 5 households in socially rented properties are overcrowded

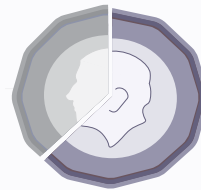


Rent private housing 36%

The median private rent per month in Dec 2024 was



For every £1 someone earns at the median wage, **63p** goes towards rent



1 in 5 properties in the private rented sector were found to be indecent



Homelessness

Number of people rough sleeping in 2023-2024

903

▲ +26% from 2022/23

1 out of 2 were experiencing rough sleeping for the first time



Housing tenure across Camden is split almost equally, with around a third of residents owning their home (30%), renting privately (36%), or in social housing (34%)

According to the 2021 Census, there are 92,759 households in Camden.

Household tenure is split almost equally in Camden across three tenures – 30% own their own homes, 36% rent privately and 34% rent in social housing. This is markedly different to the national split where 62% of people own their homes, 20% rent privately and 17% rent socially.¹ Of course, this can be explained by high house prices as well as a large temporary population such as students and young professionals living in Camden.

Camden is one of London’s largest providers of social housing, with a stock of over 22,000 social rented homes and almost 10,000 leasehold homes. 41% of the Council’s social homes are studios and one-beds, 32% are two bedrooms, while 27% are larger family homes (3 bed+).² 91% of social renters, 90% of private renters and 63% of homeowners live in a flat, while 33% of homeowners live in a terraced or semi-detached house.

The circumstances of people in the three tenures are different. According to the 2021 Census data, people who own the home they live in are less likely to be disabled compared to socially rented homes (11% vs 24%), although private renters are least likely to be (9%). Homeowners are generally older (20% are 65 and older, compared to 14% in social rent and only 3% of private renters are over 65s), and under 15-year-olds make up a larger share of social rented households (20% compared to 11% of private rented and 16% of owned homes). 34% of people in social rent were in employment, compared to 55% of owners and 63% of private renters. 26% of social renters were providing unpaid care, and only 73% said they were in good or very good health, compared to 90% and 93% for owned and private renters, respectively.

Figure 5.1: Households by tenure (%): Census 2021



Source: Census, 2021

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Good Life Camden

Homes are affordable

House prices in Camden are amongst the highest in the UK, despite a slight decrease in 2024 to £797,520 on average, and housing affordability, compared to average London incomes, is low

Housing affordability refers to the ability of individuals or households to afford suitable and adequate housing without experiencing excessive financial burden. The ONS defines a property as affordable if a household would spend the equivalent of 30% or less of their income on rent or mortgage repayments.³ House prices across England have risen consistently over the past two decades, around twice as fast as wages have, so housing affordability has deteriorated substantially.

In December 2024, the average house price in Camden decreased to £797,520 from £850,531 the year before. Camden was one of eight Inner London boroughs that saw their average house prices drop in 2024. Prices continued to rise overall in London and in England.

Despite the decrease, Camden is still a significantly more expensive place to live, compared to the London average house price (£519,579), and more than two and half times as expensive compared to the average for England (£308,781). Since 2010, house prices have increased in Camden by 48%, while London has seen an 83% increase, and England has experienced a 73% rise.⁴

House affordability in Camden is among the lowest in the UK, meaning buying a house is extremely difficult for people with average incomes. Over the past decade, Camden’s house price to income ratio has remained relatively consistent - the average house in Camden costs around 20 times the London median income (£39,133). This is a higher house price to income ratio than both London (13 times) and England (10 times the UK median wage of £29,511).⁵ An analysis by Zoopla found that to buy an average priced house in Camden the buyer would have to be earning £147,000 a year with a 15% deposit of £120,000.⁶

For some Camden residents, new housing developments have not brought meaningful affordability, with concerns that they cater more to investors than local residents:

“ The new buildings that are being built near us are not for residents—they are for people investing in property, people getting on the housing ladder. There is no such thing as affordable housing. The development will change the community radically.”

- 75+, White, Focus group discussion at Gospel Oak Living room

For some long-term Camden residents, the rising cost of housing has dramatically altered the borough’s social fabric. One resident, who has lived in the same street for over 50 years, reflected on how rising prices and changing housing structures have impacted their sense of community:

“ What has happened with the houses is, they’ve been split into single-bedroom flats that are amazingly expensive. So, the young people, which it tends to be the ones who move in, only stay for a year or two or a bit more and then they want to move out. [...] I know that neither of my children, nor my grandchildren, and certainly not my great-granddaughter now will ever be able to afford to live in Camden, and I think that is really sad because you lose the sense of community.

[...] There are only five people in the street who I’ve known for a long time. We used to have street parties, we used to close off the street once a year, where people would have barbecues in their front garden. Now, you’re not allowed to do a lot of the stuff that we did [...]. I think most of the younger people who move in don’t want to know about older people. I’m not even sure they notice us. Increasingly, I feel like I have to actually ask for space [...] just to get them to register that there’s a person there.”

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

This feeling of a loss of community is further exacerbated by the turnover of private renters, making it difficult for long-term residents to form meaningful relations with new neighbours:

“ Having lived in the same address since the 60s, I find myself lent upon by particularly elderly neighbours when they have a trouble with landlords and stuff. But otherwise, social contact is mainly, on my part, with homeowners because they are more stable communities.”

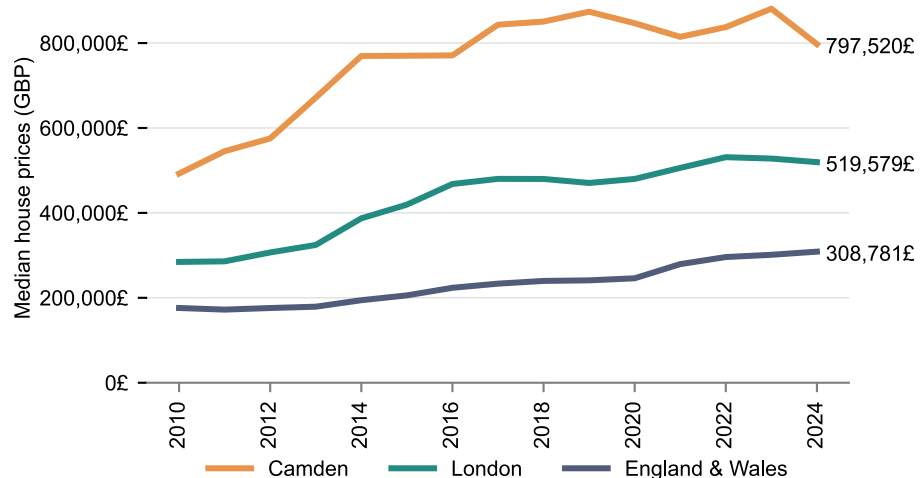
- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

For renters and those in temporary accommodation, the high cost of housing creates uncertainty about long-term stability:

“ I’m in temporary accommodation and Housing Benefit covers it, but I’ve told them when I go back to work soon, I need to live in an affordable home so I can afford the rent with my work. Where I live, even if I work like a dog, I wouldn’t be able to afford that rent.”

- Focus group discussion with parents at Kilburn Grange Children’s Centre

Figure 5.2: House prices in Camden, London and England, 2010-2024



Source: UK House Price Index, 2023

Private rent in Camden is almost two-thirds of median pay (median rent is £2,102 and median pay £3,333)

Camden has a higher proportion of residents living in private rented housing, compared to national figures. Monthly rents in the private rented sector in Camden are the third highest in the country, making Camden one of the least affordable places to rent in the UK.

The median monthly rents in the private rented sector in Camden were £2,102 in the period of October 2022-September 2023, which is £447 higher than the London median (£1,625) and 2.5 times more than the England median (£850), and private rents have increased further since then (although the median rent is no longer available, average rents have continued to rise year on year).

As a ratio compared to median income, Camden private renters were paying 63% of their earnings (median pay for all workers, part and full time) on rent per month in 2023. In the same period, the median pay for all workers was £39,998 per year, or £3,333 per month, based on the revised figures of the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings for 2023. The Rent-to-Income ratio for private rented is 63%.

In comparison, median rent for social housing was £522/month, with a Rent-to-Income ratio of 16.5%.

For many residents, the rising costs of rent—combined with high living expenses—are creating significant financial strain:

“ Camden rents are high, heating prices are high. Council tax is £97 for one bedroom. I get fed up with it, it’s all bills, bills, bills.”

- 75+, Focus group discussion at Gospel Oak Living room

A focus group discussion with members of the Camden Federation of Private Tenants provided first-hand insights into the lived realities of renting privately in Camden. Tenants described challenges in getting their landlords to carry out repairs, often facing delays before seeking intervention from the council. One participant shared their frustration with the process:

The 6 WMC ambitions

“ I had to get help from the environmental health department. It was ridiculous—I approached the landlord four times over a period of three years. Then along came Covid, and I had to do something. So I went to the borough’s private renters team, who were amazingly helpful.”

For some tenants, delayed repairs were a tactic used by landlords to pressure long-standing tenants to leave. What they described as passive harassment left many feeling insecure in their homes:

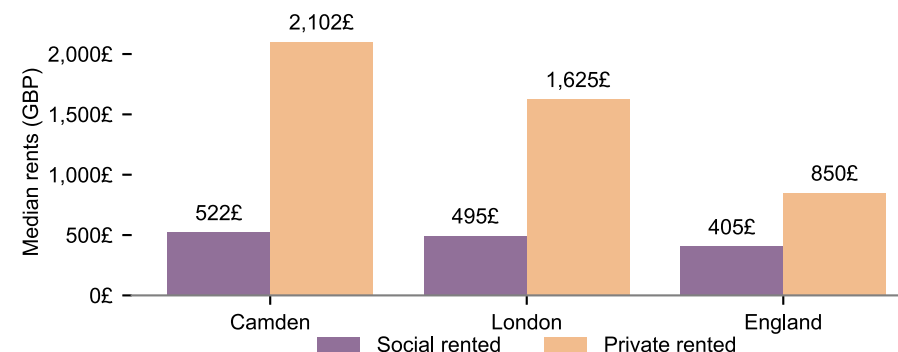
“ People with regulated rents have mixed experiences with landlords, and it tends to change occasionally. My present landlord is okay, but in the past, I’ve been subject to a sort of low-level harassment. They basically don’t want you there because they see all the commercial renters and realise they’re not getting that kind of money. You’re in the way. That has often manifested as a lack of repairs.[...] There’s a clear mental effect of not feeling secure in your own home, even when you’re supposed to have security.”

Another member spoke about more direct forms of harassment, where landlords and agents used persistent digital communication and intimidation to force tenants out:

“ I think the difference between Council tenants and private tenants (on safety) is that a lot of Council tenants will probably say the Council is hopeless, but actually, probably what they wouldn’t say is that quite a lot of the threats in my daily life come from my landlord or agent who’s trying to get me out, trying to harass me. You don’t have to go around to people’s houses these days, waving a baseball bat, there are so many ways [of harassment]—phoning people, WhatsApp, emailing people, harassing them all the time.”

Social rent is usually rent that is paid to registered providers and local authorities. It is a lower-cost rent that is set by a government formula. This means it is significantly lower than the rent a tenant would pay in the private market. Not everyone is eligible for social housing and so the next best alternative is a provider that charges ‘affordable rent’. Affordable rent is rent that is set at up to 80% of the market rent. These properties of affordable rents are defined as affordable rental accommodation and so also class as ‘social housing’. The average social/affordable rent was £522 a month in Camden, compared to £495 for London and £405 for England.⁷

Figure 5.3: Comparison of private and social rents across Camden, London and England 2023



Source: Private rental market summary statistics, ONS & Live rents, DLUHC, 2022/2023

People living on low incomes often qualify for Universal Credit, which includes a housing element. This is based on the cost of housing where they live, called the Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

Households in private rental accommodation can receive up to the amount of their LHA to help pay their housing costs. Before 2011, housing benefits would support people to rent a property up to the 50th percentile of the cost of renting given local rates. After 2011,

people would only be supported to the 30th percentile of the cost of renting in a particular area. Generally, since 2016 the LHA has been frozen meaning payments hasn't reflected the significant rent increases.

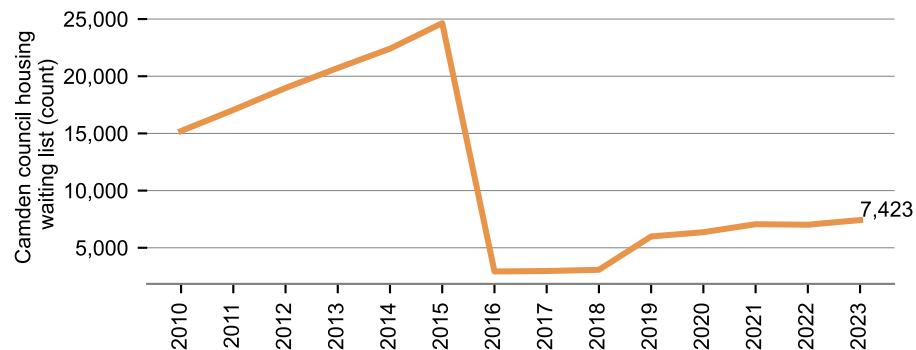
By 2022-23 only 2.3% of rental listings across London were affordable to those on the London Housing Allowance and there were none in Camden. This means that anyone facing a private rented sector eviction or seeking to move out from a family home for example, and who is reliant on benefits, cannot find a private home in the borough. This has led to an increasing number of households joining the waiting list for social housing and placed in temporary accommodation.⁸

Good Life Camden [↗](#)

◆ Housing supply meets demand

In Camden, there were 8,028 households on the waiting list for social housing at the end of March 2024, an increase of 8% from the previous year

Figure 5.4: Camden Council House waiting lists 2010-2024



Source: Local Authority Housing statistics (LAHS), 2023

In Camden, there were 8,028 households on the waiting list for social housing at the end of March 2024, an increase of 8.15% on the year before. In 2016, due to changes in the Housing Allocations scheme, the number of households on the waiting list dropped to 2,930 but has since been steadily rising.

