



We Make Camden:
State of the Borough 2026

**The 6 WMC
ambitions**

We Make Camden: **State of the Missions 2026**



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How to navigate

**The 6 WMC
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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.

These take
you to
individual
webpages

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.

Comparison group: throughout the report, we have referred to the 'Comparison group' for simplification.

This group consists of the inner London boroughs and neighbouring boroughs to Camden: 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.

Links to
sections
within this
document

List of chart and images

Click on this link to bring you to this description of the Comparison Group.

We Make Camden Missions

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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?

The State of the Missions is our annual public account of We Make Camden missions. Building on the wider context set out in the State of the Borough report, this report is the culmination of our annual learning cycle, consolidating our reflections and learnings from mission activity. In this report, we think about our learning across three levels:

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.

Individual Missions – Each mission comprises a portfolio of projects, which collectively contribute towards the change we want to see. At a mission level, we bring together the learning from individual projects and from other data sources to help 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 learning loops (Fig 8.1 on the next page) illustrate the iterative learning at each level and their interconnectedness - how individual projects should inform our missions, and how learning in our missions should inform our strategy as a whole¹.

In each mission's 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. These gaps are a key consideration in our research and data collection activities and remain a high priority in the coming year.

Collective Sensemaking

This report is a testament to our evolving practices to evidence and learning in missions. This year, inspired [by UNDP](#) methodology, each of the missions brought together a sample of their projects across different teams and partners. The projects shared their learnings in a pre-structured format, which encouraged both learning for the projects and synthesis of the takeaways for broader mission. The structure also encouraged learning from this project level to feed into learning at the mission level. These learnings also sit at the heart of this year's State of the Missions report.

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Mission section structure:

| Why is this a mission

A brief explanation of the problem and our motivation for tackling it

| Mission level learning

What we think we've discovered about solving that problem from the work we've been doing

| Project level learning

Individual projects

A summary of what we have learned from an individual project or intervention

Practice exploration

Summary of learning that has informed our thinking about how we deliver missions

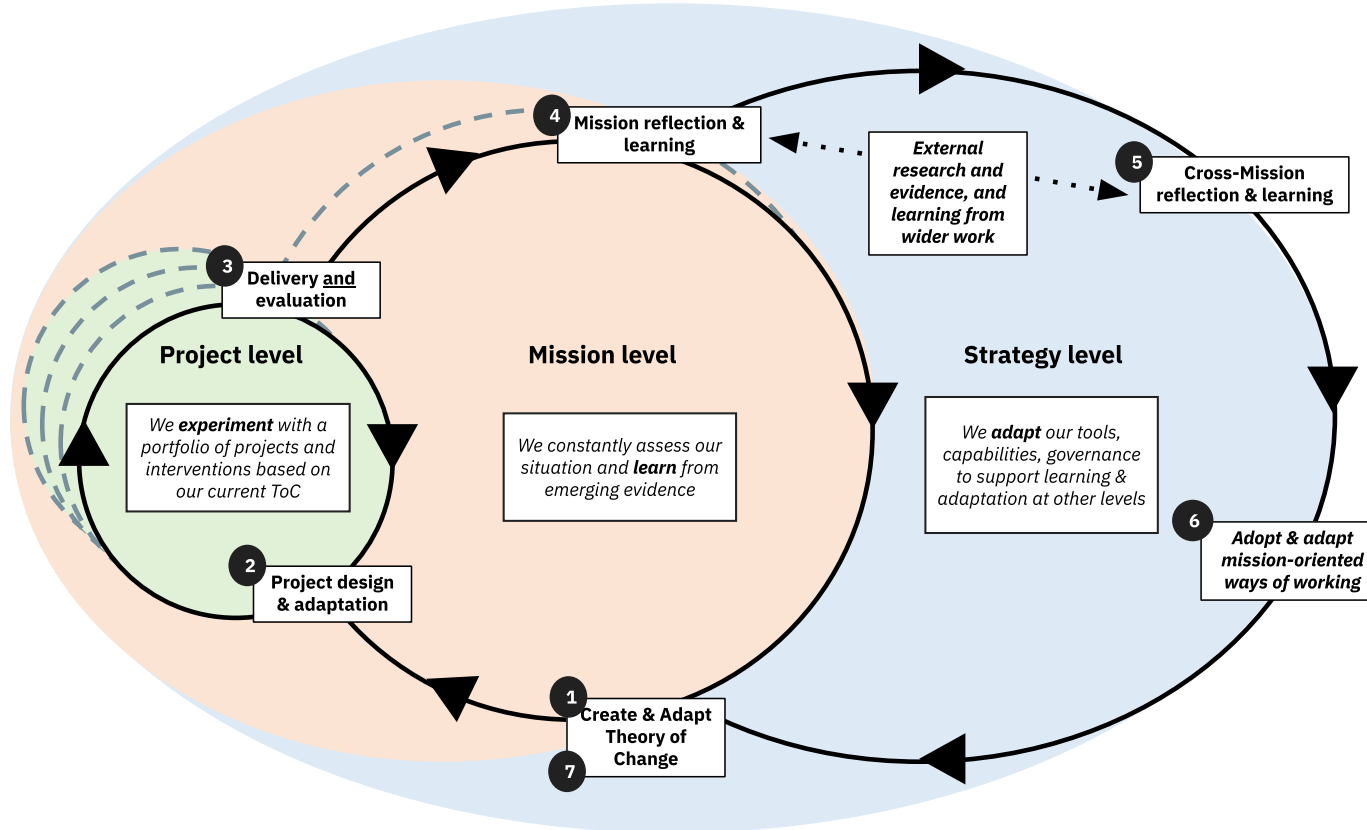
Learning from

Learning shared by external partners

| Our priorities for the coming year

What each mission plans to focus on next year

Figure 8.1: Mission learning framework



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| Mission-oriented strategy

This year, we share our learning from working in a mission-oriented way. We start with a summary of our learnings below and have included callouts in each mission chapter to highlight specific examples. Look out for the 'Practice Exploration' boxes if you are a missions practitioner.

Missions are inherently about looking at the system, and understanding our collective leverage to shape it. Here, we are capturing the things missions have taught us about re-orienting the organisation for mission delivery.

Setting the conditions for change

This year, driven in particular by learning from our Food Mission, we have deepened our understanding of what it means to take a genuinely strategic, mission-oriented approach.

Early in the food mission, there was a focus on building momentum through flagship projects, shared ambitions and a compelling narrative. This was an important part of building partnerships and activity around the mission and demonstrating what was possible. As we have listened, tested and learned across the borough, we want strategic progress to be defined by both initiatives delivered, and by the strength of the system that holds them.

Three insights have shaped the food mission's evolution this year, and will inform how we develop our overall mission approach in the coming years:

1. Missions should prioritise enabling conditions, not just activities

We now recognise that the real strategic levers are not projects themselves, but the conditions that allow people and organisations to act - shared purpose, trust, confidence, the ability to collaborate, and the capacity of partners to shape and influence the system.

2. Missions should distribute agency, not centralise control

Traditional strategies often rely on the Council or another organisation defining the problem, setting the agenda and directing the work. This approach cannot shift a whole system. Instead, we learned that missions must invite and enable, helping others understand the system they operate in, locate their role within it and take action.

3. Missions should build systemic capacity to continuously learn and adapt, not driven by linear delivery of outputs

We learned that progress is often visible in shifts in culture, relationships, confidence and alignment. This insight led us to build a more dynamic governance model for the food mission supported by a refreshed theory of change / mission map and new approaches to understanding progress, to capture how the system is becoming more capable over time.

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Changing the way we work

These principles – prioritizing the enabling conditions, distributing agency, and building systemic capacity to learn and adapt – influences the way we work inside the Council:

Bringing actors across mission system together

Working with others in the borough helps us to deepen our collective problem solving, build greater momentum, and imagine new approaches to delivery and finance. We have learnt that this requires us to be more relational and community-driven than the traditional approach to corporate partnerships ([Practice Exploration: Developing Partnership working on estates](#); Estates Mission), and our ambition is not just partner, but co-own the missions with organizations in the borough. ([Practice Exploration: Camden Food Partnership](#); Food Mission). This will further help us learn how to make it easier for organisations to work in partnership with the council across missions.

Reimagining financing for achieving missions

Funding is one of the key levers available to the council and well-resourced institutions in the borough. We continually work together to redirect these resources towards the goals of the missions.

In trying a few different funding models, we have learnt that,

- Creating bespoke funding delivery mechanisms such as the We Make Camden Kit enables us to align community activities with mission goals ([Practice Exploration: We Make Camden Kit and other grants](#); Youth Mission)
- Our Missions require us to think deeply about how our policies and processes can support us doing different work with different partners ([Practice Exploration: Community Wealth Fund](#); Diversity Mission)
- Missions don't rely solely on traditional programmatic financing, they are test beds for creative resource sharing ([Practice Exploration: 5 Pancras Square Library Café](#); Food Mission)

- Co-financing with partners can enable them to contribute directly to resident outcomes; but there is more work to ensure that we've got the enabling conditions right

This year, we are exploring how we can further our work with partners and make better use of social value agreements, as well as how we can orient funding to further diversify the levers we are using to make change.

Adaptive governance of missions for long-term change

Our missions sit outside of traditional political cycles – this is essential for long-term change that missions aim to achieve. It requires us to put a governance structure around missions that, and which enables the right people to come together and make decisions at the right time. Beyond decision-making, we also want mission governance to be sufficiently different to traditional governance in its emphasis on enabling conditions (and not just activities), iterative learning (and not just delivery) and distributed agency (and not single point of accountability).

As we have embedded this long-term view in our organisational practice, we have learnt that,

- Work within missions can require us to distribute power in new ways and think differently about leadership and accountability ([Practice Exploration: Responding to Climate Risks](#); Estates Mission)
- When setting up project-level governance, it's important to think about how we can take a multidisciplinary approach from the outset ([Practice Exploration: Challenge Prize](#); Food Mission)

In the coming year, we would like to explore how we might use our governance to better surface areas of shared interest early, so we can unlock shared momentum across missions.

