



**We Make Camden
VCS Investment Programme
2024 – 2031**

Community Partner Fund

1st year evaluation report

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November 2025





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Foreword (Cllr Shah)



Foreword from Cllr Nadia Shah, Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Equalities and Cohesion

In Camden, we have a rich history of coming together to tackle inequality and take action as a community. We call this our *rebellious spirit*—the determination to pull together to make positive change happen. This spirit is what makes our borough unique and it is central to *We Make Camden*—our shared vision for the borough, shaped in collaboration with people across Camden. At its heart is a commitment to work differently: as partners, not just providers, and to ensure that community voices lead the way in shaping and creating the future we aspire to.

As part of our long-term commitment to working with Camden's Voluntary and Community Sector, in 2023, we made a bold promise: to invest for the long term. The Community Partner Fund, a major programme of our wider £4.1 million per annum VCS Investment Programme, is the first step in delivering that promise – a seven-year commitment to organisations deeply rooted in our communities.

This report shows the extraordinary impact of organisations that we are proud to work in partnership with over the long-term. In just one year, our partners have supported over 140,000 residents, mobilised thousands of volunteers, and created spaces where people feel connected and empowered. They have helped tackle inequality, supported young people into opportunities, and strengthened neighbourhoods through creativity and collaboration. This report celebrates all of the work, dedication and commitment that has made this happen.

Looking ahead, our ambition is clear: to keep building a borough where everyone feels they belong and has the power to shape their future. That means continuing to trust and invest in our communities, amplifying their voices, and working together to achieve Camden's missions—from tackling poverty and inequality to creating sustainable, thriving neighbourhoods.

Camden is now recognised nationally as a progressive grant maker, featured in best practice publications and the Government's Civil Society Covenant – and we're committed to continuously improving our approach. This recognition reflects our ambition to doing things differently and to shifting power by—placing trust, collaboration and long-term investment at the heart of our approach.

I want to thank every organisation, volunteer and resident who has contributed to this work. Together, we are proving that Camden's rebellious spirit is alive and well – and that by working in partnership, we can create a fairer, stronger and more inclusive borough for all.

Executive Summary

This is the evaluation report for the first year of Camden's 7-year Community Partner Fund, which is part of the We Make Camden VCS Investment Programme. The report aims to bring together insights from organisations about their impact in the first year of the programme, 2024-25.

Organisations funded through Camden's Community Partner Fund lead essential work in Camden's neighbourhoods, bringing together residents, building trusting relationships and providing vital activities, spaces and services that contribute to Camden's missions and make a difference in people's lives. This is demonstrated through the highlights and successes of the last year, working with 140,000 residents and mobilising 2,425 volunteers. Through this evaluation, we've captured impact, challenges and opportunities for the future, aligned with our We Make Camden strategic priorities.

There is strong evidence that the community spaces and activities being provided by Community Partners are creating connections and belonging in neighbourhoods and supporting happier and healthier communities. There are impactful examples of how residents have got involved in volunteering and social action, getting their voices heard, but also building skills and pathways from volunteering to employment.

Feedback from the first year demonstrates the importance of long-term, unrestricted funding for the resilience of organisations and their impact with residents. In an uncertain and challenging environment, Camden's approach to funding has provided stability and security for organisations, allowing them to plan strategically for the long term, and has enabled flexibility to respond and adapt to the needs of communities. Organisations funded through the Community Partner Fund have demonstrated their ability to leverage a huge amount of additional resource for the borough, bringing in a further £10 for every £1 granted through this programme.

The variety and depth of partnerships and collaboration demonstrate how no organisation works in isolation, and how impact is amplified through collaboration with a wide range of partners to increase the opportunities available to residents and connect people, activities and resources.

Organisations are working in a very difficult environment. There are significant challenges for organisations around funding to keep up with increasing demand for their services, staff capacity, recruitment and retention, with risks of burnout in the face of rising needs and complexity. Issues such as premises, governance and infrastructure needed to run a sustainable organisation also persist.