Camden has an increasing number of households in Temporary Accommodation

The term 'homelessness' is often considered to apply only to people 'sleeping rough'. A person does not need to be sleeping rough to be legally homeless and more and more people are finding themselves homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The reasons for homelessness are numerous, including the cost-of-living, soaring rents, eviction, relationship breakdowns, domestic violence, job loss, mental health challenges, and more.

For those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, local councils have a statutory duty to provide assistance. A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group - households with dependent children or a pregnant woman, people who are vulnerable in some way e.g. because of mental illness, physical disability or spent time in care or custody, as well as those having to flee their home because of violence or the threat of violence.

In September 2024 there were 968 families in Camden in Temporary Accommodation, meaning they had been assessed as homeless and were owed a main homelessness duty and accommodated, up from 663 in September 2023 (and 536 in Sept 2022). Camden still has lower numbers than other inner London boroughs (e.g. Islington 1,551, Haringey 2,644, Hackney 3,446 in September 2024), but the direction of travel is increasing numbers of homeless families across London.

The 6 WMC ambitions

In 2023/24, 903 people were found to be rough sleeping in Camden – 26% more than in the previous year

Camden’s central location and proximity to national and international transport hubs means that there are many people rough sleeping in the borough. Camden sees some of the highest numbers of people rough sleeping in London, second only to Westminster.

In the year April 2023 to March 2024, 903 people were seen rough sleeping in the borough. This represents around a 26% increase compared to the 719 rough sleepers in 2022/23. 53% of people seen rough sleeping in the borough during the year had never slept rough before.⁹ 42% of the rough sleepers were from the UK, 28% from Europe, 22% from Africa and 6% from Asia. This means 58% were non-UK nationals who have limited recourse to public funds. In October 2023, only 21% of people who slept rough in the borough had a local connection to Camden.

In 2024, around 300 asylum seekers were staying in contingency hotels in Camden, provided by the Home Office. Due to a national push to “clear the backlog and end asylum hotels”, the Home Office began fast-tracking decisions (known as the ‘Streamlined Application Process’ or SAP) for asylum seekers. Those granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK are then required to make their own housing arrangements and can also approach local authorities to apply as homeless. Accordingly, there has been an increase in the number of homelessness presentations for those receiving positive asylum decisions - and many are leaving Home Office accommodation to sleep rough on the streets of Camden.

In 2023/24, 271 people (30%) who had been seen rough sleeping during the year had bookings into accommodation in the borough – either hubs, shelters and emergency accommodation; temporary accommodation; or longer-term accommodation. The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) means councils have to provide accommodation options for people sleeping rough and is triggered

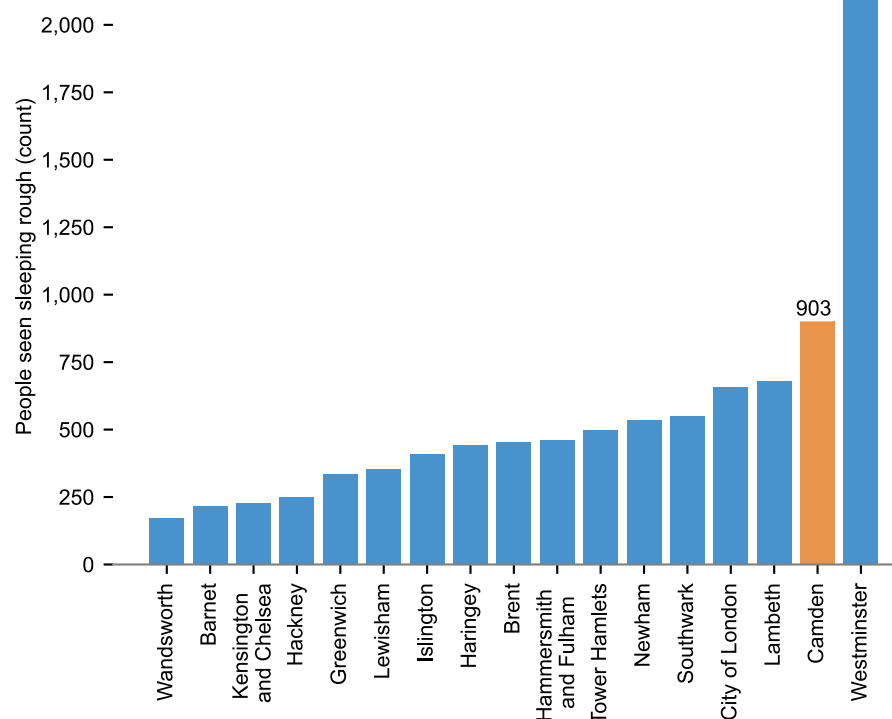
when the weather gets cold in winter. This number is a significant decrease on the 443 last year, 61% of those were rough sleepers.

Residents have noticed this rise in rough sleeping across Camden, with some expressing concern about the changing use of public spaces:

“ In the [park] corner there [are] a lot of homeless people. It wasn’t like that before, we used to use that green space but people are sleeping there now.”

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

Figure 5.5: Total number of people seen rough sleeping, 2023/24 (CHAIN)



Source: Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports), GLA, 2023/2024

In addition to this high level of sleeping rough and consistent flow to the streets, 50% of the people rough sleeping in the borough are identified as having complex needs and other challenges such as substance misuse, poor mental health, offending, and trauma. When someone experiences these issues all at the same time, their needs can fall through the gaps between traditional services.

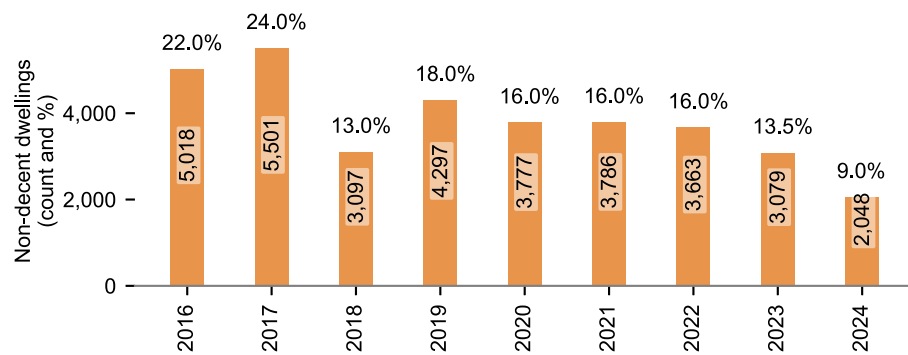
Good Life Camden 

Quality of housing is high

9% of the local authority housing stock and 20% of the Private Rented Sector housing were found to be non-decent

Living in decent housing is a basic human right. Housing in poor conditions has an impact on health, wellbeing, employment and education prospects. A home is defined as non-decent if any of the following apply: it does not meet the basic legal health and safety standards for housing; it is not in a reasonable state of repair; it does not have reasonably modern facilities and services; or it has insulation or heating that is not effective.

Figure 5.6: Non-decent homes, Camden 2016-2024



Source: Local Authority Housing Statistics, Ministry of Housing, and Department for Levelling Up, 2024

There has been a steady reduction in the number of Council-owned homes that were classified as non-decent over the past 5 years or so, down to 2,048 homes in 2024 (9% of all Council homes).¹⁰

However, private renters are more likely to live in non-decent housing, in Camden and nationally. According to the English Housing Survey on Stock Condition in 2023, the proportion of non-decent homes in the Private Rented Sector in Camden is 20% which is lower than the London average (25%) and national average (23%). Even in the 'Owner-occupied' sector the figure for non-decent homes in Camden is at 15.9%, again figures lower than the London average (16.9%) and England average (16.4%)¹¹.

For some Camden residents, poor housing conditions—particularly issues like damp and mould—have had significant consequences on health and wellbeing. One parent at a focus group at Regent's Park Children's Centre described the impact of mould in their homes on her child's health:

“ My flat, if you see it, it looks beautiful. They've painted it, they made it look very nice, but as soon as we moved in, my daughter started having chest infections and we didn't understand where it was coming from. Two years of running tests, they said she has got allergies from mould. They said it's so deep in the walls and in the floors that it's a bigger issue than cleaning it up. But painting over it doesn't do anything, because when they are sleeping at night, my daughter is breathing it in, now she has an asthma pump at night when she's not asthmatic, because of this reason. [...] Sometimes my daughter coughs so much at night that the blood vessels burst in her face and that's not normal.”

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

Another parent in the same session emphasised the urgency of tackling poor housing conditions:

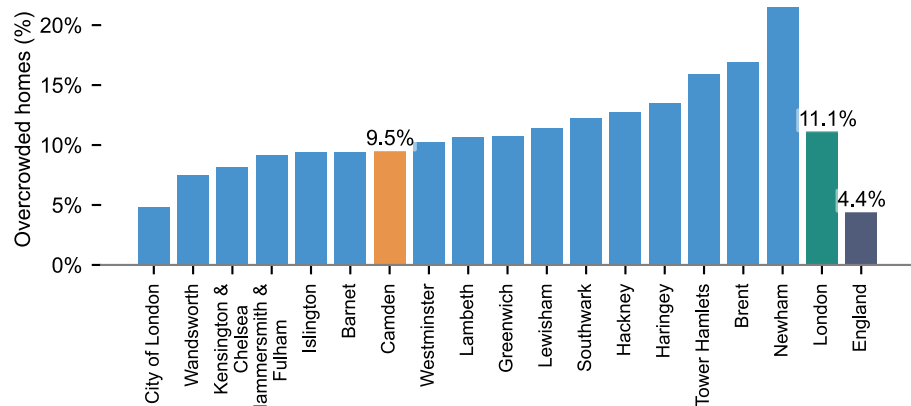
“ One area of improvement would be the mould in the homes, because if you don't have health, you don't have life.”

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

Nearly one in ten households in Camden are overcrowded

Families need space in the home - to play, develop, and do their homework. They also need privacy, especially when they are growing up and studying for exams. For those affected by overcrowded housing there can be severe consequences for their health and wellbeing.

Figure 5.7: Proportion of households that are over-crowded 2021 (%) Inner London



Source: Census, 2021

According to the census, overcrowding in Camden appears to have reduced a little between 2011 (11.7%) and 2021 (9.5%), based on properties having fewer than the necessary number of bedrooms for the size of the household. This is lower than the London average (11.1%) but higher than the average for England and Wales (4.4%). Within Camden itself, wards such as Highgate and Hampstead Town have the lowest overcrowding of around 1-2%, while in Bloomsbury overcrowding is prevalent in around 25% of households.¹²

Overcrowding is related to housing tenure. In Camden, households living in social rented housing are more likely to be overcrowded. Overall, there are 8,840 households that are overcrowded and 6,155 of these are socially rented, that is 6.96% of total households in Camden or 19.5% of the socially rented households - nearly 1 in 5.¹³

For some Camden residents, overcrowding is not just a matter of inconvenience, but a daily struggle that affects their quality of life:

“ There is a lot of overcrowding in the block I live in now. These are one-bedroom flats, but now families are coming with three children, which is damaging to flats because they are not made for that many people.”

- 75+, Focus group discussion at Gospel Oak Living room

For others, overcrowding is an extreme form of housing insecurity, with some residents feeling effectively homeless due to the lack of suitable housing options:

“ Technically, I am homeless... In a one-bed flat with my three children... I have been living like this for three years and the situation is not improving.”