Working across organisational silos

Since setting our missions, we have invested in capabilities which enable us to deliver on cross-cutting ambitions – like specialist teams within the Council, focusing on partnerships and participation, which have provided the foundation for our relational missions’ way of working.

In discovering the capabilities for missions, we have learned that:

- We are capable of more together than in isolation – partnership working enables us to extend our capabilities, balancing the strengths of our community with our skills as a Council ([Practice Exploration: Story Trail](#); Estates Mission)
- We can invest in capabilities outside the council to grow and future-proof the skills held in our community ([Practice Exploration: Systems Thinking and Leadership course for future leaders in the voluntary sector](#); Diversity Mission)
- We could broaden our use of different policy levers further in coming years, influencing other organizational policies ([Practice Exploration: Climate Action Plan 2026-2030](#); Food Mission)
- There are specific capabilities which we are lacking, and which are impeding project delivery ([Practice Exploration: Delivering Estate courtyard projects](#); Estates Mission)

In the coming year, we would like to explore more how we can mature our understanding of the skills needed to practice missions, build capacity in those areas, and leverage our diverse strengths intentionally when planning projects.

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



| Why is this a Mission?

In Camden, we take pride in the diversity of our borough. However, we understand that the outcomes for a good life are unequal for the diverse residents of Camden. This 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.

We are also working to support the next generation of entrepreneurs, recognising that local businesses play important leadership and empowerment roles in Camden.

Ultimately, we want to build a Camden where everyone has a voice and a chance to lead, now and in the future.

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| Mission-level learning

This year the mission has focused on building relationships across Council teams and with partners, and on gaining momentum in priority areas.

At a **Mission level**, a set of emerging insights will help to inform our mission journey going forwards and shape the portfolio of mission-aligned activity.

The first relates to **participation**. For residents, there is a sense of empowerment in being part of a collective:

“*I’m part of the LGBT adoption network, which is supportive, but it mostly meets outside Camden. When it did meet here during the protests, it was powerful to feel solidarity in such a difficult moment.*”

(65-74,F, Focus group discussion with representatives of the LGBTQ+ community in Camden)

A number of initiatives are opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices by embedding participatory approaches and supporting the further development of our participation practice. While participation is foundational to mission-oriented working, careful attention to representativeness, inclusion, and accessibility is essential. We are very active in creating infrastructure and opportunities for participation, but must identify specific measures of success to learn about the suitability of various forms of participation for engaging diverse communities.

The second insight relates to **financing**. This year, we have launched projects that draw on a wide range of funding sources, both within and external to the Council. We are already seeing the importance of seeking opportunities from a diverse range of financing options. This will be a key area of focus as we seek to sustain and scale successful projects.

The third relates to leadership values. Several projects seek not just to promote representation in leadership positions, but to ensure that leadership is exercised in line with values of inclusion, anti-racism, and community connection. The Future Camden Fund supports small businesses with a strong social value ethos, while the Future Leaders project focuses on anti-discrimination and inclusion in its leadership programme for school pupils. The Diversity Mission will benefit from retaining this focus on the purpose and impact of inclusive leadership as well as representative leadership.

At a Strategy level, the mission has generated lessons for Camden’s overall missions approach.

Firstly, context matters. The Mission has a strong focus on citizen participation and community empowerment because it builds on innovative participation practice in Camden and benefits from capacity within the Council to build participatory approaches into projects. The mission has been developed in a way that reflects a Camden-specific interpretation of participation and power sharing. Recognising that missions are shaped by their context is a precondition for working with the strengths of the local system.

Secondly, unexplored value exists in connecting mission-aligned activity. The Diversity Mission shares areas of interest with the Youth Mission, notably the education system and how young people are equipped to succeed, and so there will be value in the missions working together as a system. Similarly, within the Diversity Mission there are opportunities for projects to complement each other, such as the Future Camden Fund and the Community Wealth Fund, which could play joined-up roles within an established business support and growth system. In the next year the Diversity Mission will look at how it can ensure that its portfolio operates as an integrated system.

Thirdly, there is widely applicable learning about mission financing. As noted above, the diverse range of funding sources that Diversity Mission projects draw on points towards the importance of exploring the full

range of potential funding sources. There will be value in the missions exploring, how to formalise and build the practice of securing financing for mission-aligned projects.

| Project level learning

The section below highlights a selection of **projects and initiatives** that are in delivery and from which we can draw learning that will help to shape the mission going forward and Camden’s approach to missions in general:

Camden’s Inclusion Journey

This year, Camden published the story of the [Council’s inclusion journey](#). The story seeks to share the Council’s work on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and articulate the impact that it has had on our organisation. Our latest employee experience survey highlights the achievements of this journey, including progress on feelings of inclusion and belonging among Camden’s workforce, with 86% of staff feeling they belong in our organisation and 91% feeling treated fairly and with respect.

For the Council, publication of this document opens the door to important conversations about how we might do more. Being transparent about our inclusion journey is a necessary enabler for the Council to engage partners in a wider conversation about inclusion, representation, and diversity among people in leadership positions in Camden.

We believe that everyone across Camden has a role to play in making the borough a more diverse, inclusive and representative place to live and work. Our inclusion story is therefore aimed at organisations, businesses, charities, institutions and groups of all shapes and sizes across the borough who are looking to learn from others or engage in a

conversation about inclusion. It highlights that we are on a journey, and while we are proud of our achievements we know that we have further to go.

Practice Exploration: Systems Thinking and Leadership course for future leaders in the voluntary sector

Using Camden Council’s Apprenticeship Levy, we partnered with the University of Birmingham to launch a Level 7 Systems Thinking and Leadership (Leadership and Management) apprenticeship for a diverse cohort of 24 emerging voluntary and community sector leaders in Camden. Starting in August 2025 and running for two years, the programme responds to known challenges in workforce development, retention and leadership succession, and supports the Diversity Mission by strengthening VCSEs and increasing leadership diversity across Camden institutions. We also introduced a bursary to remove barriers to access, with early feedback indicating it has been critical for learners’ participation.

Early learning shows strong appetite for structured development, and we want to build on this by exploring further capability-building opportunities for partners (e.g. evaluation skills) and the levers available to resource them.

Priorities for next year

- Leverage our and partners’ strengths more tactically when planning projects
- Identify and build additional capabilities where we are not currently resourced

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Who Cares? A Camden conversation about adult social care

This year, in partnership with Demos and New Local, Camden Council launched a borough-wide conversation about care and support, with more than 1,000 Camden residents aged 16 or over taking part.

This project is part of Britain's largest trial of digital democracy, which has been grant funded through Waves – a €1 million project to develop and test new AI-powered digital methods to improve local democracy by making it easier, quicker and cheaper to gather views, discuss issues and reach consensus.

The ambition is that the project will yield learning about mass participation on complex topics, which will support the Diversity Mission's objective that more residents feel that they have a voice in decision-making. The project team have identified learning around the technology being both a catalyst for engagement at scale and a challenge in terms of inclusion, user experience, and data ethics. There is also emerging learning around the trade-offs that may need to be considered if the Waves model is to be mainstreamed into local policy development or increased in scale so that it offers more opportunity for civic engagement.

Practice Exploration: Community Wealth Fund

We are piloting Camden's Community Wealth Fund (CWF), investing £2 million in local businesses and organisations that create opportunities for young people and increase diversity in positions of power. A 1,000-strong Diversity Panel of people who live, work or study in Camden will shape the Fund's eligibility criteria, investment strategy and investment decisions ahead of applications opening in 2026. Designing this model drew on Scottish Government participatory research guidance, including

paying expenses and compensating people for their time, but the unprecedented scale exposed that our existing payment mechanisms were not fit for purpose. The team worked across the council—particularly with procurement and finance—to test new approaches and support executives to agree risk tolerance, highlighting both the value of cross-council collaboration and the challenge of setting new precedents without a clear guide. An early finding is that 750 panel members have not previously taken part in similar civic engagement, demonstrating the potential to reach beyond "usual" participants, strengthen relationships, clarify shared principles, and advance the Diversity Mission's ambition to open-up power structures and amplify civic voice in local decision-making.

Future Camden Fund

The Future Camden Fund (FCF) is the council's programme of finance and business support for socially impactful early-stage businesses that are either based in Camden or have a strong connection to the borough. It was launched in 2022 and is a blended repayable finance and grant fund. So far it has awarded £282,000 to seven businesses, including five grants and three loans.

The FCF seeks to support minority-led businesses, who, statistically speaking, face more barriers to funding². While no entrepreneurs are excluded based on their characteristics, the strategy to promote the FCF supports its engagement with entrepreneurs from under-represented communities. In this way, the FCF works towards the Diversity Mission objective to support the next generation of diverse entrepreneurs.

To date, 53% of businesses that have been supported are female-founded or led, 21% of entrepreneurs have a disability; and 63% are Black, Asian, or from another ethnic minority. Additionally, the project team has also found that an offer of culturally competent business

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support has been a success, having delivered over 85 hours of 1:1 consultancy time to 16 businesses.

Future Leaders

Future Leaders is a free, year-long leadership programme that aims to help young people build confidence, gain real-world skills, and make a positive impact in their communities. The programme, delivered by Future Leaders UK, features developmental workshops, a guest speaker series, mentoring, visits, and local projects.

By working in schools through Future Leaders UK, we are learning about how school-based models of leadership skills delivery compare with other models, and we are establishing a basis for further engagement with local schools about the role that they can play in working towards the Diversity Mission.

Last year, 100 year-12 pupils participated: 96% felt more prepared to take up positions of power in Camden in future, 98% felt their educational aspirations had been significantly raised, and 91% felt more empowered to advocate for equality and diversity in Camden.

| Our priorities for the coming year

We will seek to build a movement to advocate for inclusive recruitment, development, and leadership practices among organisations and institutions in Camden, with a view to ensuring that a greater number of organisations share data about their workforces and have support to increase the extent to which their leaderships are representative of Camden's communities.