Community Outcomes: key learning and opportunities to explore further

- There is more that could be done to support Community Partners to share their experiences of what works and to enable their communities to have a voice in shaping policies and practice that impact on them.
- There is an appetite from partners to be involved in strategic conversations about the We Make Camden missions, recognising they are often time poor, but expertise rich. These partners are well placed to play a leadership role in shaping the approach to achieving Camden's Missions.
- There are lots of great examples of how organisations are supporting young people into volunteering, training and employment. We are exploring opportunities for access to apprenticeships for VCS organisations and working with infrastructure partners like Young Camden Foundation to determine what is needed in Camden. These feel like important approaches to consider as Camden develops its Inclusive Growth work.

VCS Outcomes: Key learning and opportunities

- There are clear benefits of long-term, unrestricted funding for delivering the best outcomes for Camden's residents and communities. As a council, we should consider how this learning could be applied to other grants and commissioned services.
- We will keep advocating for the importance of long-term, unrestricted funding with other funders, through networks such as [IVAR's \(Institute for Voluntary Action Research\) open and trusting grant-making](#) initiative.
- Funding awarded through the Community Partner Fund has provided a significant investment for organisations, who have been able to use it to leverage further funding – for every £1 donated partners have attracted £10 of funding. Despite this, organisations are still facing considerable challenges including a more difficult funding landscape and increasing costs. This will continue to present a significant adaptive challenge for the Council and the sector.

Our Grant Making Approach: Key learning and opportunities

Camden is recognised across the country as a progressive grant maker – featuring as a case study in national publications on best practice. To understand the impact of our grants on our communities and VCS partners we have developed an evaluation approach to our We Make Camden VCS Investment programme underpinned by a Theory of Change. We recognise that capturing this impact, sharing our learning with partners and ensuring that community voices and insights continue to shape local policy and practice are key. This first year evaluation of our Community Partner Fund is the first step in this journey. Moving forward we aim to support reflection, learning and insights from our Community Partners by providing tools and training for them to capture data and tell their impact stories with our partners Rocket Science and VAC.

Part 1: Background

In Camden, we have a rich history of coming together to tackle inequality and take action together as a community. We call this our “**rebellious spirit**”.



This spirit and the way we pull together in times of crisis or to make positive change happen, are the things that make our borough unique. **We Make Camden**, is our renewed vision for our borough, developed in collaboration with people across Camden. Collaborating deeply with Camden’s Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is central to this vision and the way we work. Camden’s VCS plays a critical role in the life of the borough and has consistently demonstrated an ability to use its independence, creativity and responsiveness to tackle inequality, empower communities and take action.

In 2024 Camden launched a new 7-year grants programme designed to create the conditions to support a thriving VCS in the borough. This new £4m per year **We Make Camden Voluntary and Community Sector Investment Programme 2024-2031** recognises the critical importance of funding the VCS to ensure a thriving, responsive and active tapestry of organisations, deeply rooted in our communities.

Our new funding programme serves as an ecosystem of funding to VCS organisations who can help deliver this vision - ranging from multi-year core funding, project funding and organisational support. The text box below shows the range of different grants provided.

The Community Partner Fund is our largest funding programme within the VCS Investment Programme providing 7 years of investment to 37 partners amounting to nearly £2m in unrestricted funding to organisations a year.

Camden's VCS Investment Programme 2024-2031

Grants programmes:

Multi-year unrestricted core funding

- Community Partner Fund – long-term core funding for key community organisations, to strengthen Camden's communities
- Camden Advice Network – funding a network of advice charities to support and empower residents

Community Projects Funding

- We Make Camden Project Fund – grants for community-led projects that address local needs and contribute to the We Make Camden missions
- We Make Camden Kit – micro-grants empowering residents to launch small-scale social action ideas that make Camden a better place
- Cohesion Fund – small grants for events/projects that bring diverse communities together – fostering dialogue, trust and unity across Camden

Organisational Foundations Funding

- Infrastructure Fund – supporting infrastructure organisations that build the capacity, collaboration and resilience of Camden's VCS
- Organisational Sustainability and Development – one-off grants to help local charities become more sustainable and well-run

Our Theory of Change

During the first year of the new We Make Camden VCS Investment programme we worked with Community Partners and VCS Infrastructure Partners to design our approach to evaluating the programme. As part of this we developed a [Theory of Change](#) which underpins our evaluation approach and draws on the Camden Missions.