- Focus group discussion with parents at Kilburn Grange Children's Centre

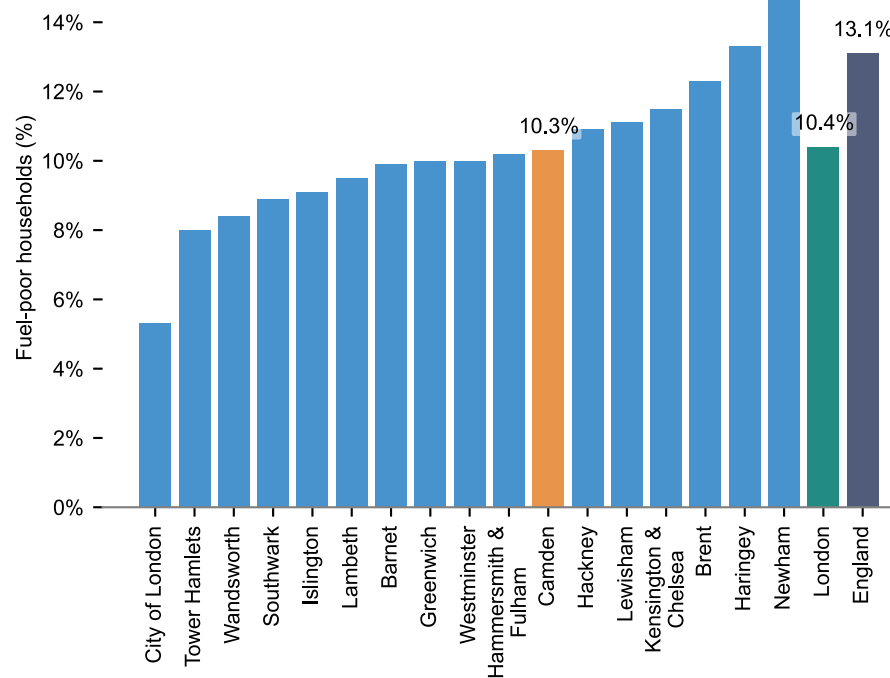
Camden has lower levels of fuel poverty than London and the rest of the country

A household is considered to be fuel poor if: (i) it is living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F or G; and (ii) its disposable income would be below the poverty line (60% below median). In Camden, an estimated 10.3% of households were in fuel poverty in 2022, compared to 10.4% in London and 13.1% in England.¹⁴

The energy price cap is a limit on the unit rates and standing charges that energy suppliers can charge for their standard variable tariffs. Between 1 January to 31 March 2025 the energy price cap is set at £1,738 per year for a typical household who use electricity and gas and pay by Direct Debit. This is an increase of 1.2% compared to the cap set between 1 October to 31 December 2024 (£1,717). This increase reflects wholesale energy price instability driven by global events.¹⁵

The winter fuel payment was previously paid to all pensioners to help with energy costs during the coldest period of the year. But in July 2024, the government said future payments in England and Wales would go only to those on low incomes who received specified benefits such as pension credit. The changes mean that nearly 10 million pensioners did not receive a payment for winter 2024 in England and Wales, including 12,500 Camden pensioners.¹⁶

Figure 5.8: Proportion of households fuel poor (%), 2022



Source: Sub-regional Fuel Poverty, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2022

The 6 WMC ambitions

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationalestimatesofhouseholdsbytenureengland>
- 2 Camden Housing Asset Management Strategy 2025 – 2030 <https://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s122605/Apx%20B%20-%20Housing%20Asset%20Management%20Strategy.pdf>
- 3 <https://www.beta.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/privaterentalaffordabilityengland/2023>
- 4 Median house prices, London DataStore / Land Registry <https://data.london.gov.uk/download/uk-house-price-index/70ac0766-8902-4eb5-aab5-01951aaed773/UK%20House%20price%20index%20%282%29.xlsx>
- 5 2023 revised figures [Earnings and hours worked, UK region by age group](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/earningsandhoursworked/ukregionbyagegroup) - Office for National Statistics
- 6 <https://www.timeout.com/london/news/how-much-you-need-to-earn-to-buy-a-house-in-every-london-borough-020925>
- 7 Social rents <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies>
- 8 The Institute of Health Equity 2025, Raise Camden: Child Health Equity Audit
- 9 <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>
- 10 Social housing non decent [Local_Authority_Housing_Statistics_2023_24_Sections_A_C_D_E_F_G_H_I_J.xlsx](https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/local-authority-housing-statistics-2023-24-sections-a-c-d-e-f-g-h-i-j)
- 11 Private rented decent homes [EHS_Local_Authority_Stock_Condition_Modelling_DHS.ods](https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/ehs-local-authority-stock-condition-modelling-dhs)
- 12 ONS 2021 census <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingenglandandwales/census2021>
- 13 Overcrowding and under-occupancy by household characteristics, England and Wales: Census 2021 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/overcrowdingandunderoccupancybyhouseholdcharacteristicsenglandandwalescensus2021>
- 14 DBEIS sub-regional-fuel-poverty-2022-tables.xlsx ([live.com](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies))
- 15 <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-price-cap>
- 16 <https://www.camdencitizen.co.uk/2024/10/17/camden-pensioners-lose-winter-fuel-allowance-council/>

Green, Clean and Sustainable

Camden should be a green, clean, vibrant, accessible and sustainable place with everyone empowered to contribute to tackling the climate emergency



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**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

This chapter reviews data relating to the environment and sustainability aspects of Camden.

Camden residents are among the leading users of sustainable transportation in London, frequently choosing to walk or cycle, with 85% of all trips made using sustainable modes, including public transport. The borough's strong public transport links make it easy for residents to travel across London, as one resident noted:

"The public transport links are good and it is easy to access other parts of London with ease from Camden. I like the diversity of the borough and all it has to offer."

- 35-44, Female, SOTB parents and carers survey



At the same time, Camden's walkability makes it possible for many to navigate the borough without relying on transport options:

"The best thing about Camden is that you can walk almost anywhere. For me, as I have a son who has sensory [needs] and cannot go on public transport, walking everywhere is great."

- Focus group discussion with parents at Regent's Park

While road safety remains a concern, casualties and severe injuries have been declining over the past decade.



Air quality is improving, though it still exceeds WHO guidelines, and an estimated 7.7% of deaths are attributable to particulate air pollution. Greenhouse gas emissions continue to decline compared to 2005 levels. Residents enjoy abundant green spaces, with 69 parks or play areas per 100,000 people, and some 75% express satisfaction with local natural areas.

One resident described how access to green space provides a personal sense of peace and relief from stress:

"I use the park very often when I need to clear my head, or when I'm stressed out, I go to that park and I sit on the bench [...] and it clears my head [...] I have all this green fresh air around me and I sit on a bench and no one bothers me. I don't have to shout, I just up to the sky and pray and I walk home and I feel good in myself"

- 63, Male, Black British, Focus group discussion at SHAK

However, the borough faces some challenges with urban cleanliness: while litter and detritus levels are lower than the London average, graffiti and fly-posting are more common, and fly-tipping incidents rank among London's highest. Waste management data from 2022/23 shows that Camden collected 93,390 tonnes of waste, with households generating an average of 355 kg annually, of which 28% was recycled, reused, or composted.

Good Life Camden

The Good Life Camden framework describes the things that are important for living a good life, and was co-created by residents and staff. This chapter includes signals from the **Environment** theme:

- People use clean modes of transport
- Air quality improves across the whole borough
- Cleanliness and waste
- Camden becomes net zero
- Camden's green spaces and parks serve the needs of its diverse communities.



Key insights

The 6 WMC ambitions

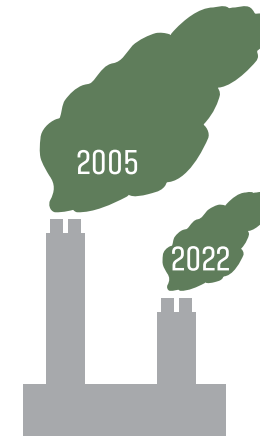
More than **4 out of 5** trips made by Camden residents are by sustainable modes of transport—walking, cycling, or public transport



17% of adults in Camden cycle at least once a week



2 in 5 of adults walk at least 5 times a week



In Camden, greenhouse gas emissions have declined by **48%**, from 1,926 kt in 2005 to 995kt in 2022

Camden households generated 355 kg of waste, on average in 2022/23



28% was recycled



72% was not recycled

In Camden, there are...

76 & **300**
parks & green spaces

3 in 4 people said they were satisfied with green and natural spaces in the local area



“I use the park very often when I need to clear my head, or when I’m stressed out... I have all this green fresh air around me and I sit on a bench and no one bothers me. I don’t have to shout. I just [look] up to the sky and pray and I walk home and I feel good in myself.”

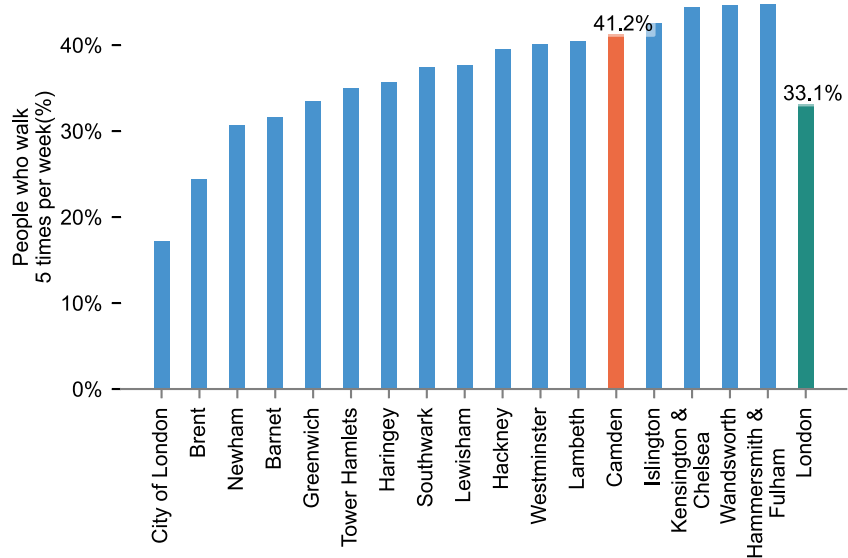
Good Life Camden [↗](#)

People use clean modes of transport

Adults in Camden Walk or cycle more than in most other London boroughs

Walking or cycling is better for people’s physical and mental health, and reduces the impact of travel on the environment. In Camden, there are 26km of segregated cycle lanes as of 2024.

Figure 6.1: Proportion of adults that walk at least 5 times per week in %, for London boroughs and London average, for 2024 Scorecard data (average of 2020/21 and 2021/22).



Source: Outcome indicators, Healthy Streets Scorecard, 2024

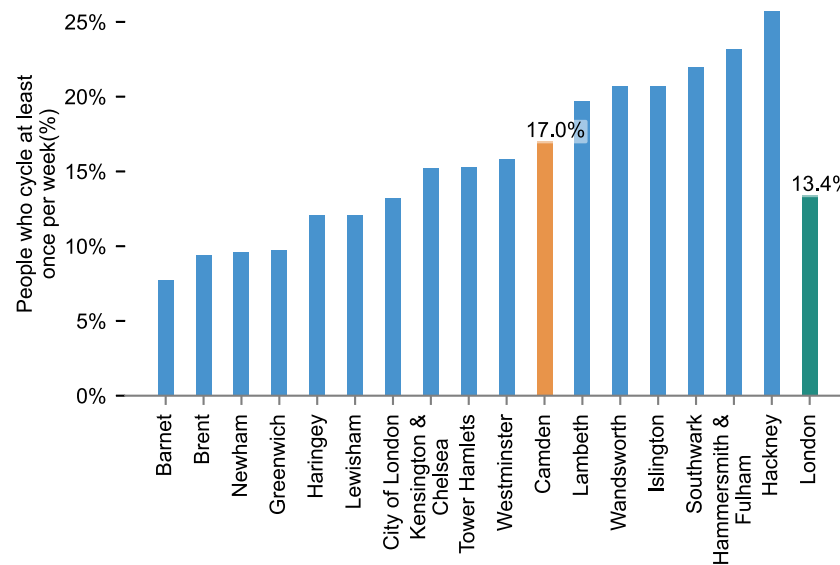
In 2020-2022, 41% of Camden adults said they walked at least 5 times a week, based on the average data for those years, positioning it among the higher-ranking boroughs in London, with the London

average at (33.1%). Islington (42.5%), Kensington & Chelsea (44.4%) and Hammersmith & Fulham (44.7%) exceed the Camden average, and Brent and Newham are well below with 24.4% and 30.7%, respectively. Camden was also one of the only boroughs for which the share of adults walking went up compared with the previous two-year average, while almost all the others saw a decline in the share of walkers.

Cycling once a week at least was less common, with 17% of adults in Camden reporting that they cycle, although this still placed Camden among the more active boroughs and ahead of the London average of 13.4%. In contrast, Barnet has a share of 7.7% of adults cycling once a week, and Brent, Newham and Greenwich all around 9.5%.

In Westminster, rates are closer to Camden, with 15.8%, and the more active boroughs of Hackney (25.7%), Hammersmith & Fulham (23.2%) and Southwark (22%) surpassing Camden.

Figure 6.2: Proportion of adults that cycle at least once per week in %, for London boroughs and London average, for 2024 Scorecard data (average of 2020/21 and 2021/22)



Source: Outcome indicators, Healthy Streets Scorecard, 2024

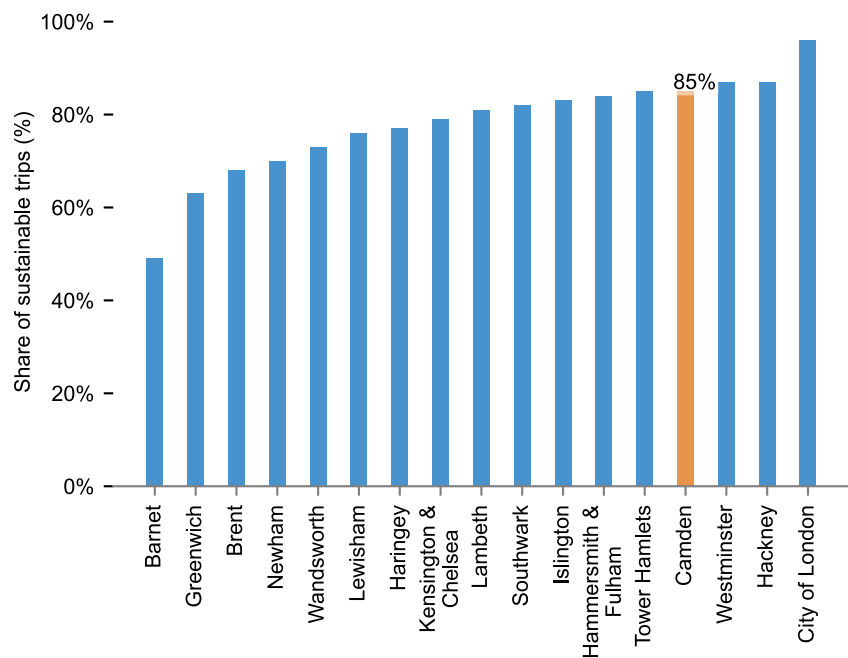
The 6 WMC ambitions

85% of trips by Camden residents were made by sustainable modes of transport: walking, cycling or public transport

Sustainable travel is defined as proportion of trips made by ‘sustainable modes of transport’, i.e. walking, cycling or public transport, by borough residents, rather than all trips made in and through the borough.