We will develop a place-based approach to amplifying civic voices by working alongside initiatives in Camden neighbourhoods including Kentish Town, Kilburn, and Euston. We will do this while learning from the ongoing mass participation pilots, integrating lessons into our

participation practice, and seeking to continue engaging the people currently involved in the mass participation pilots

We will deepen our engagement with schools in Camden, with a view to ensuring that our partnership is delivering to equip the next generation of leaders with the skills they need.

We will establish a more detailed understanding of entrepreneurial diversity in Camden, with a view to designing targeted initiatives that reach the communities that face the most barriers to establishing and leading successful businesses.

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Our Estates Mission

By 2030, Camden's estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity



| Why is this a Mission?

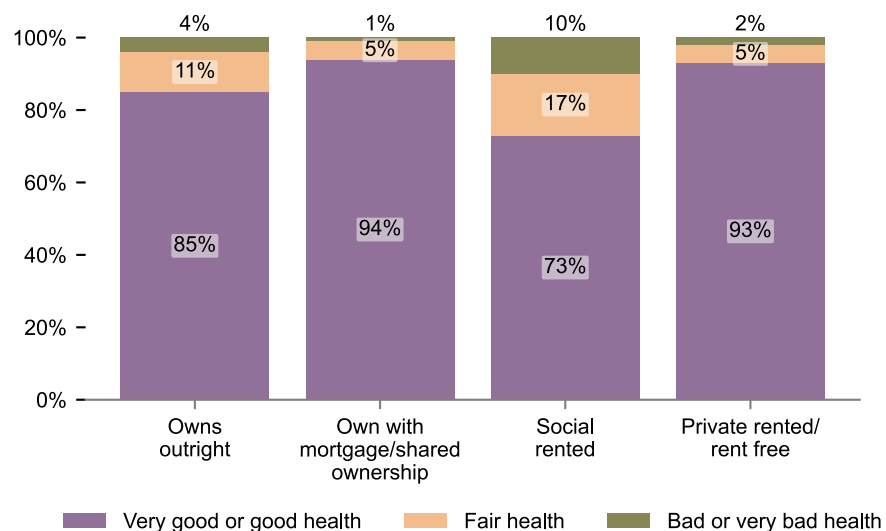
Where we live has a big impact on our health and wellbeing. We know that there is a big difference in health between our neighbourhoods, and residents on our estates are particularly likely to have worse health outcomes than others. We want to reduce that gap, so that by 2030, residents on our estates have the same levels of health and wellbeing as others in the borough.

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 homes reported being in very good or good health – 20 percentage points below those who own with a mortgage or rent privately, and over 10 percentage 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](#)). We also know that council tenants are much more likely than other tenure types, including private renters, to face deprivation in multiple dimensions (across health, education, employment, household).³

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Figure 10.1: Health outcomes by housing tenure, 2021 Census



Source: ONS - Census, 2021

- Worked with Arsenal in the Community to upgrade the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Peckwater Estate
- Worked with Openstead to quantify climate risks on Webheath Estate, and develop an approach to better understanding climate risks across our property portfolio
- Kicked off a programme of work to explore the social determinants of health at an estate level with the Institute of Health Equity
- Opened applications for a programme supporting community led regeneration and placemaking with Footwork Trust
- Run a series of resident engagement sessions at Hunter House around the design of a new courtyard with a student placement team from Central Saint Martin
- Launched a Public Health and Urban Design officer working group to identify opportunities to improve health and wellbeing through changes to the built environment

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Mission level learning

In the State of the Missions 2025, the priorities we set for the year were:

- Creating new civic spaces in our neighbourhoods through our Neighbourhood Spaces programme
- Extending and strengthening our community champions programme.
- Bringing together our public health and urban design teams.
- Deepening our understanding of our priority estates by creating a portrait of an estate.
- Connecting health and housing data, working with NHS colleagues.

As well as working on those priorities, over the last year the Council has:

Bringing together health and housing data at the estate level

We don't have a detailed picture of health needs at an estate level – but we are working on this by trying to bring together primary care data with address data. This would enable us, to analyse how long-term health conditions and needs vary from estate to estate. This work has involved significant relationships and trust building with NHS partners, as well as working through multiple governance processes. We are now well aligned, and should soon have access to primary care data at an estate level. We will test this on two estates to begin with, and then expand the dataset to include others. This approach will enable us to validate the usefulness of the dataset and make changes before rolling it out across the borough.

Understanding the climate risks on our estates

Our estates face significant and increasing climate risks (especially flooding and heat) that we could do more to mitigate. Analysis from projects on two estates provides an example – but these risks are not unique to these estates.

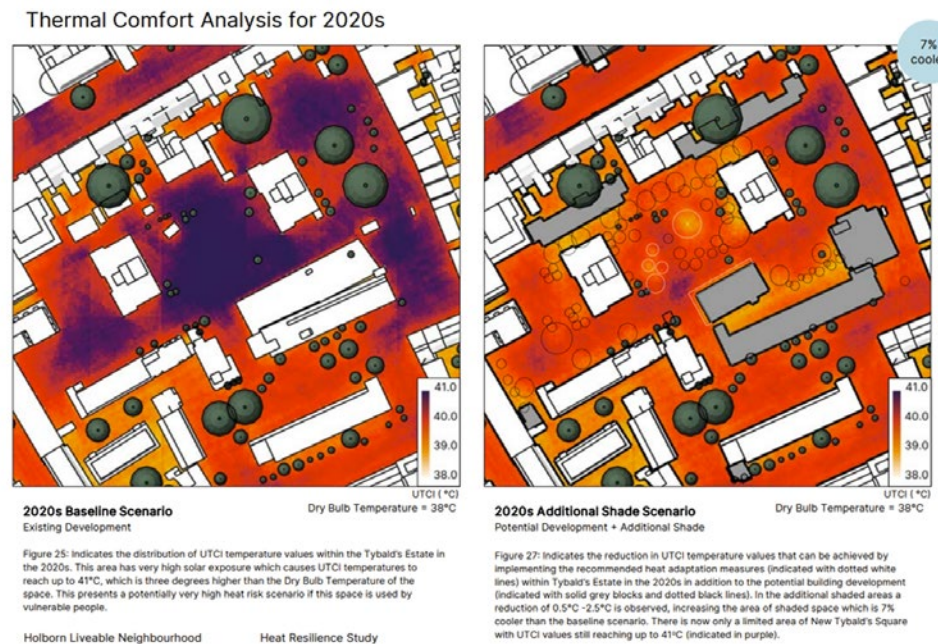
Based on hydraulic modelling by Openstead, on Webheath Estate we face £2.4m over 10 years; a variety of Sustainable Drainage Solutions (SUDS) could reduce this by 50%. Some SUDS may develop sites that are already green spaces, to provide greater flood protection.

Figure 10.2: Example intervention on Webheath Estate to improve flood resilience (source: Openstead)



On Tybald’s Estate, by the end of the 2020s we can expect temperatures of up to 38 degrees; by the 2050s, up to 42 degrees. Additional shading could improve thermal comfort by 5-7%. Prolonged exposure to such heat presents significant health risks; this is compounded by the vulnerabilities many estate residents face.

Figure 10.3: Thermal Comfort on Tybald’s Estate in the 2020s; baseline vs additional shade (source: Shade UK)



These projects raise questions. Although we are beginning to better understand the climate risks from flooding and heat, we do not yet understand the health impacts. Given the demographics on different estates, where do these climate risks pose the most significant health risks? What would be the most effective mitigations?

We lack a borough wide evidence base on these risks – with insight coming from two pilot projects looking at specific estates. We want to know – how do these risks vary across the borough? Which estates should we prioritise for flooding and heat risk preventative work?

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Practice Exploration: Responding to climate risks

Our estates (and our wider property portfolio) face significant risk from climate hazards (flooding and heat in particular) over the next 10-20 years, but ownership of that risk is fragmented and funding to mitigate that risk (such as installing flood risk mitigation such as sustainable urban drainage or shade) is limited.

The Council’s new Climate Action Plan 2026-30 will be considered by Cabinet in December and introduces a new focus on climate resilience which builds on our statutory Flood Risk Management Strategy. Through our work with Openstead to develop a pilot product that analyses expected climate risk at an estate level, we have found that there are a range of interested stakeholders (e.g. finance, housing, property green spaces, transport), but the risk has no clear organisational ownership.

Learning From: Regents Roots Festival

The Regent’s Roots Festival led by Old Diorama Arts Centre (ODAC) is an annual community and arts festival on the Regent’s Park Estate in Camden. Developed collaboratively with residents and partner organisations, the festival attracts over 1,000 attendees each year and provides insights into community sentiment.

A survey (with 400+ responses) on the day of the festival highlighted the festival’s role in strengthening local relationships and belonging. Consistent with previous years, 68.5% of attendees met someone new, 85% reported increased feelings of connections and 81% suggested enhanced perceptions of safety and social atmosphere. This highlights tangible benefits for the participants and residents as well as the role of place-based events in promoting a sense of belonging and connection, a key ambition of mission.

Developing community capabilities in shaping their local area

A key element of the Mission’s theory of change empowering residents and communities to shape their local area. One takeaway from the sensemaking workshops was that projects focus on developing capabilities grounded in place.

One version of this is building residents’ capabilities. The Story Trail project (see Practice Exploration below) employed Neighbourhood Curators; we have run an accredited course to support residents to develop fundable climate projects; the Vacant Spaces project included elements of community building; and the People and Places programme is building the capacity of 15 ‘local social innovators’ with a vision to transform their estate or neighbourhood.

A complementary approach is embedding professional capacity in place. This has been most evident in our community champions programme, which has 5 community activators working on specific estates, one per each of our neighbourhoods.

Whichever approach projects take, the key learning is: to empower residents, developing new capabilities, rooted in place, is critical.

Practice Exploration: Story Trail

Missions are a shared endeavour, where we all have a role to play. One thing we are learning is how we can leverage our strengths to support others and complement theirs

In 2025, Old Diorama Arts Centre launched the Regent’s Park Estate Story Trail, a resident-led public art trail. The trail consists of 28 artworks across 12 site-specific installations, including alternative street signage and manhole covers.