The outcomes and impact for Camden residents, communities and the VCS are outlined below. This Community Partner Fund first year evaluation report will help us track progress against what we set out to achieve over the course of seven years. This report provides progress in year 1.

Theory of Change - What we will achieve

Intended Community Outcomes

- Improved access to a wide range of services and activities helps people to be happy and healthy.
- Builds community strengths and a deeper sense of belonging across Camden's diverse communities through activities and community spaces that bring people together.
- Greater opportunities for community members to volunteer, lead projects and to have a voice on issues that are important to them.

Intended VCS Outcomes

- Improved, reliable access to tools and support to explore new ideas, turn their ideas into social action, diversify income sources and allocate money where needed.
- Create an environment of cross-stakeholder collaboration to tackle social challenges across the programme, enabling a more joined up offer for residents.
- Support identification and management of key risks with a focus on key areas of a well-run, sustainable organisation such as finance, governance, strategic planning and delivery, workforce development and impact evaluation.
- Create a shared understanding of the community and develop systemic solutions by sharing quality data and insights among VCS and Camden Council to support in shaping policy and practice regarding key social challenges by recognising experiences of inequalities.
- Facilitate leadership of trustees, managers, staff and volunteers to reflects the diversity of our communities and neighbourhoods.

Impact

- Camden residents lives are improved through a contribution to tackling root causes of inequalities
- Camden residents feel a sense of control for their lives
- Camden residents feel a connection and belonging to the area
- Camden residents have healthier and happier communities

We Make Camden Strategic Context

The We Make Camden Community Investment Programme has been designed to align with our strategic vision as a council, with connections to We Make Camden, the Camden Missions and our Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Our VCS partners play a critical role in helping us achieve our ambitions.

Camden's Missions

The Community Partner Fund is strongly connected to the We Make Camden's **missions**. These Missions are bold, long-term, collective goals that help bring people together to tackle the borough's most important and complex challenges.

The four missions are:



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



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



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



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

This first year evaluation has enabled us to map the many ways in which Community Partners are contributing to and helping to shape these missions (see appendix 2). The case studies throughout this document illustrate some of the ways in which this is happening.

Often, these partners, who are deeply rooted in our communities, are working across multiple missions, taking a holistic approach to people's lives. The learning captured here will enable us to better understand these missions and the huge contribution Community Partners and other VCS organisations make to realising them.

The Way We Work

The approach to partnership established through the Community Partner Fund is grounded in Camden's 'The Way We Work' commitments.

“We want to work with people and organisations with first-hand knowledge of problems, with the Council taking a partnership role but responding to new information and ideas from our communities.”

The Way We Work

The Way We Work is our renewed vision for how we, as Camden Council will work as an organisation to respond to the ambitions set out in **We Make Camden** as we face new challenges in the years to come. This document and We Make Camden recognises that the people and institutions of Camden make it the special place that it is.

The Community Partner Fund embodies this change of direction, supporting our ambitions to change the relationship between council and community from service provider to partner and enabler.



Providing a long-term unrestricted investment to Community Partners has helped to shift our relationship, to work with partners not just as 'deliverers' of our vision, but as strategic partners – able to shape the agenda, provide insights on challenges from different perspectives and amplify the voices of the diverse communities they serve.

The findings from this year one evaluation have shown us that long term unrestricted funding has enabled a stronger, more strategic relationship to be built. This spirit of partnership and collaboration comes out strongly in this evaluation. Capturing the energy, knowledge and experience of these Community Partners will enable us to build strong community leadership and work collaboratively to tackle some of our biggest social challenges as a borough.

“Long-term investment from Camden Council demonstrates trust in our approach and sends a strong message to other funders and partners. It helps us play a stronger leadership role locally, contributing to Camden's missions on Young People, Diversity, Estates and Neighbourhoods, and tackling Loneliness.”

Elfrida Rathbone Camden

About the Community Partner Fund

The Community Partner Fund provides seven-year unrestricted funding to strategic partners in Camden who are deeply rooted in their communities with a focus on neighbourhoods and equalities. Grants started in April 2024 and run for seven years.