Sustainable travel was common in Camden, with 85% of trips in 2023 conducted by sustainable modes of transport, among the highest across London. Hackney and Westminster are slightly higher with 87%, and much lower rates of sustainable travel are in Barnet (49%), Greenwich (63%) and Brent (68%).

Figure 6.3: Share of trips made by sustainable modes of transport: walking, cycling or public transport, 2023



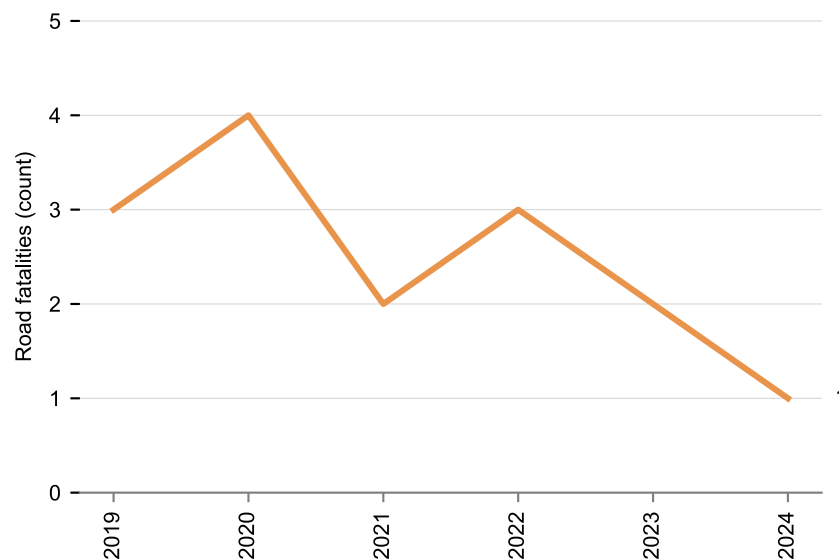
Source: Outcome indicators, Healthy Streets Scorecard, 2024

Road fatalities are declining in Camden and across London, and in 2024 there was one casualty recorded in December

Road traffic accident fatalities have been in decline, with the total number of fatalities in the UK down 4% from 2022 to 2023.¹ The biggest decline in fatalities was for motorcyclists (12%), and for all casualties the biggest decline was for cyclists with 6%. In Camden in 2024 there were no road fatalities until December, when sadly there was a fatal incident on Finchley Road.

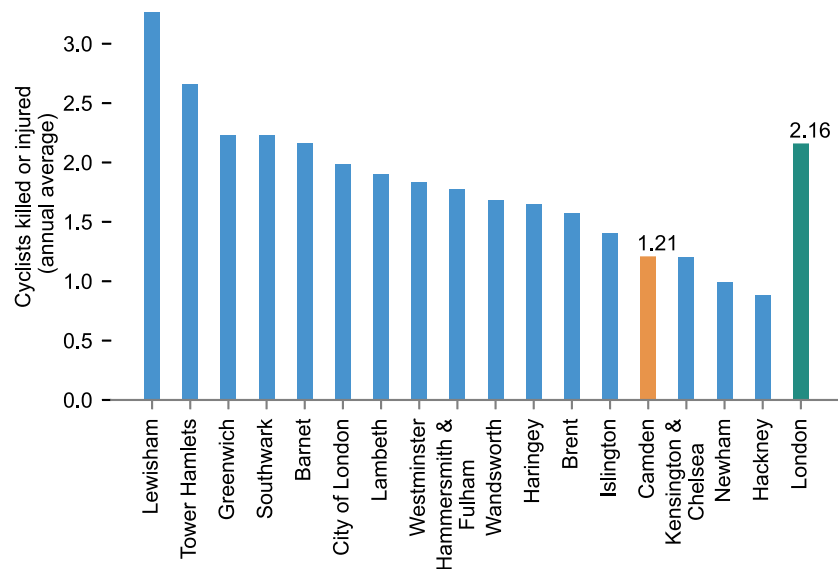
Across the borough comparison group, the rate of killed or seriously injured cyclists and pedestrians is one of the lowest in Camden.

Figure 6.4: Annual road fatalities, Camden



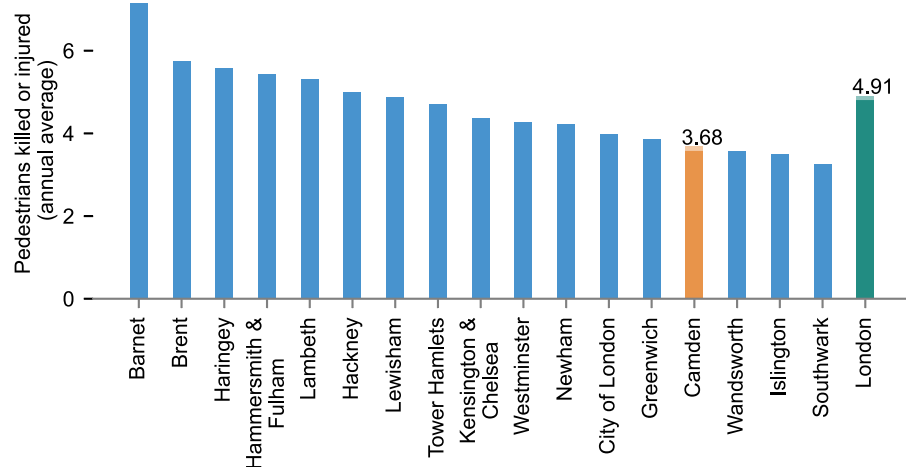
The 6 WMC ambitions

Figure 6.5: Cyclists killed or seriously injured, latest year, per 100,000



Source: London Travel Demand Survey, Transport For London, 2024
 Note: 2024 Scorecard data uses 2022/23 data only, as three year average data is unavailable from the LTDS due to the Pandemic period.

Figure 6.6: Pedestrians killed or seriously injured, latest year, per 100,000



Source: London Travel Demand Survey, Transport For London, 2024
 Note: 2024 Scorecard data uses 2022/23 data only, as three year average data is unavailable from the LTDS due to the Pandemic period.

Good Life Camden ☺

GLC: Air quality improves across the whole borough

Air pollution has an impact on both our health and the environment. It is known to affect our lungs, hearts and brains and is linked to long-term impacts on health, with children, older people and people with existing conditions most vulnerable.

Air pollution in Camden comes from road vehicles, trains and construction activity, from burning gas, oil, wood and coal for heating and power, and from commercial kitchens and restaurants. Indoor air pollution is also known to have an impact on health, and comes from cooking and burning food, from the use of wood, charcoal and gas for cooking and heating, as well as from chemicals in cleaning and personal care products, furnishings and decorative materials, and from candles and incense.

While air quality in Camden is improving, some residents continue to experience pollution in their everyday lives, particularly in areas with high levels of road traffic and construction. A mother from a focus group at Regent’s Park Children’s Centre described how constant congestion near her home means exposure to vehicle emissions throughout the day:

“Where I live, on the junction of Camden Road, you’ve got cars 24 hours, whether that be 4 o’clock in the morning, or in the afternoon, there are always cars and pollution.”

As part of the [Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods 2030](#) initiative, we gathered insights from residents about the impact of air pollution and the availability of green spaces. While efforts to improve air quality are ongoing, some residents continue to feel the effects of pollution in their daily lives, particularly in areas with heavy construction and traffic. One

The 6 WMC ambitions

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

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

- Focus group discussion at Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods

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

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

- Focus group discussion at Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

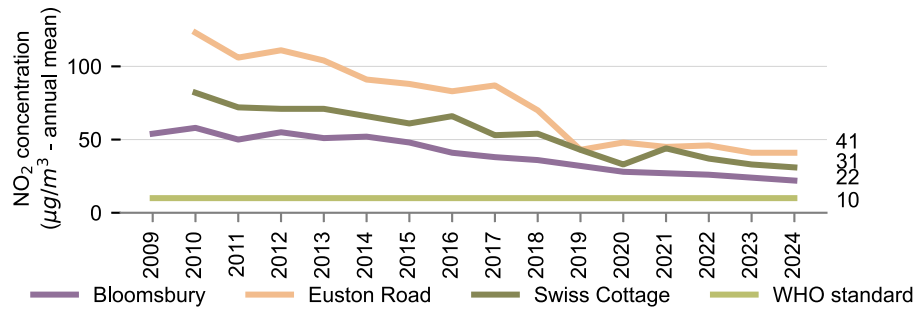
Particulate matter PM2.5 concentrations have also declined in Camden over the past 10 years; however, the relative change is weaker than has been observed for NO₂. In any given year, a significant portion of the PM2.5 measured in the air in Camden will originate from activities and sources outside of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

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

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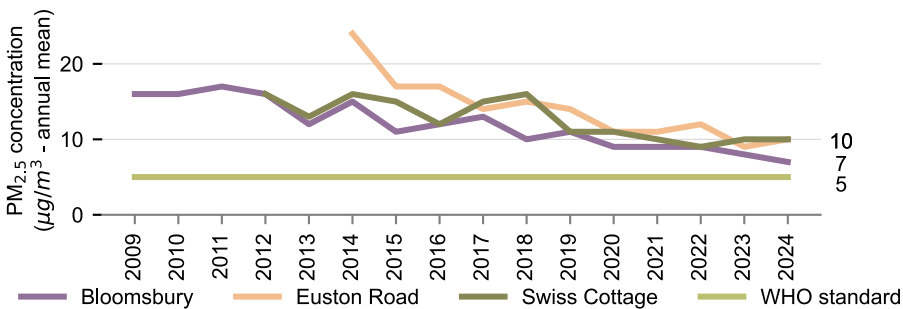
This component of PM2.5 air pollution in Camden depends on weather conditions, and this is largely why the year-on-year change in annual mean PM2.5 has not been consistent despite the gradual long-term reduction. Local sources of PM2.5 include building emissions from commercial kitchens, heating and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

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



Source: Sources of air pollution in Camden, LB Camden, 2024

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



Source: Sources of air pollution in Camden, LB Camden, 2024

Good Life Camden ☺

GLC: Cleanliness and waste

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

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

- SOTB parents and carers survey

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

“I do go to the park, but they are always covered in dog faeces [...] I need the green spaces and to rest on the bench as I have a disability [...] the picnic benches are filthy dirty.”

- 65+, Disability, Focus group discussion with Adult Social Care co-production group