What have we learned? This ambitious project challenged the Council’s planning processes, due to its scale, which cut across multiple teams’ remits

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The Story Trail underlines the importance of partnership working, where skills can complement one-another. ODAC brought trusted community relationships and agility; combining the Council’s expertise in negotiation, regulation, safeguarding and risk management enabled the project to go ahead. The project was led by community champions. Beyond acting as a catalyst for belongingness, story trail empowered and built capacity of residents to shape their local area – a key ambition of estates mission

While learning is a core component of our missions practice, we also learned that the evaluation requirements for a project like this can stretch the capacity of our partners. Looking ahead, how can we build on our relational approach to further develop the capabilities and capacity we need to achieve our missions?

| Project level learning

What have we learnt about the operational delivery of projects within the Estates Mission?

Vacant spaces

The resident design panel for the Hilgrove pilot site has been really successful with residents feeling a sense of ownership of the project. Members of the group have applied to the People and Place programme to support their bid as a community led operator of the future Hilgrove site.

Low interest in a commercially allocated pilot site has stalled delivery of one community focused site. A cross-funding model (where commercial revenue subsidises capital works on a community site) is therefore unlikely to be feasible.

We have seen high levels of interest from VCS organisations to take on sites. Some indicated they may be able to raise capital investment

through donors or external funds specifically open to VCS organisations (and not others, such as the council). This could open up a new delivery approach where sites are assigned to VCS organisations to raise capital.

Neighbourhood spaces

The delivery of community “meanwhile-use” programme requires more staffing resource than currently available from Camden Council. This has led to reducing scope of work to deliver core areas.

Demand for space is very high, in particular creative/messy workspace and community storage. The project team are constantly having to refer people to external partners where space is often short-term/ meanwhile.

There is a strong appetite for cultural programming and dedicated culture space in Kentish Town where several spaces have closed in recent years.

“Action groups” (sub-groups of the broader Kentish Town Commons network, coming together around a specific theme) are working well and leading to interesting projects, but may require dedicated funding to work on a long-term basis. Action groups are predominantly made up of VCS organisations rather than individual residents as work schedules rarely align. We are developing a dedicated resident action group that can be facilitated to suit resident’s needs and build individuals’ capacity.

The “Kentish Town Commons” community stewardship group has been slow to establish. Interest is strong, and a diverse group has formed, but more training is required. As we increasingly ask residents to take leadership roles within pieces of work, we need to recognise that extra support will be critical.

Project capital costs are hard to control with current construction industry market conditions. Camden Council has been generally supportive to help secure additional capital, but further delays or market changes may weaken business case.

Business model viability requires continuous review to ensure project will be appealing to external operator. For future sites it would be beneficial to consider how/if we can grow our own operator in the borough.

Community champions

This year, Camden’s community champions programme expanded from three to five projects.

Recruitment to the coordinator posts has been challenging for some of the projects – despite increasing the budget for each project, two have found the recruitment of coordinators a challenge. Existing coordinators have also reflected that the high costs of living in London, have made them reflect whether their roles are sustainable.

Finding space to deliver activities and events is a challenge - some of the projects do not have a local base on their target estates and find it challenging and expensive to find local community spaces. This is because of a lack of available, local spaces and high rental costs.

Confidence and a sense of empowerment has grown amongst community champions particularly, and also amongst engaged residents, through skill sharing, leadership opportunities, and community participation, as evidenced by our evaluation of the programme last year.

Community connections continue to be strengthened on target estates – coordinators continue to report that residents are reporting stronger feelings of connection and belonging, through attending champions events.

One resident reflected on the personal impact of this, sharing that,

“*being part of a community has been good for my health, I enjoy doing things that distract me from the worries I face at home. I enjoy talking to people about things that make me happy and reliving happier memories from when I was young*”

(64, Female, Pearly Sari at The People’s Museum).

Participatory Budgeting

During the pilot we engaged with tenants and residents of the Hilgrove Estate in a comprehensive process to determine how a portion of their estate’s service budget would be spent over two years. The core engagement methods included the recruitment of a representative working group, co-design workshops, and an estate-wide vote. The primary objective was to test a system that gives residents the community power to shape their area through decision-making on public money expenditure.

Key learning included that:

Service budgets within housing are too difficult to work with. HRA budgets are restricted by existing contractual arrangements and the requirements around recharges to leaseholders for service charges. Unrestricted funding, such as Local CIL, may be a better source of funds.

The costs of facilitation and process management are too high to operate at an estate level – participatory budgeting might work better at a cluster or neighbourhood level. Some resident goals (such as changing the grounds maintenance contract or recruiting a resident caretaker) are difficult to achieve.

Practice Exploration: Delivering Estate courtyard projects

There have been numerous capital projects in Estate ‘courtyards’ - i.e. the outside, semi-public spaces on our Estates - launched or delivered. This includes landscaping work at Denyer House and Hunter House, the Peckwater MUGA, and the No More Ball Games campaign at Hilgrove Estate. We refer to these as ‘courtyard projects’ below.

Our hypothesis is that these (relatively) small projects will be an area of increasing interest and activity because they present a relatively low-cost option for improving life for residents on estates, they are a great focal point for resident engagement, and there is overlap with both the food mission's goal of supporting more food growing and the climate team's goal of increasing green space on our estates.

However, there are a number of barriers to scaling up the delivery of these projects.

The process for approving landscaping work on our Estates is not fully clear. Working on Estate courtyards is inherently complex because the land is 'owned' by one Council service and managed and maintained by another, but neither are responsible for delivering improvements to the courtyards. Projects such as Denyer House have been seen as 'one-offs' and we haven't clarified who should be responsible for approving designs and giving permission for work to continue. We need to decide whether this kind of project remains ad hoc and bespoke, or can be streamlined into new or existing shared planning and decision making processes.

We lack responsive project management capacity for capital delivery. There are multiple teams that have the capability to project manage capital delivery, but, for good reasons, projects are planned a long time in advance, and officer time is allocated according to the information the division has at a particular point in time. Projects that are initiated outside those divisions sometimes find it difficult to fit into these pre-existing delivery pipelines. Ensuring courtyard projects budget for delivery costs could be part of the solution, but due to their being resident-led and dependent on less certain funding, it is difficult to allocate officer time in advance. We could explore whether there is enough

demand for dedicated role to project manage the less predictable, responsive work that arises off the back of resident-driven improvement work.

Courtyard projects do not currently have strategic, long term, predictable funding. These projects are often funded from a patchwork of sources, which can take time to assemble and confirm. The lack of predictable funding means that it is difficult to create a coherent workplan that prioritises estate courtyards based on need, especially as funding often come from Local CIL to work on specific estates. A solution to this could be to allocate a slice of strategic CIL to estate courtyard projects. Camden receives ~£7-9m in CIL per year; an allocation of ~£250k per year would enable us to deliver 4-5 courtyard improvement projects without adding officer capacity.

Practice Exploration: Developing Partnership working on estates

Partnerships as a catalyst for narrowing Camden's health gaps

Partnerships will play an increasingly central role in how Camden addresses the persistent health and opportunity gaps faced by residents living on our estates. A key priority for the year ahead is the deepening of the Health Anchor Partnership, which will focus on running deliberative engagement sessions with estate residents to understand what they want and expect from the Council's relationship with major life sciences companies. Through this deliberative process, residents will help shape the principles that guide Camden's public-private partnerships, AstraZeneca and MSD, ensuring that industry expertise and investment are directed

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towards community priorities and the goal of reducing the health inequality gap.

As this has developed, progress has taken longer than first anticipated due to volatility in the national and global life sciences environment, including recent decisions by major pharmaceutical firms to pause or scale back UK investment. Establishing a genuinely resident-led partnership model based on trust, accountability and shared power has also required more groundwork than traditional corporate engagement, which typically prioritises institution-led, short-term activity over community-defined outcomes.

This participatory approach sits alongside wider work with Camden's anchor institutions and corporate partners. The collaboration with Arsenal and adidas on regenerating a community pitch at the Peckwater Estate illustrates how large corporations can contribute directly to youth provision, physical activity and local belonging. Similarly, partnerships with the Francis Crick Institute, Central Saint Martins and ZSL will expand access to science engagement, creative health programmes, environmental initiatives and routes into learning and employment. In the year ahead, a more joined-up partnership landscape will give residents clearer and more visible benefits, with corporate, civic and cultural anchors working in alignment with local priorities.

People-powered change as bedrock of partnerships

Partnerships enable Camden to deliver more than statutory services can achieve alone. As frontline services continue to operate under pressure, public-private and civic partnerships will bring specialist expertise, facilities, volunteers and investment into the borough. This will help expand preventative health activity and strengthen the neighbourhood networks that underpin long-term wellbeing.

A key focus for the year ahead is embedding resident and community voices as a non-negotiable element of how Camden works with industry and other large institutions. Rather than viewing public-private partnerships as technical or transactional arrangements, Camden will move towards a model where corporate involvement is guided by community-defined principles, expectations and accountability. Residents will shape what responsible corporate participation looks like on estates, what benefits they expect to see, and how the wider value of industry involvement should be measured. This approach will help ensure that partnerships – whether with life sciences organisations, research bodies, cultural institutions or technology firms – deliver tangible outcomes that contribute to reducing health inequalities in ways residents can recognise, influence and trust.

| Our priorities for the coming year

There are a number of projects that we have kicked off, that we will continue to deliver. They include:

- Community champions
- Renovating the neighbourhood space at 2 Prince of Wales Road
- Refurbishing the vacant space at Hilgrove into a community space
- Delivering the courtyard improvement projects at Hunter House

Over the course of the year we have been developing a number of projects that will be launching in 2026. These include:

- Marmot Estates, in partnership with the Institute for Health Equity. This will take a hyper local approach to understanding the social determinants of health, working closely with residents on two Estates to understand their priorities

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- People and Place: Camden, in partnership with Footwork Trust. This will support 10 projects led by 'local social innovators' with a vision to transform their estate or neighbourhood. The programme will provide a small grant of £5k, as well as one to one expert mentorship, peer support, and connection to the wider movement of community asset development across the UK.
- 107 Kingsgate, as part of the Neighbourhood Spaces project. This will work closely with community members to develop the plan for the transformation of the historic 107 Kingsgate Community Centre

Beyond individual projects, we are keen to embed some of our learning into new policies, changing the conditions for future work that the council undertakes. Priorities here include:

- Developing a policy around heat mapping for regeneration work on estates (and carrying our borough wide research on heat risk on estates)
- Developing a strategic approach to delivering courtyard improvement work, and finding long term, consistent funding

As noted above, partnerships are core to the way we want to deliver the mission. We are focussing on:

- Working with health anchors to define and deliver joint work coming out of the deliberative engagement sessions
- Developing a stronger mission partnership network with community centres, many of whom already work closely with nearby estates in a place leadership role
- There is significant opportunity to reorient some of our services to better align with the Estates mission through progressive and strategic procurement. In particular, there is an opportunity to work the adult social care commissioning team to explore possibilities to align our Homecare service with the Estates Mission

We know that for this mission to be a success, we have to radically improve our Estate level intelligence; we currently struggle to disaggregate most outcomes based on housing tenure or hyperlocal area. Two significant pieces of work to address this include:

- Building a health and housing dataset. We are continuing to work closely with NHS colleagues to combine health and housing data, which will enable us to see the prevalence of different long term health conditions at the estate level for the first time.
- Creating a 'Portrait of an estate' tool. This will enable us to bring together different data sources connected to a single estate easily and quickly, enabling us to make smarter decisions about where to work with different programmes, and to contact the right people when working on an estate.

Our Food Mission

By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food



| Why is this a Mission?

The Camden Food Mission aims to transform the borough's food system into one that is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. 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

Food insecurity is not just a question of access and affordability, it is a systemic challenge. The ongoing cost of living crisis, climate-driven environmental events, geopolitical shifts, and volatile food prices are reshaping how reliably and sustainably food reaches people.

The food system spans regulation, production, processing, purchasing, and consumption. Its structure influences dietary choices, yet many groups still face inconsistent access to affordable, sustainable, and nutritious food.

While Camden does not produce the food it consumes, we can influence how food is sourced, distributed, and accessed, ensuring it is nutritious, affordable, and sustainable.

We know that poor nutrition contributes to long-term health conditions, which affect residents' quality of life and place significant pressure on health and social care services. Moreover, for every £1 spent on food, another £1 is generated in hidden social costs, including environmental and health impacts.⁴

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Among Camden's school children, the poor nutrition starts early. The latest Health-Related Behaviours Questionnaire (also known as 'the schools survey') has found that only 26.6% of secondary and 36.9% of primary pupils hit the 5aday fruit & veg target yesterday. Additionally, 35.4% of secondary students had skipped breakfast on the day of the survey.

Food production, distribution, consumption, and waste form an environmental cycle that both affects, and is affected by, our ability to produce food sustainably. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a whole-system approach that examines infrastructure gaps, outdated policies, and systemic inequalities. This approach recognises the essential links between food, climate, energy, and health systems.

The Food Mission is not just about tackling food poverty; it's about building a borough where collaboration thrives, agency is shared, and every actor can contribute meaningfully to a better food future for Camden.

| Mission level learning

Over the past year, the Food Mission has grown in both ambition and clarity. We have delivered a wide range of projects with partners across Camden, generating real energy and learning. But our most important insight is that project delivery alone cannot shift a complex food system. Projects matter they are the starting points for change, building relationships, confidence and shared understanding. But they only create lasting impact when they strengthen the conditions that allow collaboration, agency and innovation to take root.

This realisation has transformed how we see our role. The Food Mission is evolving from a project facilitator to a mission-led capacity builder. We are now focused on cultivating the enabling conditions that help people understand the food system, locate their role within it, and act

with confidence. Trust, relationships, shared purpose and adaptive ways of working have proven just as important as any single intervention.

Our long-term plan identifies five pathways to transformation. These are: shifting markets through policy, regulation and lobbying; strengthening demand-side initiatives such as co-ops and food hubs; fostering food culture and innovation; leveraging collective action across sectors; and building shared intelligence grounded in data and lived experience.

These efforts sit within Camden Council's long-term commitment of £700,000 per year for seven years to food system transformation. This includes up to £200,000 per year for mission-oriented partnership projects and £100,000 per year for seven years to strengthen advice provision in food aid settings, supporting neighbourhood-level collaboration and local capacity.

Practice Exploration: Camden Food Partnership (CFP)

Camden Food Partnership is not simply a convening space but a vital piece of system infrastructure. When the Partnership acts as a focal point for alignment and shared stewardship, the whole mission moves more coherently. In areas where collaboration has been strongest, we have seen shared problem-solving and collective momentum.

We have developed a seven-year Partnership Plan to guide the long-term growth of the CFP. The plan positions the Partnership as a structure that connects people, policies and resources to create lasting structural change. Our vision is clear: a borough where good food is accessible to all, where local businesses thrive, and where food culture reflects the diversity of our communities. This is not about isolated projects; it is about building a system that works for everyone.

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A significant step forward has been the launch of the Food Partnership Catalyst Fund, through which we welcomed our first Catalyst Partners: Cooperation Town, Lifeafterhummus and FEAST With Us. Catalyst Partners share the mission’s ambitions and strengthen the infrastructure of the local food system. Each receives £50,000 per year for two years, with potential support for up to seven years. These organisations do not just deliver projects, they create the conditions for others to act, innovate and contribute to borough-wide change.

To complement this, we have rebuilt the Camden Food Partnership Steering Group, which reconvened this year with a broader membership, bringing together community organisations, local institutions, businesses, academics and the Council. The Steering Group provides strategic guidance, strengthens alignment and supports the development of an independent, resilient Partnership.

Camden’s Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan (HWAP) launched in March 2024 to support people of all ages to reach and maintain a healthy weight. The plan works across sectors and departments to develop whole system working and targeted support. It brings together partners from a range of sectors, including Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, NHS, Schools, and departments across the council. The HWAP has a shared focus with the Food Mission on addressing nutrition and healthy food but the HWAP also focuses on other health behaviours. The Plan was recognised regionally as good practice this year.

Three key learnings from the first year of the HWAP are specifically relevant to the Food Mission:

1. The need to **focus on nutrition and healthy weight in the early years**. The Plan builds on action in Camden which has contributed to year-on-year reductions in overweight levels for children at school entry. We know that having a healthy weight at the age of 6

is a strong predictor for a healthy weight at the age of 18, so further action is needed during the early years and at school.

2. **Tailored interventions are needed to support different communities in Camden**, with a focus on ensuring that information and services are appropriate and culturally relevant for different demographic and community groups. A pilot project with the Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association successfully supported Bangladeshi women to benefit from the borough wide weight management service, and findings from focus groups with resident champions this year highlighted the need for very tailored behavioural communications that reach into communities, alongside general information sharing through organisation channels.
3. **Front line workers value and need training** to support the nutrition and healthy weight needs of residents. This training focuses on both increasing their confidence and their competence to enable effective help within their ongoing relationships with residents. Training is not always available, so Health and Wellbeing developed a new training module for adult social care staff to enable better nutritional support after hospital discharge when older people return to their homes.

Practice Exploration: Climate Action Plan 2026-2030

This system shift is also reflected in Camden’s new **Climate Action Plan 2026-2030**. Developed through a five-month, deeply inclusive engagement process, the plan places community voice and lived experience at its core, echoing the principles of the Food Mission. Residents identified food growing, food waste, and local food resilience as key areas for action amongst others, signalling a growing appetite for practical, community-led solutions. As a result, food now features prominently across two of the Plan’s seven priorities, including the local circular economy and greening and growing. The Plan adopts a shared-endeavour approach, reinforcing our shift toward enabling conditions and partnership-driven action across Camden’s neighbourhoods.

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| Project level learning

Over the past year, the Food Mission has collaborated with council teams and borough-wide partners to deliver a diverse portfolio of projects and initiatives. These efforts have demonstrated the power of partnership in driving tangible outcomes and building momentum for change.

The mission has begun to organise projects by the broader “tactic” we are testing e.g. our school food projects, from the breakfast programme to free break time fruit and veg, are part of our testing the tactic of *increasing access to and uptake of healthy food at school* as a means to deliver mission outcomes.

Below is a summary of some of the key insights across our tactics and projects:

Increasing access to and uptake of healthy food at school

Supporting children to eat healthily at school - particularly secondary school - is a challenge. On average only 61% of eligible secondary pupils had a school meal on census day (ranging from 47.3% to 76% across schools). The 2025 Health Related Behaviours Questionnaire shows only 23% of secondary pupils eat a school breakfast 2–3 times a week, and 10% daily.

Since 2023, Magic Breakfast has delivered the **Camden School Breakfast Programme** expanding from 9 schools in 2022 to the 25 most deprived Camden schools in 2025. 3,089 pupils now receiving a free breakfast daily, compared to just 587 in 2022, a step change in tackling morning hunger. Magic Breakfast is trialling innovative methods, such as Grab & Go stations at school gates, which have been a success at La Sainte Union, now achieving 43% uptake, the highest among Camden secondary schools. Magic Breakfast’s adaptive approach has helped several schools to address hunger at the start of the day, particularly in primary schools where uptake can reach 97% of pupils.

The mission is testing procurement power, and working in partnership, to improve secondary school food. **The new school meals contract**, introduced in April 2025, includes specific requirements to improve uptake and pupil experience of free school meals. Initiatives such as taster sessions will allow pupils to influence menu planning based on real feedback rather than past preferences, aiming to make school meals more appealing and inclusive.

In response to a previous FSM Test and Learn Project we co-designed **a universal free fruit and vegetable offer** across all Camden secondary schools to address breaktime hunger. Feedback from pupils and staff has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the scheme helps bridge the mid-morning hunger gap. Schools have also begun experimenting themed or cultural days to encourage pupils to try a wider variety of fruit and vegetables. These innovations highlight the value of working closely with pupils and schools to co-create solutions.