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

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

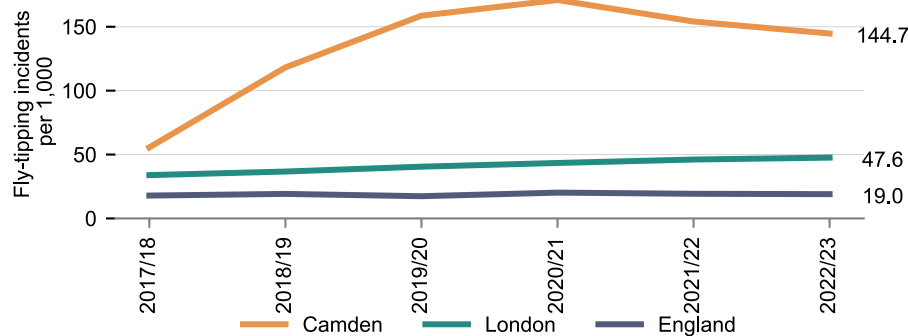
- SOTB parents and carers survey

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

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

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

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

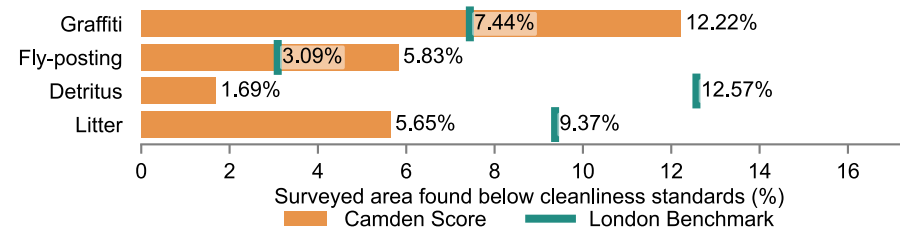


Source: WasteDataFlow database, 2022/2023

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

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

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



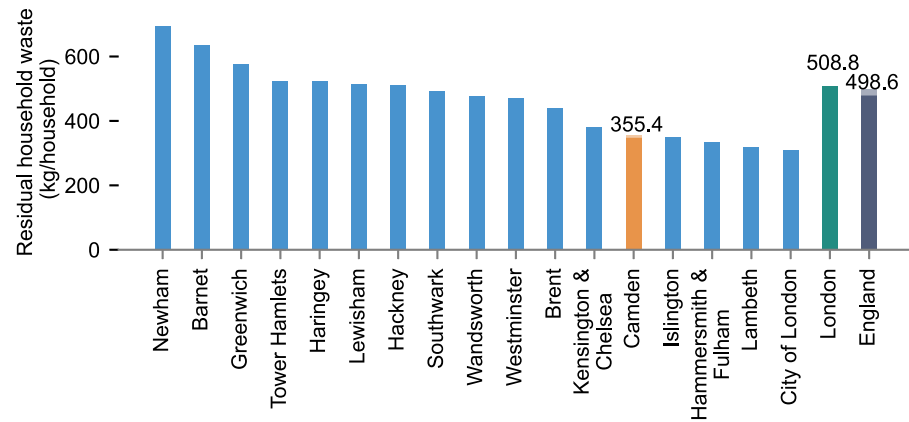
Source: LB Camden, 2024

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

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

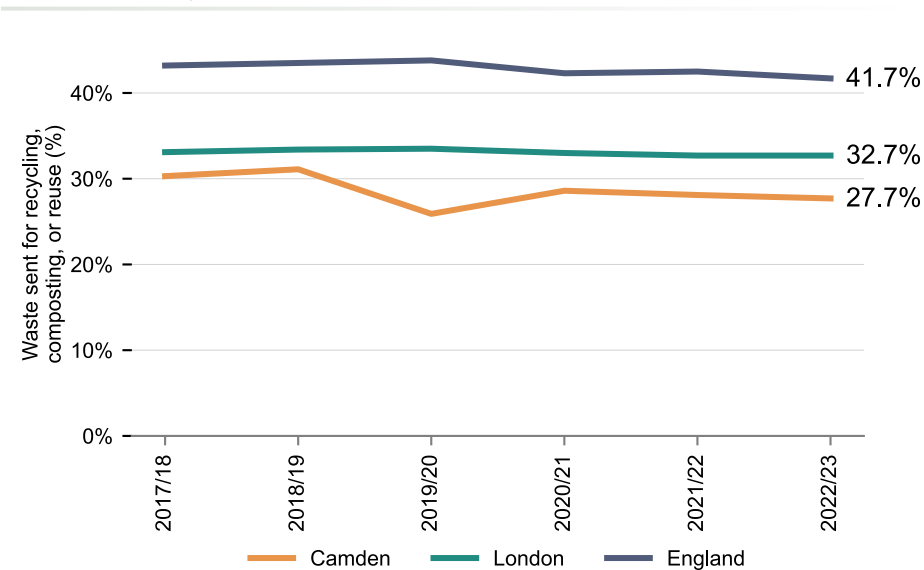
The share of household waste that was sent for reuse, recycling or composting in Camden was 27.7% in 2022/23, with 2023/24 projected to be 29%. This rate was lower than London (32.7%) and England (41.7%), but comparable to the inner London average (26%).

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



Source: WasteDataFlow database, 2022/2023

Figure 6.12: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting, 2015/2016 - 2022/23

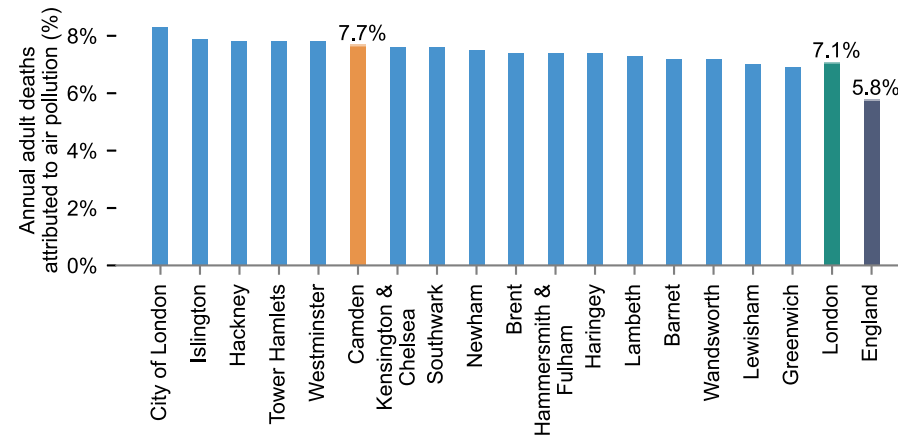


Source: WasteDataFlow database, 2022/2023

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

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

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



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

The 6 WMC ambitions

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

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

Good Life Camden 

GLC: Camden becomes net zero

Greenhouse gas emissions in Camden continue to decline compared to 2005

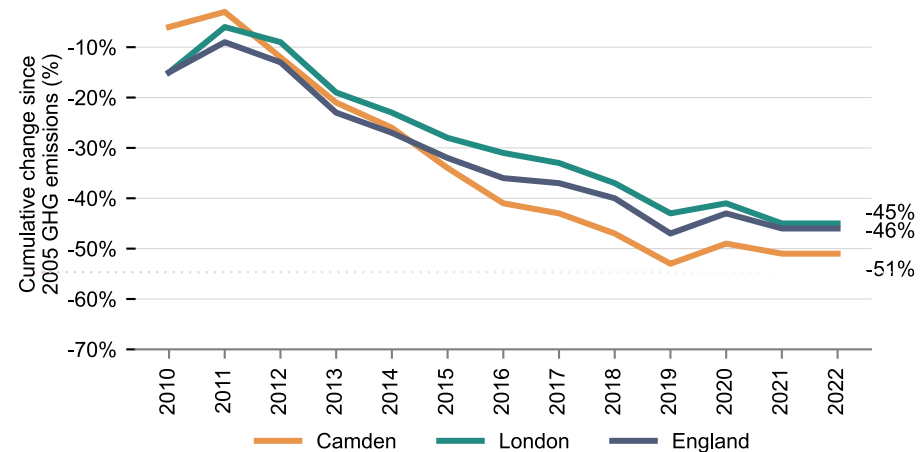
Greenhouse gases are those that cause the ‘greenhouse’ effect on the Earth, causing it to warm and the climate to change. Measures of Greenhouse gas emissions tell us about the impact we have on the climate, and emissions are measured in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e).

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

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

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

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



Source: Greenhouse emissions statistics, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2022

Good Life Camden 

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Focus group discussion at Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods

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

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

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

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

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

- Focus group discussion with Camden Federation of Private Tenants

| Camden Parks Survey

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

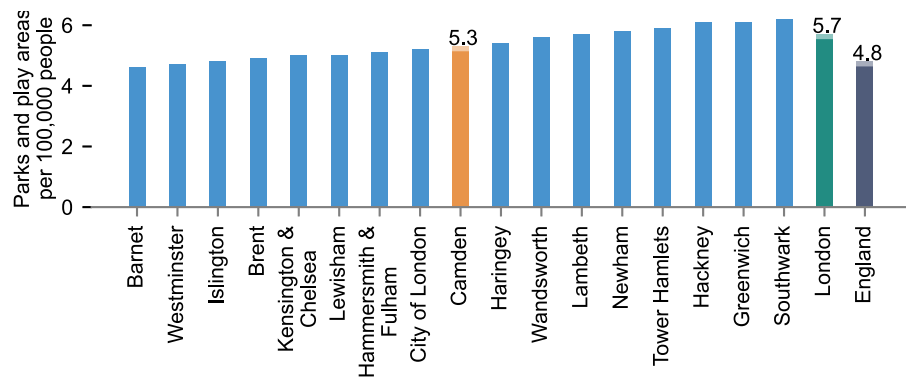
Overall, 56% of respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with Camden's green spaces, and those living within a five-minute walk of a park showing notably higher satisfaction and more frequent use. Proximity emerged as a key factor in shaping positive experiences. 41% were satisfied with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

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

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

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

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



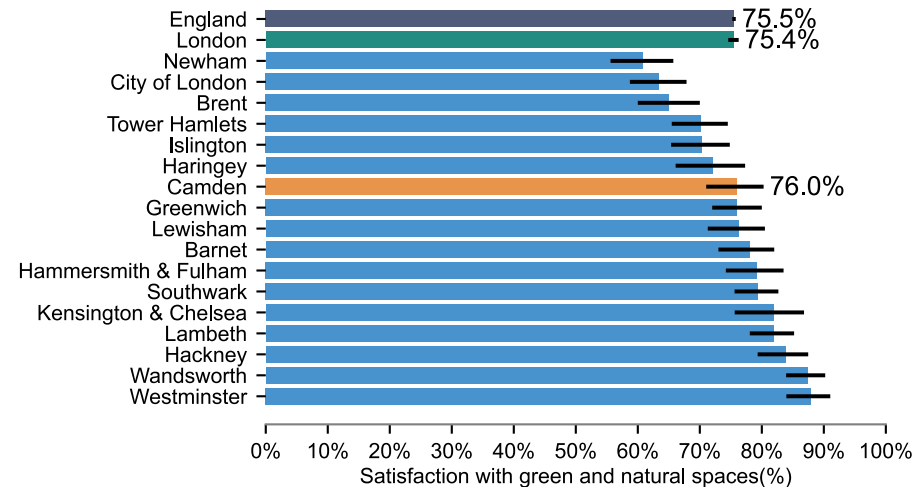
Source: Number of Parks and Play areas in local areas, ONS, 2024

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

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

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

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



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

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-provisional-results-2023/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-provisional-results-2023>
- 2 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Waste and recycling statistics, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/waste-and-recycling-statistics>
- 3 <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/air%20pollution#page/4/gid/1/pat/159/par/K02000001/ati/15/are/E92000001/iid/93861/age/230/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1>
- 4 Camden Council, Our carbon reduction programme, <https://www.camden.gov.uk/carbon-reduction-programme>
- 5 Office for National Statistics, Number of parks and play areas in local areas, England and Wales <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/numberofparksandplayareasinlocalareasenglandandwales>
- 6 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Community Life Survey 2023/24 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication/community-life-survey-202324-neighbourhood-and-community#satisfaction-with-green-and-natural-spaces-in-local-area>

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

Inequalities



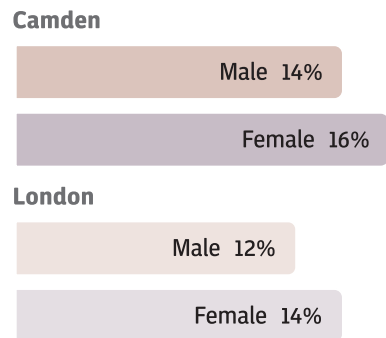
**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

Key insights

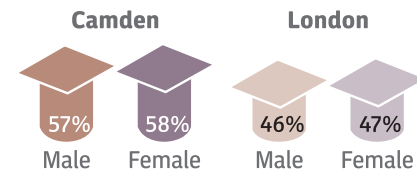
The 6 WMC ambitions

Differences in outcomes...

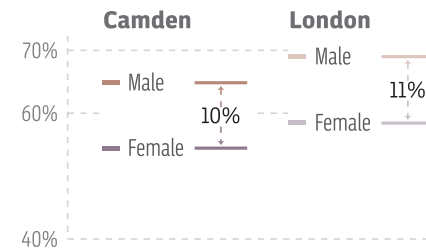
% disabled *
(under the Equality Act 2010; if impairment has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' effect on daily activities)



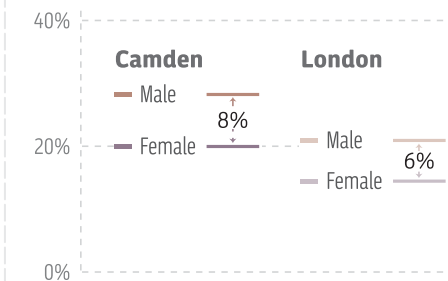
% with advanced qualifications
(level 4 or above)



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

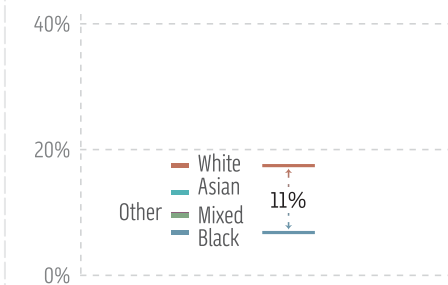
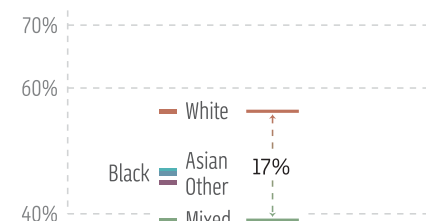
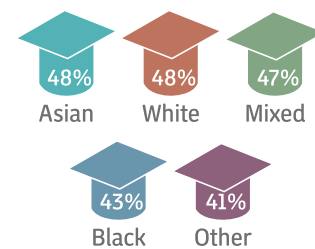
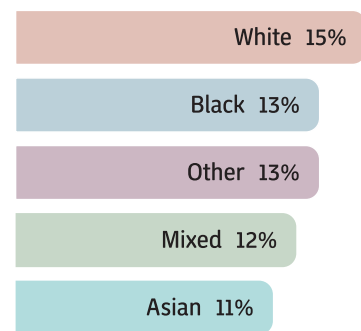


% working professionals
(in higher managerial, administrative, and professional occupations)