Work with schools to ensure curriculum support learning about healthy eating

Schools are not just places for children to eat healthy food, but also a great opportunity for them to learn about the food system and practical hands-on food growing and cooking skills. However, barriers remain such as limited infrastructure and low confidence among staff. Cooking and food education is a compulsory part of the national curriculum up to Key Stage 3, yet many Camden schools struggle to deliver it due to limited space, equipment, and staff confidence.

Camden Council is working in partnership with two primary schools - Brecknock and Richard Cobden - to **integrate food growing into school life**. The three-phase programme includes assessment, tailored recommendations, implementation, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training for teachers alongside student workshops.

To support active, hands-on food education, Camden has also been delivering and exploring a number of other projects, including: a feasibility study into the creation of a dedicated cooking site within a

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local school, open to bookings by other schools; practical cooking sessions for staff in one primary school; combined Food in Schools networks with Design & Technology networks to increase reach; and offering £200 grants to nine primary schools for basic cooking equipment.

Unlock opportunities for food growing in underused spaces, provide residents access to food growing spaces and encourage their participation in local food growing initiatives

The Food Growing Programme is designed to make food growing more accessible and inclusive for Camden residents. Rather than focusing solely on creating new spaces, a key element of long-term success lies in strengthening and extending the reach of existing community gardens. To achieve this, test and learn projects have been launched to engage diverse stakeholders and form active local networks and working groups. These groups will not only support the development of new and existing growing spaces but also connect closely with the Camden Food Partnership, ensuring that the educational side of food growing becomes a core part of the borough's collaborative food system.

Mill Lane Community Garden is a new food-growing space located in Mill Lane Open Space. Co-designed with local partners, Mill Lane Garden Centre and Emmanuel Church of England Primary School the project builds on previous learnings from creating food-growing spaces in parks and aims to establish a replicable partnership model for future initiatives.

The **Southfleet Community Garden** transforms a large disused space in St Silas Estate, previously associated with anti-social behaviour, into a vibrant community food-growing hub. Co-designed with the local Tenants and Residents Association (TRA), the project aims to turn the underused area into a shared resource that fosters community cohesion and wellbeing.

We have introduced **local seedbanks in Camden libraries** to make food growing more accessible. Residents can collect seeds for free, grow vegetables, and return harvested seeds to replenish the seedbank. Libraries offer significant potential to engage children, young people, and adults in food growing, and seedbanks act as a gateway to deeper involvement, sparking educational and creative activities. A key partnership with OmVed Gardens Seed Saving Network has been instrumental in providing initial seed stock and practical guidance for growing and seed-saving, and they have delivered seed saving workshops, talks and seed swap sessions at the Camden Grower's Food Network.

These projects have reinforced a key insight: that local partners act as anchor institutions, creating the conditions for wider collaboration. When schools, voluntary sector organisations, and community groups connect through these anchors, they form networks that extend beyond a single project.

Practice Exploration: 5 Pancras Square library café

Through Camden's Food Mission and in partnership with Camden Libraries, and Lifeafterhummus Community Benefit Society, an underused space at 5 Pancras Square has been transformed into a community café. Using surplus food collected by volunteers (including local residents and Somers Town businesses), meals are cooked in the Lifeafterhummus kitchen and served as nutritious, affordable plant-based food—tackling food waste while building community connection, employability, skills and confidence.

The café has been enabled through blended partner funding, shared resources and the advantages of the 5 Pancras Square site (including existing security and infrastructure, allowing safe cash payments). Supported by partners including North London Waste Authority and ReLondon, the project demonstrates the value of community-led innovation and cross-council collaboration,

and how food can act as a connector for longer-term systemic change. As ReLondon’s Lamia Sbiti notes:

“*Too much perfectly edible food gets wasted in London, while many people cannot afford proper meals. Lifeafterhummus’ mission to bridge this gap is highly important.*”

What we’ve learned and our priorities for next year: deliver our missions requires creativity, flexible networked delivery, and scaling the enabling conditions for this way of working—working with partners to fund projects, making better use of social value agreements, and orienting funding to use a more diverse range of policy levers.

Practice Exploration: Challenge Prize

In 2025, Camden launched its first-ever Challenge Prize: a recurring innovation competition designed to generate bold solutions to complex problems, with the inaugural prize advancing the Food Mission by tackling food waste in the Hospitality and Food Service sector. The challenge invited individuals, startups, chefs and organisations to respond to three briefs—reducing surplus creation, embedding waste reduction as a daily workplace habit, and managing inedible food waste—and selected four finalists (LimeTrack, From Fork to Field, Carbontrac and ZeroWasteOS) to receive funding and support to prototype and scale, with a winner set to receive additional funding to launch or expand in Camden.

Designing and delivering the Prize was complex, with limited internal precedent, and required collaboration across Strategy and Design, Digital, Communications and Legal. A “just-in-

time” approach to bringing in specialist teams often clashed with established processes, reducing agility and sometimes requiring workarounds—highlighting the importance of building a multidisciplinary project team from the start. The work also showed that innovation needs deliberate outreach and relationship-building: existing partnerships were stronger around food redistribution, so the team relied on personal networks and cold outreach to engage new stakeholders, and used creative communications to secure judges, test-bed partners and experts on a limited budget.

What have we learned? “We need to define the problem space before moving to solutions and get the right people involved from the start. We need to make sign-off processes clearer.”

Priorities for next year: “We need to better connect projects and participating groups, reduce internal barriers to approving innovative work, and clarify governance and sign-off procedures.”

Make community assets open for local use

This ‘test and learn’ project is a partnership between the [O2 Centre](#), [Carib Eats](#) and Camden’s Food Mission to create **a community food studio** in the heart of Finchley Road, a space designed to bring people together around nutritious, affordable, and sustainable food. Supported by seed funding from Camden Council and rent-free space from [Landsec](#), the O2 Centre Landlord, this initiative is a powerful example of cross-sector collaboration, where corporate partners and community organisations work in new ways to deliver social impact.

For residents, the studio will become a community asset, a place to connect, learn, and share skills through food. For the O2 Centre, it activates a vacant space and strengthens local connections. The

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vision includes community wealth building through social enterprise, employability opportunities, and innovation in food projects that inspire future initiatives. At the launch event, 48 attendees included residents, 20 community groups and 7 businesses, with 15 community partners expressing an interest in partnership projects.

O2 Centre Director Ant Foran said:

“*The O2 Centre has been at the heart of the community for over 25 years. It is in our DNA to support initiatives like this. Camden’s Food Mission is something we’re incredibly passionate about and we want this future space to be a genuine community asset. A place to encourage young people come and spend time in, where everyone feels welcome.*”

The Borough of Sanctuary Food Hub is Camden’s first co-designed kitchen space for people seeking asylum and local residents. Developed through a year-long collaboration between Camden Council’s Food Mission, the Refugee Communities Team, UCL, FEAST With Us, STCA, and local architects, the hub opened during Refugee Week 2025 with a shared community meal. It transformed a café into a welcoming space where people can cook, eat, and connect.

Food insecurity among asylum seekers is shaped by systemic barriers, not just financial hardship. [By designing with asylum seekers rather than for them](#), the hub promotes dignity, inclusion, and agency. It reflects Camden’s Borough of Sanctuary commitment and the Food Mission’s goal of creating enabling conditions for systemic change.

Co-production builds trust and relevance but requires time and flexibility. Cross-sector collaboration is complex yet essential, and resilience is critical when facing challenges such as participant relocation and funding constraints. Despite these hurdles, creativity and shared commitment made the hub a success. Food is a lever for inclusion and systemic change, reinforcing Camden’s mission to create a food system that works for everyone.

Expanding and investing in financial wellbeing training / Additional advice capacity within food settings via Camden Advice Network

Following a successful pilot in 2021, Camden is investing £220,000 in a three-year **Financial Wellbeing programme** delivered by Citizens Advice Camden. This forms a core part of the Food Mission’s Money First approach and Camden’s wider financial inclusion agenda. The project builds financial confidence and resilience by embedding advice and education within council services and voluntary sector networks. It equips residents and volunteers to manage benefits, debt, and household budgets, creating a culture of early intervention and shared financial understanding. By integrating this model into food-focused community spaces, the programme aims to reduce reliance on emergency food support and strengthen long-term household stability.

Financial insecurity is a root cause of food poverty. Tackling it requires preventative advice and systemic integration, not just crisis support. The project links financial wellbeing with employment pathways through Good Work Camden and expands access by embedding advice in trusted community settings.

We are learning that multi-year investment is critical to shift from reactive to preventative approaches. Embedding financial advice within food systems builds trust and creates new opportunities for early intervention. Strengthening collaboration with partners such as Trussell Trust food banks is a priority for the next phase, ensuring advice reaches high-footfall sites and deepens integration at the neighbourhood level.

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Learning From: Feast With Us

Feast With Us (FEAST) is focused on supporting anyone experiencing food insecurity while using an intersectional approach to improve nutrition, reduce food waste and build a lasting community. In a 2024 survey (129 responses) of participants across nine hostels and community centres in Camden and Islington, UCL researchers tried to understand food security, nutritional impact, and user experience.

Food insecurity remains widespread, especially in hostels. Many participants reported skipping meals, reducing portion sizes, or going full days without food. Across nearly all venues, users report feeling well-nourished after meals, reporting improvements in their well-being and physical health. The meals are generally more nutritious and include more fruits and vegetables than what users might otherwise eat. The Community centre, Queen’s Crescent Community Association, have reported FEAST meals acting as social anchors. These learnings reaffirm our thinking in the food mission as activating community spaces around shared meals, which continues to be an important lever to change the food system in the borough.

| Our priorities for the coming year

For long term sustainability, food growing must be embedded into policy. We want to trial a **Right to Grow** to understand how Camden can support food growing in the long term.

To strengthen and extend the impact of Camden’s existing community gardens, we are **exploring the creation of a Roots to Neighbourhoods fund**. The fund would build on the skills, knowledge, and relationships

that community growers already hold, enabling them to work with residents to expand community food growing spaces on Camden-owned land.