...across Camden and London, by gender

...between Camden residents, by ethnicity



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Endnotes

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

We Make Camden Missions

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

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



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



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



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



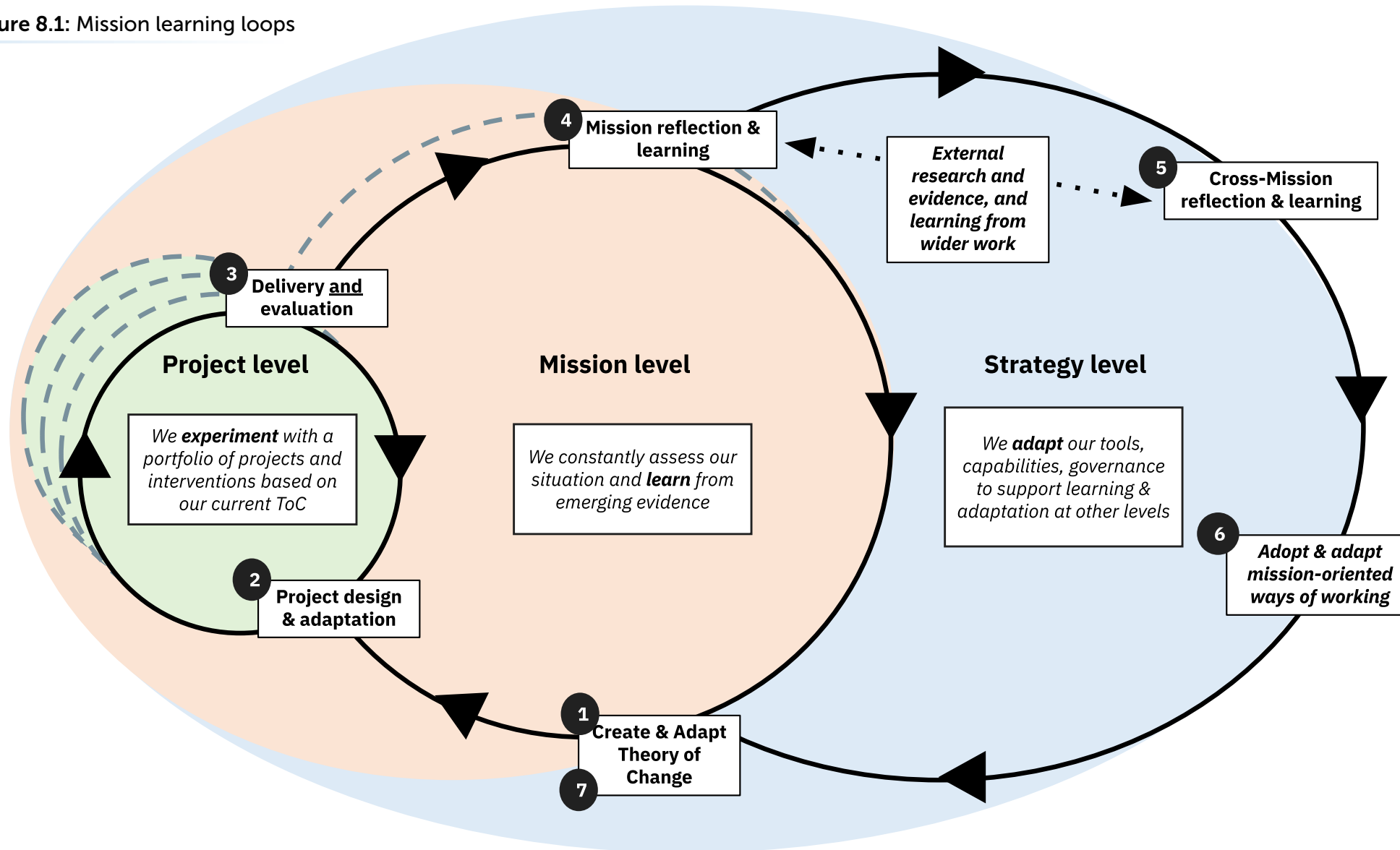
By 2030, Camden's estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity.

| What is the State of the Missions?

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

| Our approach to learning

Figure 8.1: Mission learning loops



The 6 WMC ambitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 6 WMC ambitions

Our Youth Mission

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



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The 6 WMC ambitions

| Why is this a Mission?

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

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

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

| What are the youth mission's key aims?

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

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

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

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

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

**The 6 WMC
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◆ Good Life Camden – measuring progress

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

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

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

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

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

| Our Universal Offer

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

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

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

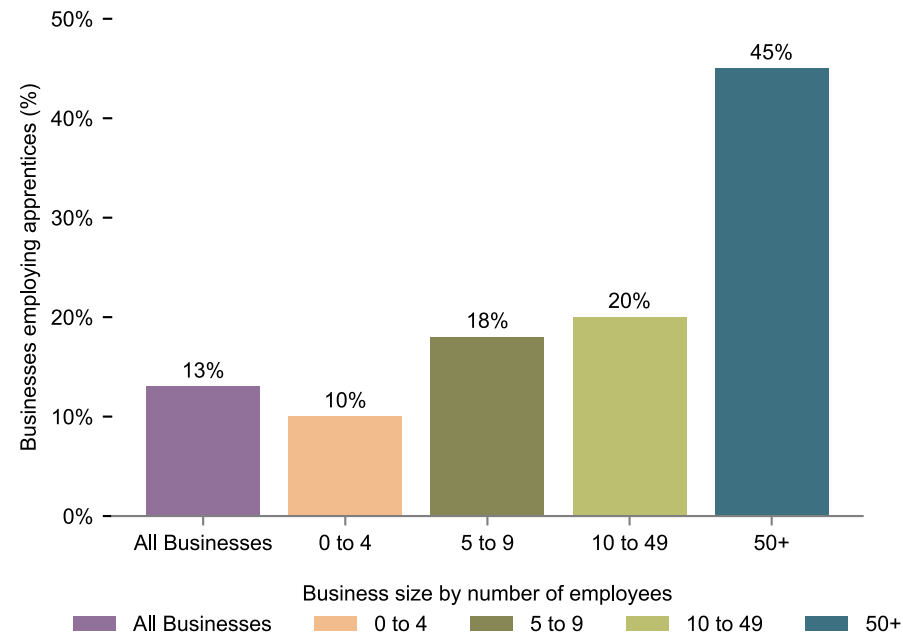
- Every young person is offered work experience during post-16 education to build real-world skills and industry insights. In 2023/24, this support helped 100 young people secure work, training, or self-employment.
- One-to-one careers guidance is available through local advisors, providing tailored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

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

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

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



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

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

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

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

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

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

– Student participant, Camden STEAM programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

– 13, Female, Youth Assembly, 2024

Another Camden resident stated,

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

According to Camden Giving & Brap (2024),

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

| Care experienced young people

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

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

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

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

“

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

– Care experienced intern

”

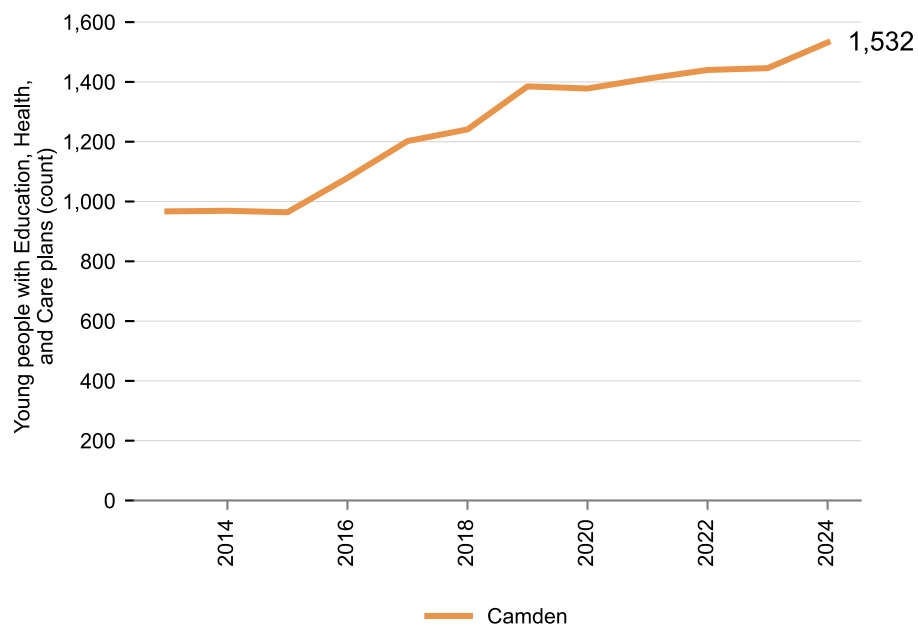
| Young people with Education, Health and Care Plans

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

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

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



Supported Internship

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

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

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

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

– Parent feedback from an Ambitious About Autism Supported Internship

| School non-attenders

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

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

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

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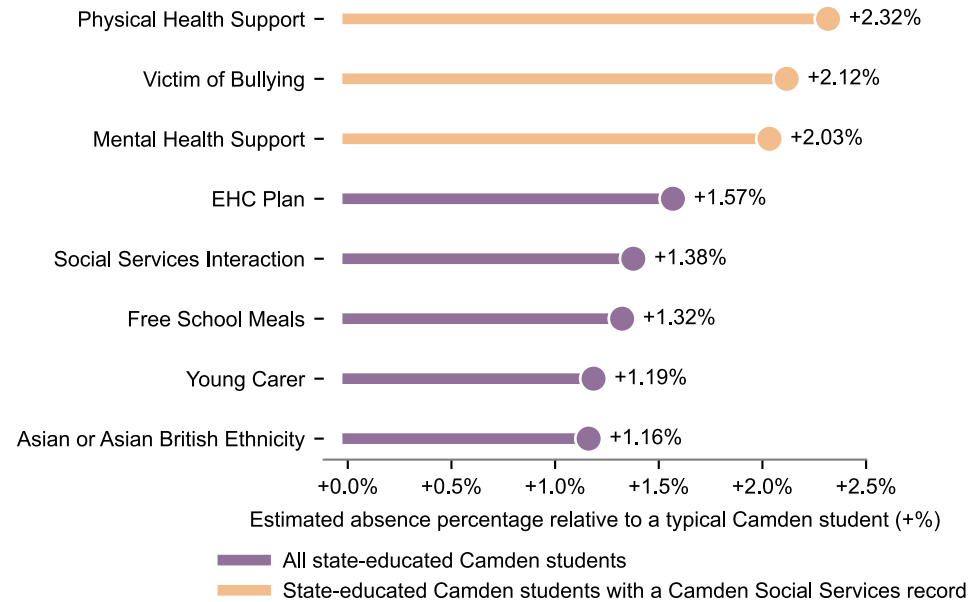
to school attendance. To understand how to enable better system collaboration we ran a workshop with services across Camden to identify where service provision could be connected to better support priority children and young people. The data analysis and research activities identified seven main priority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

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

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

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

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



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

Fitzrovia Youth In Action – School Attendance Peer Mentoring Project

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

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

Key Learning

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

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

| Disabled Young People

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

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

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

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

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

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Rebuilding Bridges

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

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

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

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

– Secondary School Education Welfare Officer, survey, 2024

| Young People in the Youth Justice System

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

Youth Pathways Finder

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

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

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Honest Grind Coffee (HGC)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

| Our priorities for the coming year

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

Key priorities include:

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

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

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Our Estates Mission

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

The 6 WMC ambitions

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| Why is this a Mission?

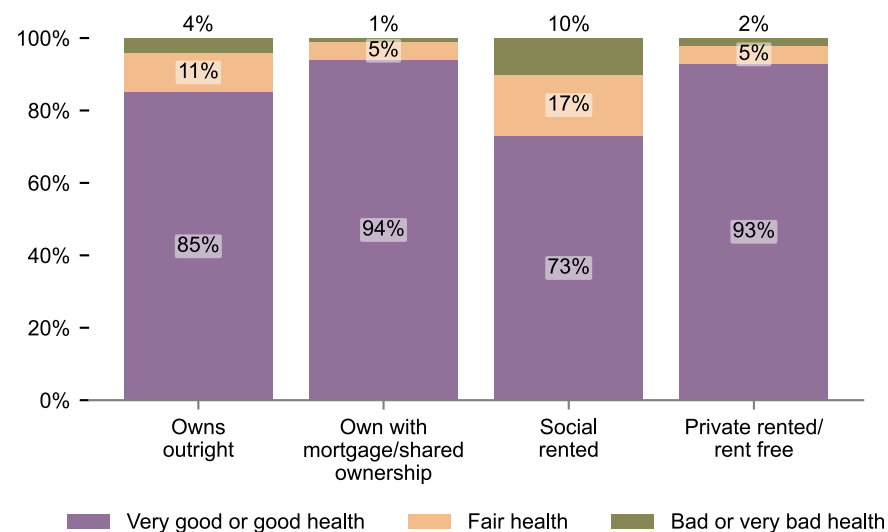
Where we live has a big impact on our health and wellbeing. We know that there is a big difference in health between our neighbourhoods, and residents on our estates are particularly likely to have worse health outcomes than others. We want to reduce that gap, so that by 2030, residents on our estates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

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

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

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

Figure 10.1: Health outcomes by tenure, 2021



Source: ONS - Census, 2021

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

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

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| What are the Estates Mission's key aims?

Our main goal is that by 2030, residents on our estates have the same levels of health and wellbeing as others in the borough.