In 2026, the Food Mission will develop scalable, school-led models that strengthen family engagement, improve food literacy, and enhance community resilience. **Building on Rhyl Kitchen Classroom’s initiatives**, we will capture, refine, and transfer effective practices such as shared cooking, community meal provision, food growing, and accredited learning, into a framework that other schools can adopt.

ASC services. At two of Camden’s Extra Care services, **we are planning to run a pilot with a partner VCS organisation to cook a lunchtime meal for the residents of the service, as well as opening the doors to the local community to attend as a drop-in lunch club.**

- To strengthen Camden’s food infrastructure and create conditions for a market-shaping approach, we have identified the development of **a Camden Food Hub** as a core priority. The Food Hub will serve as a collaborative platform that helps partners optimise logistics, reduce food waste, and enable joint working across the system. It will also enable collective buying and shared resourcing, supporting partners to influence local food markets and grow community-led food initiatives with greater scale and coherence.
- In 2026 **we will expand an integrated, neighbourhood-based support model** that strengthens Camden’s Money First approach and addresses structural drivers of poverty and economic exclusion. Building on existing delivery, we will work with partners to scale a coordinated offer that further embeds advice, employment support, and mental health provision within food settings, ensuring residents can access multiple forms of help in one trusted location. This will enhance caseworker capability and partnerships to deliver, personalised interventions, enabling residents to progress from food poverty and problem debt towards long-term financial resilience.

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- In 2026, the Food Mission and Healthy Weight programme will work with **Camden's markets and street traders** to shape local food environments that make healthier choices easier. By strengthening access to affordable, nutritious food in our markets and neighbourhoods, we will help tackle growing health and economic inequalities
- 2026 is a pivotal year for **the Camden Food Partnership** as we move from participation to co-design. Our focus is to activate the partnership by strengthening shared governance, clarifying strategic direction, and testing collaborative approaches that build confidence and momentum. We will consolidate the role of Catalyst Partners as drivers of system change, supporting new co-ops, activating community kitchens, and enabling others to lead within local food environments. Our Steering Group of community leaders, businesses, and academics will guide progress, champion collaborative working, and shape partner-led engagement, including participatory events, training, and cultural food celebrations.
- A key emphasis for 2026 is **supporting neighbourhood-level networks** such as One Kilburn and Kentish Town Connects. Strengthening these groups will unlock shared resources, improve referrals, and expand peer learning, helping residents access more coordinated support. We will grow community power, expanding networks of active citizens who have voice and agency to act. Through We Make Camden Kit funding and partnerships like Castlehaven, we will support resident-led innovation, food growing, community harvesting, and knowledge sharing.

Our Youth Mission

By 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure



| Why is this a Mission?

What if we lived in a borough where every young person has access to opportunities that make them safe and secure? Where their talents and ambitions translate into secure employment or entrepreneurialism, and where they form a wide network of relationships that support them to grow and develop into their adult life?

Camden is striving to be a borough where every young person, whatever their background, can access the opportunities they need to feel safe, secure, and able to succeed in the long term. This mission is grounded in the understanding that meaningful change requires collective effort. At the heart of our approach is co-production, bringing together young people, businesses, schools, public services, and community organisations as equal partners across three broad outcomes:

- Young people can access good jobs, training, and pathways into work.
- Young people have a voice in shaping their opportunities.
- Camden offers welcoming, supportive spaces where young people can access guidance, inspiration, and resources.

Camden is a borough of opportunity, with strong public services, a thriving business ecosystem, and a vibrant community sector. Yet entrenched inequality continues to limit access for many young people. The Youth Mission was established to address these inequities, recognising the lasting impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and long-term underinvestment in youth services and education.

We know there is no 'one size fits all' solution. Alongside universal provision, the Mission focuses on young people who face the greatest barriers to entering employment or training. In 2024, 1.8% of 16–17-year-olds were not in education, employment or training (NEET), higher than the London average but lower than England. Learning from

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our work so far has highlighted five priority groups whose children and young people needs are most complex:

- care-experienced young people (507 in 2024/25)
- in the Youth Justice System, (61 in 2024/25)
- young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, (1680 in 2024/25 and 273 in receipt of Exceptional Needs Grants)
- school non-attenders (16% in primary schools and in 26% secondary schools are persistently absent 2024/25)
- disabled children and young people (578 disabled children and young people aged 0-25 in 2024/25)

We need to respond to an evolving set of circumstances: a shifting labour market, changing government policy and funding, and the diverse ambitions of young people themselves. To succeed, the Mission must remain flexible, testing and learning to ensure these priority cohorts can build sustainable futures.

Meeting these challenges requires a long-term approach that unites stakeholders across sectors in a coordinated effort to deliver real, sustained change. This is not just a response to immediate pressures; it is a generational commitment. That is why we had set an interim target of 2025 to demonstrate measurable progress, while keeping our broader vision for the Mission's goals in 2030 firmly in sight.

| Mission level learning

As we approach the end of 2025 and the first phase of the Youth Mission, we are taking stock of what has been delivered, what young people have told us, and what this means for the next phase of the mission in 2026 and beyond. This reflection process is a central part of how we work, continually learning with children, young people,

partners and communities so that our mission remains grounded, ambitious and youth-led.

This year's activity has been shaped by a commitment to co-production. Across Camden, we have been working alongside children and young people to understand how opportunities, relationships and spaces in the borough are experienced day-to-day. Their insights, challenges and ideas are directly informing how the mission evolves.

How we listened and learned

We partnered with Khady's Dream, one of our Mission Ambassadors, to co-design and deliver engagement workshops with young people in Somers Town, Netherwood and through an online survey. Through these conversations, children and young people described Camden as a place full of opportunity yet one where opportunities can sometimes feel hard to find or reach.

Young people may not have heard of the "Youth Mission", but they recognised the staff, spaces and programmes they encounter every day. Their message was clear: the Mission is experienced most strongly through relationships when someone believes in them, communicates clearly, and gives them the chance to try something new.

Young people told us:

“ It feels like Camden actually cares about us not all councils do.”

“ Sometimes the opportunities feel hidden.”

“ I want to do more, but things like travel make it harder.”

They spoke about the confidence they have gained, the mentors and youth workers who supported them at difficult moments, and opportunities that helped shift their sense of what's possible. They also highlighted what needs to improve: clearer pathways, personalised support, better communication, and a stronger offer for young people who are currently not connected to services.

Across the engagement, young people said they want:

- opportunities that feel reachable
- supportive adults they can trust
- safe, representative spaces with relatable role models
- pathways aligned to their aspirations, including entrepreneurship
- communication that is simple, timely and youth-centred

These reflections are shaping our understanding of what the Youth Mission must prioritise as we transition into its next phase:

Youth participation and agency

We have made progress in creating spaces for young people to influence decisions, co-design initiatives, and contribute to community life. The learning from this year suggests that the next phase must deepen inclusive participation, ensuring young people facing the greatest barriers are meaningfully involved.

Sustainable resourcing and investment

Projects this year drew on a wider mix of funding streams. This has reinforced the need for a sustainable, diverse funding model particularly as we look to scale youth-led innovation and long-term opportunities.

Values-led youth leadership

Young people are stepping into leadership roles rooted in equity, collaboration and community. The mission will continue nurturing leadership that is not only about individual development but also about positive impact for others.

Practice Exploration: We Make Camden kit and other grants

Grant making to citizens and VCSE organisations is an important systems lever used to catalyse mission activities in the borough. With varying grant sizes, We Make Camden - Kit (< £2k), Growth Grant (£2 - 5k) and Project fund (£5 - 20k) - they are helping create strong local momentum.

Since the inception of missions, and for the first four cohorts of the We Make Camden Kit, a participatory grant making program jointly delivered by Camden Citizens, Camden Council, Camden Giving and Camden businesses, has distributed over £1 million in the borough across 492 grants, 58% were for citizen-led projects. Of the citizens, 53% led a community project for the first time with the support of the kit. This is part of the participatory approach across the four missions which aims to empower residents and communities to shape their local neighbourhoods and decisions.

In a recent evaluation of the We Make Camden kit, the positive impact on wellbeing and confidence of participants, especially among young leaders, stood out. The resident panellists, who help decide the grant allocation also report a similar wellbeing and confidence boost as one of them shared,

“ I used to think I wouldn't be able to change the community with one voice but after Camden Giving I believe that we can all make a change slowly but surely, if we do it together”.

Within We Make Camden's grantmaking framework, the successful projects who either already are or go on to register as organisations have further opportunities to grow. The growth grant, also delivered as a participatory grant by Camden Giving,

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supports existing WMC kit projects based on their track record. In the year 4, 27% of the grants (i.e. 35 out of 127) were awarded to successful WMC kit grantees to continue their projects in the borough. Similarly, the We Make Camden project fund, a separate fund administered by Camden Council with grant size between £5-20k, also received interest from past WMC kit grantees and supported 13 kit grantees and 2 growth fund grantees. These funds collectively provide a locus for continued community action in the borough and contribute to learning about what missions mean to our residents given their agility to stay responsive to local needs in the borough.

| Project level learning

The following section highlights learning from a selection of ongoing projects and initiatives. These insights will inform the continued development of the Youth Mission and contribute to Camden’s broader approach to delivering mission-driven work across the borough.

Our Universal Offer

Camden STEAM has delivered its most impactful year to date, with a strong focus on supporting the Youth Mission priority cohorts. Over **13,000 unique students** engaged in high-quality STEAM activities across Camden, with nearly **20,000 student engagements** enabled through the partnership. The number of participating schools almost doubled from **26 to 51**, strengthening reach into priority communities. More than **500 work experience** placements were mobilised, providing meaningful routes into employment for young people facing the greatest barriers. The programme is now supported by **73 STEAM** pledge partners and over **200 STEAM ambassadors**, with **114**

companies delivering activities in Camden, helping to widen access, raise aspirations and improve economic opportunity for young people most in need.

STEAM Work Experience student

“ I enjoyed listening to professionals talk about their journey, making me realise that there is much more you can achieve outside of your education. The best thing was also meeting new people, interacting with them and spending time the whole week. The team project helped me build confidence and learn how to use time and being organised. I also made good connection between my teammates.’

– Google placement, aged 17

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 2025, the Connexions community team worked with **420** young people, providing **2044** individual contacts, while the schools team supported approximately **1,300** 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 2025 and 2024, up from 98.4% in 2023**.

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:

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- Every young person is offered work experience during post-16 education to build real-world skills and industry insights.
- In **2024/25, this support helped 440** 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.
 - In **2024/25, 137** young people started apprenticeships
 - **Over 300** young people underwent construction training at the Euston Skills Centre, equipping health services, housing advice, and financial support when needed. them for careers in the growing infrastructure sector.

Youth Justice Service – Paid Work Experience

Camden’s Paid Work Experience (PWE) programme provides flexible, London Living Wage employment for children known to the Youth Justice Service, supporting them to re-engage with education, training and employment while reducing the risk of reoffending. Since 2020, **22** young people have taken part across 10 local employers, the majority (16) of whom were NEET (not in education, employment or training) at the point of referral.

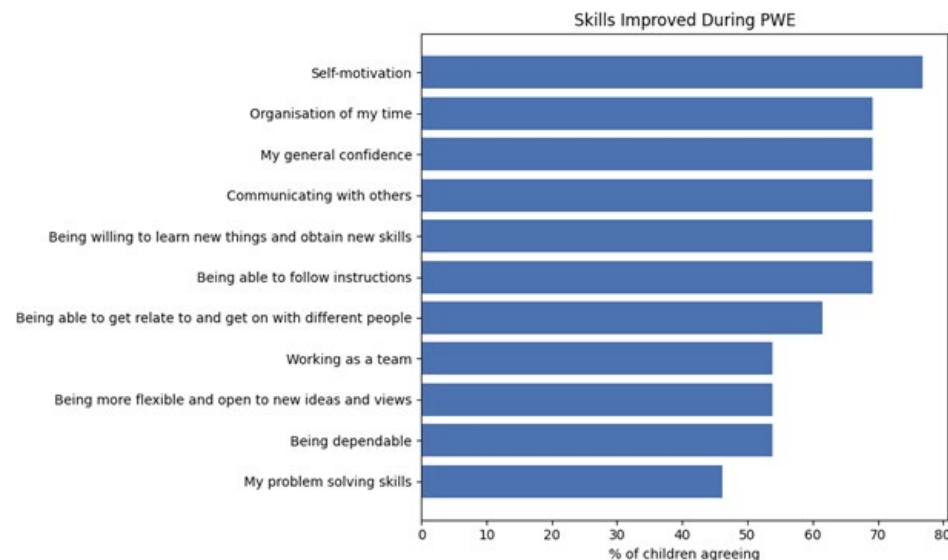
The programme has delivered strong outcomes. By April 2025, NEET numbers had reduced from **16 to 3 young people**—an 81% reduction. All children who were in college or at risk of becoming NEET maintained an education, training or employment destination, giving the programme a 100% ETE retention rate for this group. Global Majority young people also benefitted strongly, with **100% engaged in ETE**, helping to counter wider labour-market inequalities.

The intervention shows early evidence of reducing offending. Only one young person reoffended within 12 months of starting their placement, producing a **4.8% reoffending rate**, compared with the most recent Camden rate of 50% and the national rate of 32.5%. Notably, no child

committed theft or robbery after entering PWE, despite one-third having previous convictions for acquisitive crime.

Children reported significant improvements in confidence and work readiness. Average self-ratings increased from **2.84 to 4.13**, with **92%** describing themselves as “very ready” for work. Feedback highlights increased motivation, positive identity development and a sense of belonging—key components of the Child First approach.

Figure 12.1: Skills improved during Paid Work Experience (PWE)



A major learning theme is the **value of flexibility**. Tailored hours, phased starts and on-site pastoral support allowed children with complex needs, SEND or trauma histories to participate successfully in environments they would otherwise struggle to access. This adaptability was central to sustained engagement.

Limitations include incomplete historical data, limited tracking of placement duration, and very low participation from girls (2 of 22),

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indicating the need for wider vocational options. Strengthening follow-up support and improving data systems would further enhance impact and help quantify cost-effectiveness.

Overall, Camden’s PWE programme demonstrates that **paid, flexible and relational employment opportunities can significantly improve life chances for highly vulnerable children**—raising ETE engagement, reducing offending and supporting the development of a positive pro-social identity.

Head Start into Higher Education Programme – Camden Virtual School x ICET

Care-experienced young people (CEYP) continue to face some of the most entrenched barriers to higher education, **with only around 15% progressing to university by age 19, compared with 47% of their peers**. Camden’s Head Start into Higher Education programme was designed in response to this inequity, recognising that existing support for CEYP is inconsistent, fragmented, and rarely grounded in long-term relational practice. Funded through a **seven-year investment** from the Inner Circle Educational Trust (ICET) and delivered in partnership with the Camden Virtual School (CVS), the programme currently supports **30 CEYP** who demonstrate academic potential at Levels 2 and 3. Each young person is matched with the Educational Navigator (EN), a relational role that provides continuity, personalised guidance and support across key transition points. Young people were selected using clear attainment criteria at KS4 and post-16, recognising that participants would enter at different educational stages rather than as a single representative cohort.

An independent evaluation led by the University of Birmingham and National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) is assessing the programme through a mixed-methods, co-created approach. Early findings reinforce the importance of holistic, consistent and stigma-aware support, alongside flexible pathways that recognise

that success for CEYP may include, but is not limited to, access to higher education.

Compared to the national picture, Camden’s CEYP are significantly more likely to be Black (around eight times more likely), Asian (two and a half times more likely), over the age of 16, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (three times more likely). These insights show that Camden’s CEYP cohort looks very different from the national picture and faces distinct contexts and challenges.

Learning from Year One points toward strengthening cohort identity, introducing individual support plans, and planning for long-term continuity of the EN role. These insights will inform the next evaluation phases, which will track individual educational journeys and compare outcomes with broader CEYP populations.

Camden Primary Schools Career Day

The Camden Primary Schools Careers Day 2025 engaged over **200 Year 4 pupils from 22 schools**, including Robson House and Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, with **20 employer partners across STEAM industries** such as healthcare, creative industries, construction, logistics, and public service. The event at the British Library offered interactive workshops, employer-led stalls, and hands-on activities, designed to broaden horizons, spark curiosity, and connect classroom learning to real-world careers for children in Camden.

Throughout the Careers Day, pupils connected activities directly to school subjects such as maths, science, design technology, and computing. Hands-on experiences from robot dogs from University College London’s Computer Science department and exploring 3D-printed bones to building structures and engaging in creative workshops enhanced problem-solving, teamwork, and confidence. One pupil reflected,

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“*The robot dog was amazing – I want to make one,*” highlighting how interactive activities sparked curiosity and potential career aspirations.

Teachers noted increased ambition and engagement, particularly in STEAM subjects, and pupils demonstrated leadership by sharing their learning with peers when they returned to their schools. Employers reported that pupils’ thoughtful questions and enthusiasm exceeded expectations. As one partner noted,

“*Designing a hands-on activity for this age group was a fun challenge – they absolutely loved it,*” emphasising the value of early outreach and interactive engagement.

The event demonstrates that early, interactive exposure to careers inspires curiosity, builds confidence, and connects classroom learning to real-world possibilities. Lessons from the day will inform future initiatives to strengthen social mobility, broaden pupils’ horizons, and embed early careers learning across Camden’s primary schools.

Camden Future Talent

Camden Future Talent delivers inclusive pathways into education, employment and training for young people, working across Council services and with a wide range of local partners. In 2024/25, the team worked with over 60 Council services and external employers, including schools, cultural institutions, FE and HE providers, and employers such as the Francis Crick Institute, the University of London, Lime e-bikes and Working Men’s College.

Originally focused on apprenticeships, the team has expanded its offer to include internships, structured work experience and enhanced employment support for **16–24 year olds**.

The team operates as a single point of contact for young people and families, handling enquiries, with clear referral routes to specialist

support where needed. This includes new targeted provision for care-experienced young people aged 17–25 through a new government-funded project, Full Potential Camden, which has already registered over 80 young people. The programme provides one-to-one employment and training support, confidence building, wellbeing and mentoring, employability training, and access to work experience, apprenticeships and job opportunities.

In 2024/25, the team delivered work experience placements for eligible young people aged 18+, ranging from one-week tasters to three-month placements. For those needing additional support, Camden Future Talent provides ongoing employment support, achieving **84% completion rates and 68% of those involved progressing into employment**, apprenticeships or further education or training.

Alongside delivery, the team plays a strategic role in embedding inclusive recruitment, expanding placement opportunities and strengthening progression routes across the borough, supporting the Youth Mission and Inclusive Economy priorities to improve long-term outcomes for young people.

| Priorities for the coming year

This section outlines our priorities and milestones for 2026–2030, whilst still reflecting on our journey, achievements, and progress through 2025.

Place-based support and opportunity for all young people

The Youth Mission will take a consistent, place-based approach across Camden to ensure children and young people have equitable access to opportunities, support and influence wherever they live in the borough. We will continue to work alongside existing youth and community activity across the borough, strengthening local infrastructure while sharing learning across the borough. This approach will ensure that local strengths shape delivery.

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Youth voice and participation

We will continue to embed meaningful participation at every level, ensuring children and young people are supported to shape decisions that affect their lives and communities. Participation will be inclusive, accessible and rooted in neighbourhoods, with clear pathways for young people to move from involvement to leadership.

Strong systems around young people

The Youth Mission will continue to build on the strong partnerships already in place, strengthening joined-up systems that create real opportunities children and young people from our priority and universal cohorts. Our Mission Ambassadors including Khady's Dream, the British Museum and the Roundhouse will continue to champion the mission, model inclusive practice, and open up pathways into participation, leadership and work. Working alongside schools, neighbourhood organisations and institutions, we will deepen collaboration, share learning and ensure support around young people is connected, accessible and rooted in place.

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Endnotes

- 1 <https://medium.com/@changebydesign/making-the-map-navigational-learning-in-missions-81f77838dd1e>
- 2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/small-business-access-to-finance/small-business-access-to-finance>
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