The three main goals of the Estates Mission are:

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

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

Our estates are healthy environments

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

Our residents have the power to shape their local environment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

◆ Good Life Camden – measuring progress

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

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

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

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

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

| Mission Outcome | Key measure | GLC theme |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| People who live on our estates feel a sense of belonging and connection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of adults who feel lonely often or always or some of the time Percentage people feel they belong to their neighbourhood | Social connections |
| Our estates are healthy environments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcrowding Ethnic Groups Damp and mould Air quality Hospital admissions for asthma (under 19 years) | Inequality Housing Health |
| Our residents have the power to shape their local environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of agreement that you can personally influence decisions affecting the local area Involvement in social action in the last 12 months | Empowered citizenship |

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

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

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

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

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

Learning from: Regent’s Roots

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

Vacant Spaces pilot

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

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

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

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

Figure 10.2: Hilgrove estate garage



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

Figure 10.3: Community play day



What we learned

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

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

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

Next steps

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

| Our estates are healthy environments

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

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

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

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

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

Denyer House improvements

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

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

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

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

Before:



After:



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What we learned:

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

Our residents have the power to shape their local environment

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

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

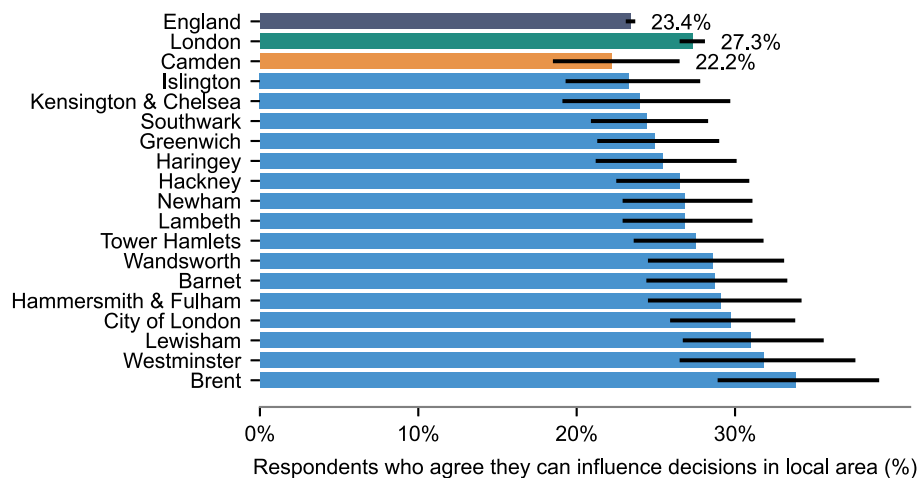
Community power is not any one thing – it is a range of approaches that share a common ethos. Approaches might include handing over power about particular decisions or budgets; deeper collaboration and engagement; or building capacity and capability within communities to act for themselves.

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

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

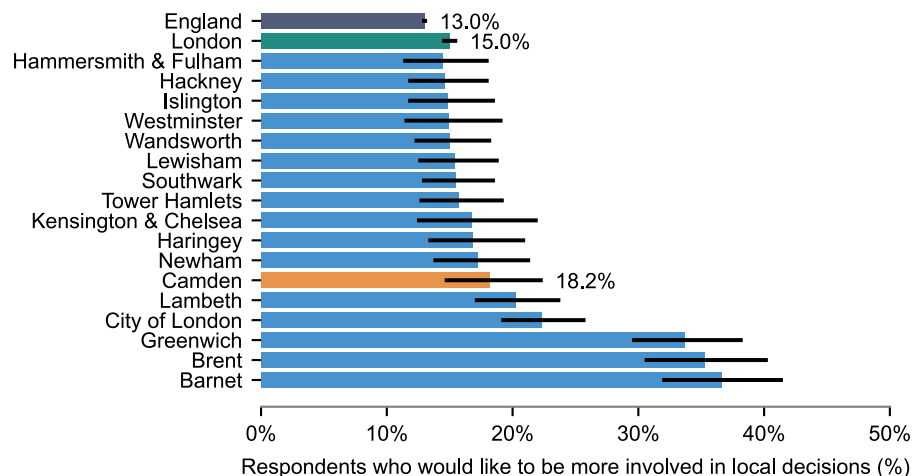
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Figure 10.4: Share of people who agree that you can personally influence decisions affecting the local area



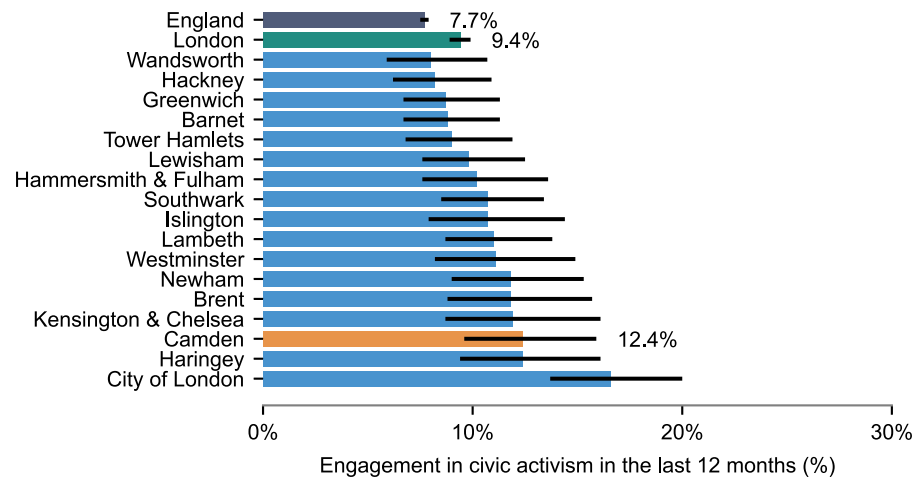
Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
 Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

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



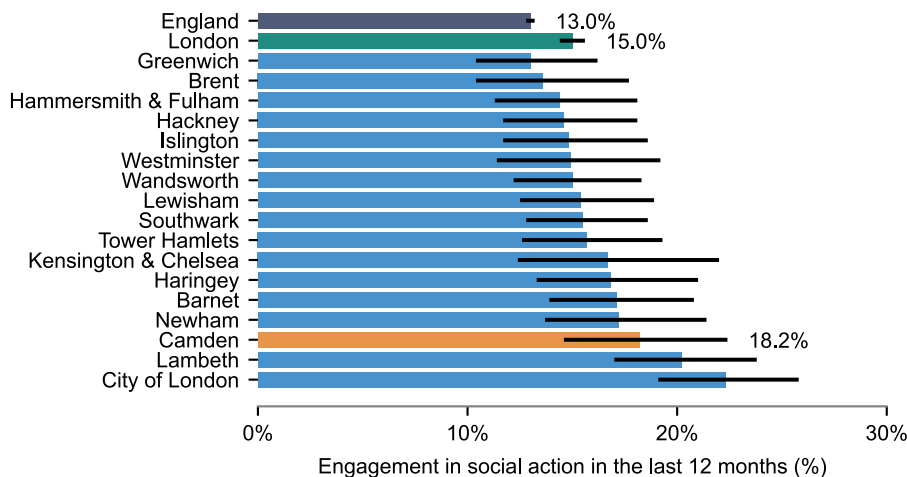
Source: Community Life Survey, 2023/2024
 Note: Error margin bars are displayed in black

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



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

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



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

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Participatory Budgeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

What we learned

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

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

Next steps

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

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

Community Champions

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

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



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

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



What we learned:

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

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

Next steps

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Their connections flourish beyond the designed sessions as volunteers observe,

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

Our priorities for the coming year

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

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

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

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Endnotes

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

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Our Diversity Mission

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



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| Why is this a Mission?

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

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

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

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

| What are the Diversity Mission's key aims?

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

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

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

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◆ Good Life Camden – measuring progress

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

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

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

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

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

| Increasing leadership diversity in key institutions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Public disclosure of leadership diversity data varies across Camden organisations

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

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

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

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

Public availability of senior management data (2023)

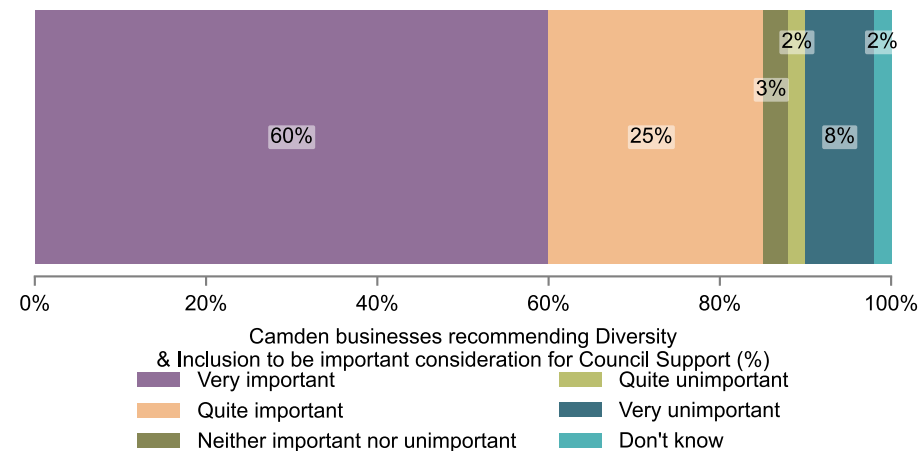
| Organisation | Age | Disability | Ethnicity | Gender |
|---|-----|------------|-----------|--------|
| Argent | | | | |
| Arup | | | | |
| AstraZeneca | | | | |
| British Land | | | | ● |
| Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust | | | | |
| Camden Council | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Google | | | | |
| Great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

● = data is publicly available

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

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

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



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

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Learning from: Veolia

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

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

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

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

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

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

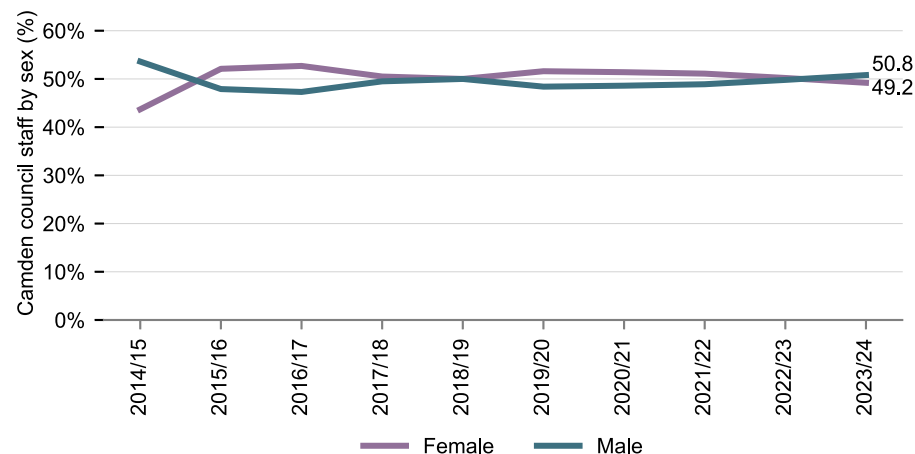
The Council is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is representative at all levels. To meet this objective, Camden’s employment profile is published, and the organisation has been voluntarily reporting its

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

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

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

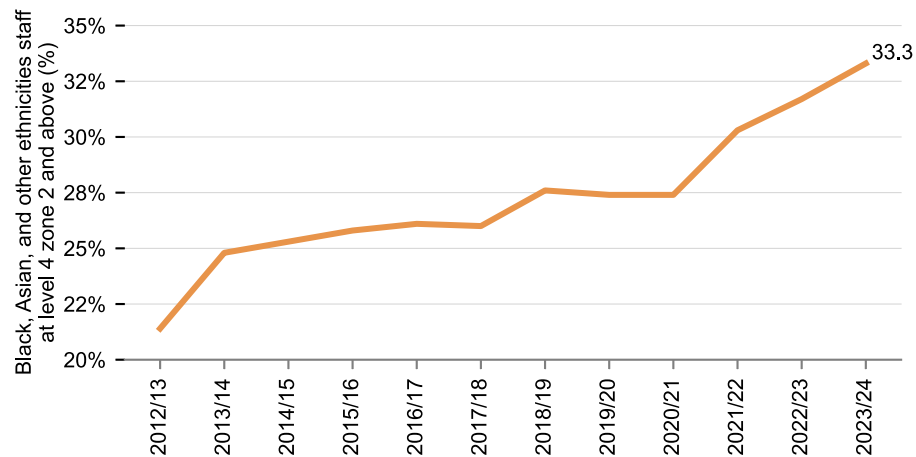
Figure 11.2: Camden council staff by sex, 2014-2023



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Black on Board

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

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

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

Opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As one of the participants from citizen assembly expressed,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

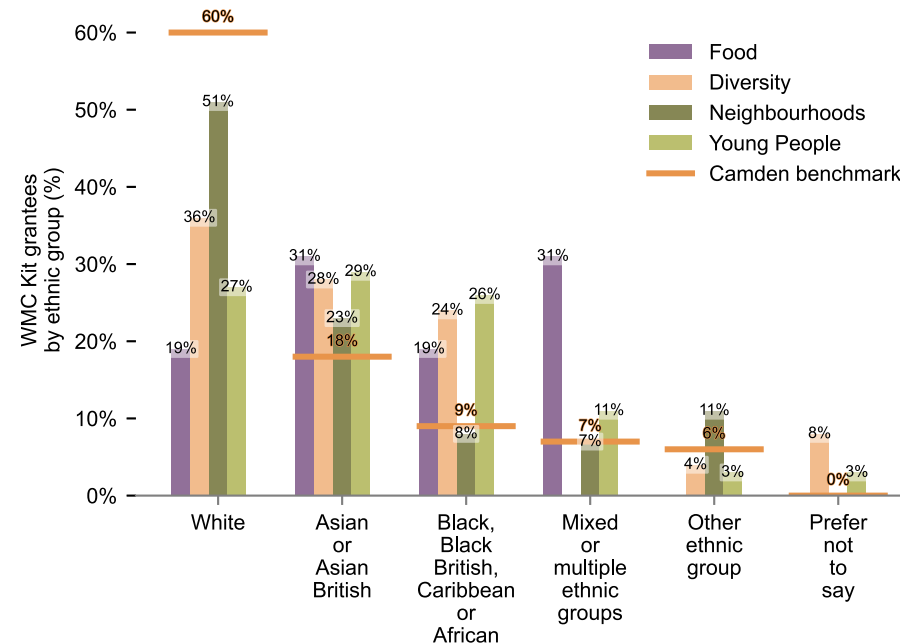
One of the ambitions of delivering the kit as a participatory grant

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

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

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Figure 11.4: Distribution of WMC Kit Grantees by Ethnic Groups



Source: WeMakeCamden kit data, 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An education system that prepares young people for leadership

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

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

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

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

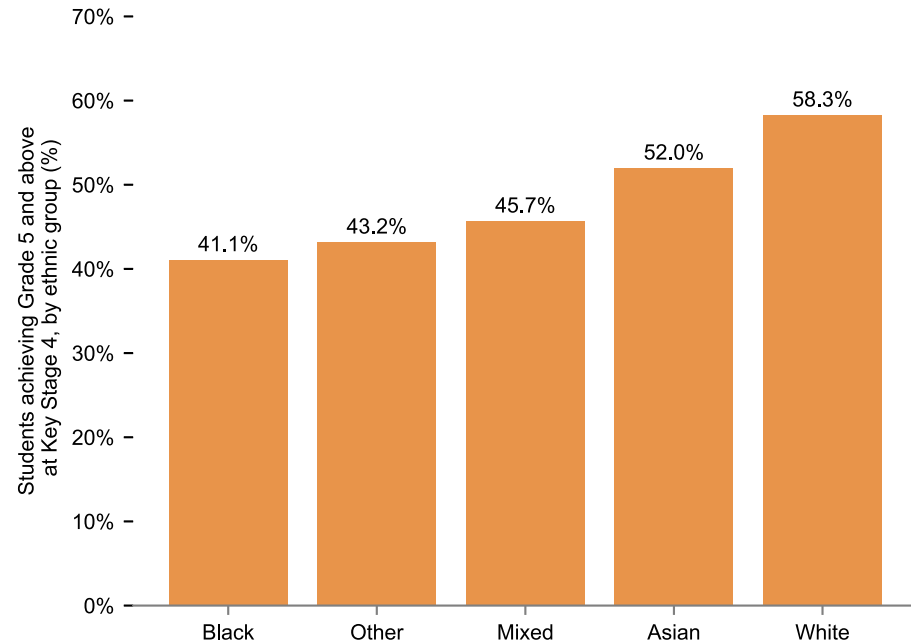
In this section, we further discuss our understanding based on public data and our engagement in the borough.

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

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

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

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

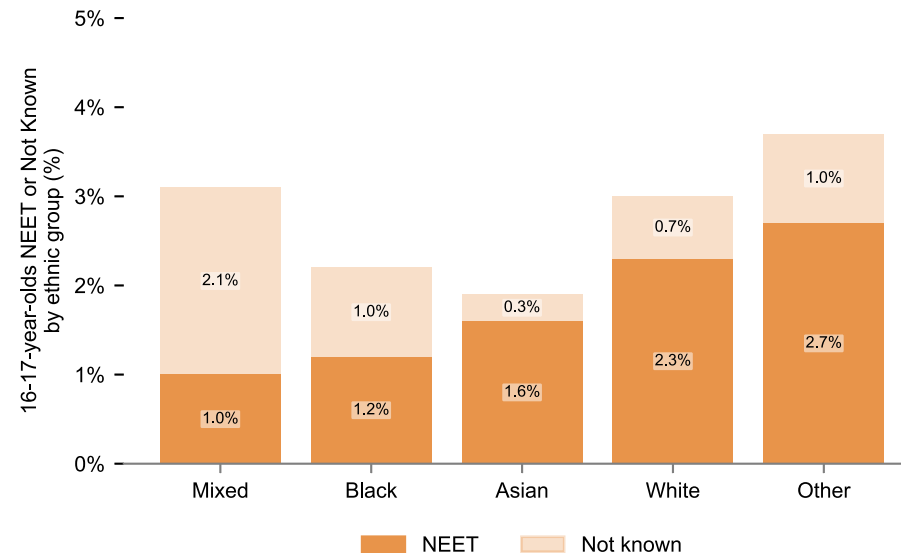


Source: Department for Education, 2023/2024

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

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

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



Source: Department for Education, 2024

Future Leaders Program

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

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

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

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

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

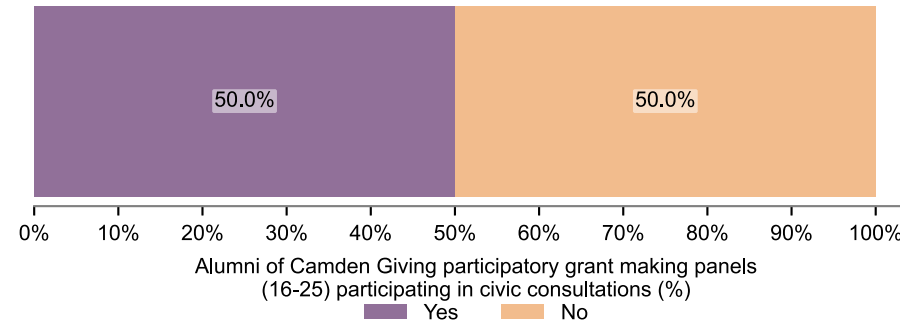
We need more data about the voice of young people in decision-making

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

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

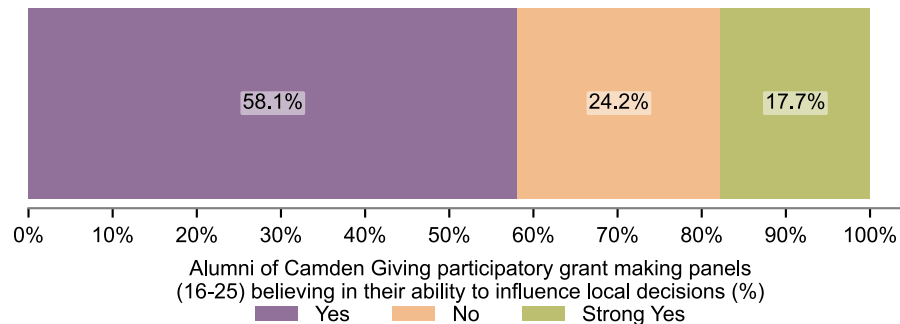
These results are not representative of Camden’s young people overall; however, these are the questions we would like to ask young people in the borough, through the work of the mission going forward.

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



Source: Survey of grant-making panel, Camden Giving, 2023/2024

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



Source: Survey of grant-making panel, Camden Giving, 2023/2024

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Young Governors Programme

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

| A Local Economy that Supports Entrepreneurial Diversity

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

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

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

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

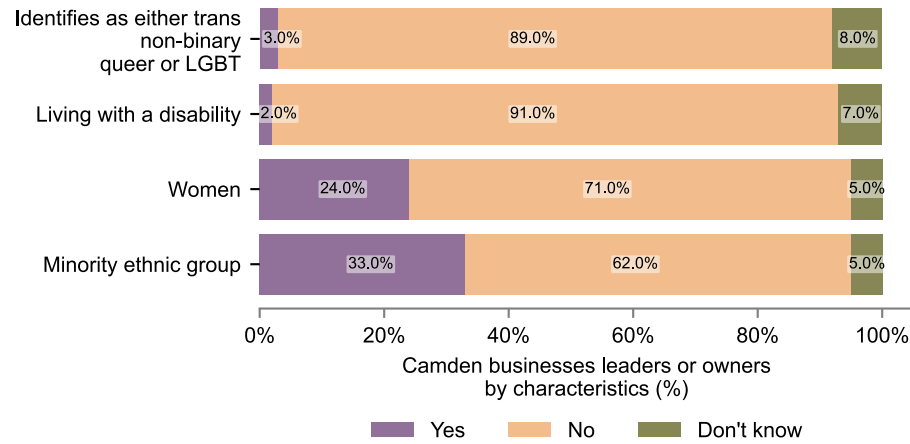
While we have some insight into the diversity of business owners in Camden, we have limited understanding of the diversity of our entrepreneurs

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

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

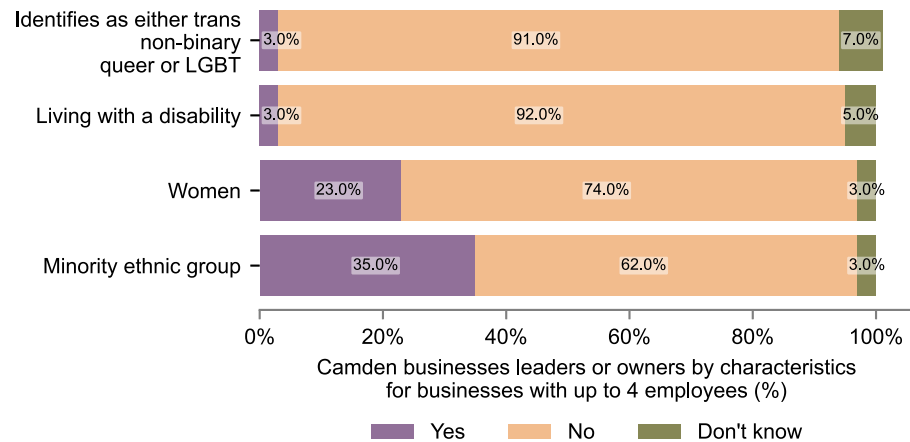
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Figure 11.9: Percentage of Camden businesses 'led or owned by' for all businesses



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

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



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

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

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

Future Camden Fund

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

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

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Rebel Business School

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

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

Learning from: [Bloomsbury Beginnings](#) – a We Make Camden Kit Grantee:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ how we view motherhood”

and that

“ being a mother is not a liability.”

| Our priorities for the coming year

Over the coming year we want to:

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

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

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ambitions**

Endnotes

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

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

Our Food Mission

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



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| Why is this a Mission?

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

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

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

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

What are the key aims of the Food Mission?

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

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

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

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◆ Good Life Camden – measuring progress

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Residents eat a healthy and balanced diet

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

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

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

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

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

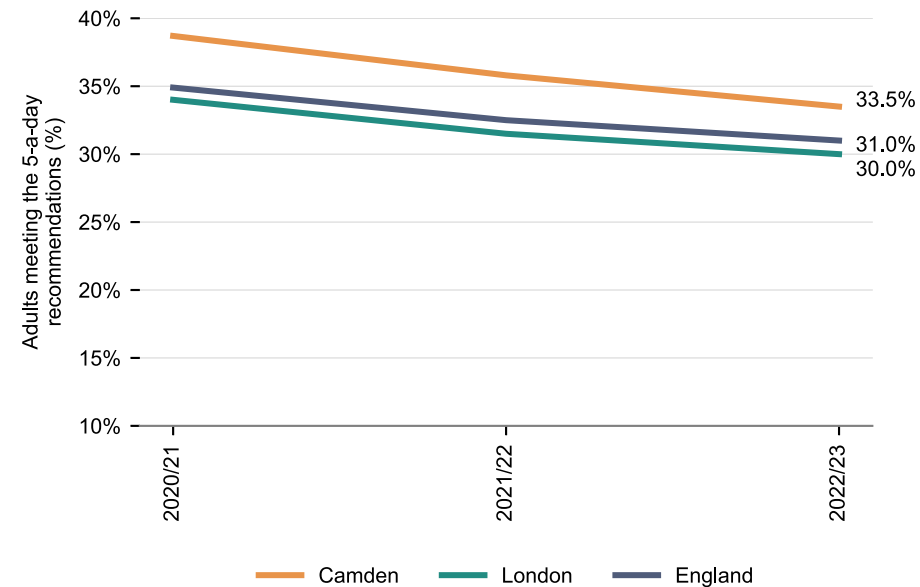


We don't have a fruit and vegetable market like they do in other parts of Camden. Because of our location [Warren Street] the food is even more expensive, so we should be considered because of where we live in Central London. I understand the shopkeepers need to do that because the rent is higher in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

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



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



Source: OHID, based on Sport England data, 2022/2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Camden School Breakfast Programme

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

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

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

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

– Parent, La Sainte Union

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

– Year 3 pupil, Christ Church School

Free School Meals take up pilot

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

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

Key insights from the work include:

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

As a result, several changes were introduced:

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

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

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

Uptake of the Holiday Activities and Food programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learnings from: Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

| Our priorities for the coming year

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

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

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

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

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

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Endnotes

- 1 The Hidden Cost of UK Food, <https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/our-work/true-cost-accounting/#:~:text=The%20Hidden%20Cost%20of%20UK,a%20further%20%C2%A3116%20billion>.
- 2 Source - CA cost-of-living data dashboard | Flourish

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Appendices

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

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

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

Table 13.1: Overview table of included Community Life Survey measures

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

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