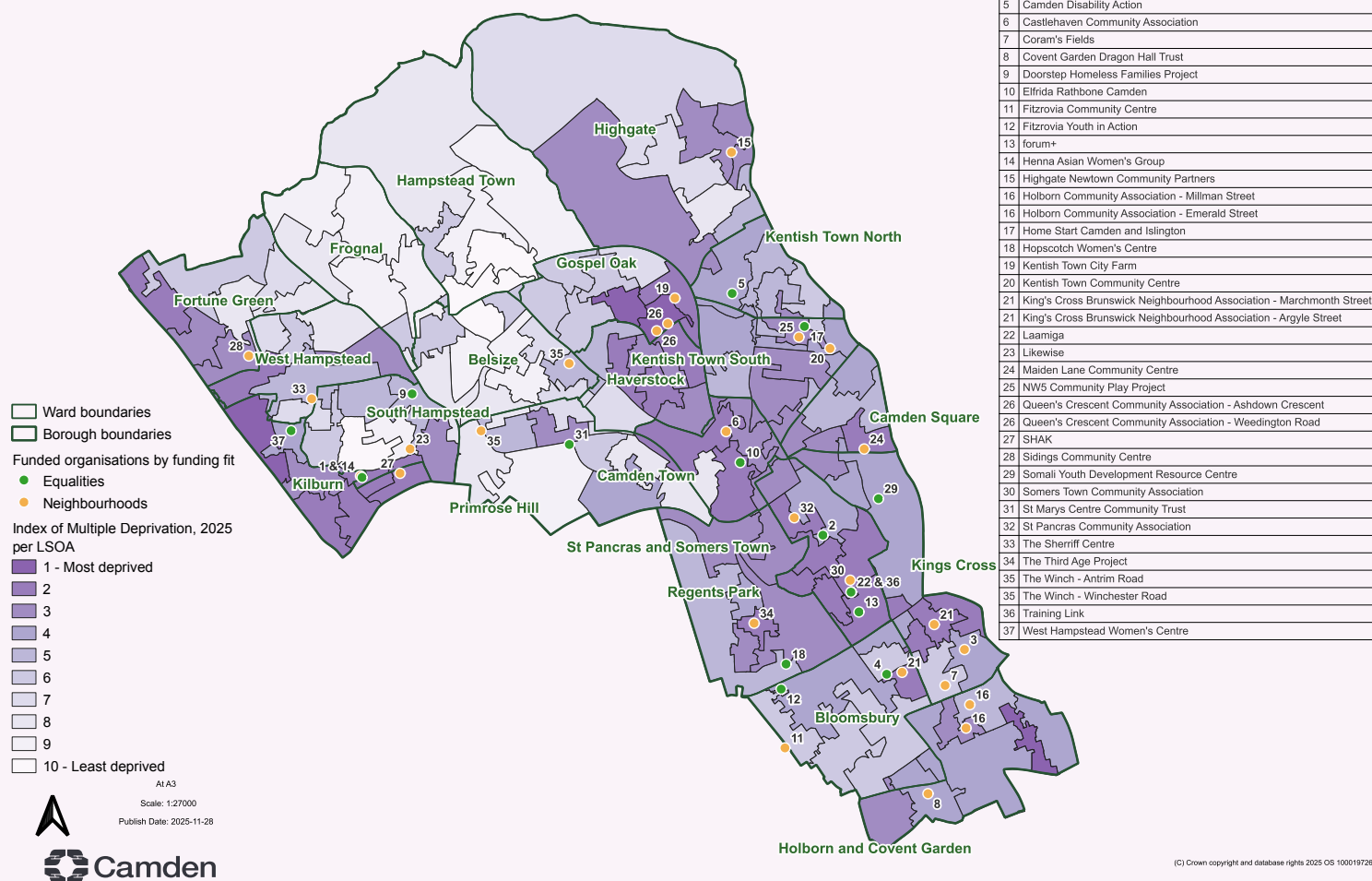
Neighbourhoods

Organisations with a strong connection to place and a clear understanding of their local communities and their needs. They are often running community spaces in the most deprived areas of Camden, recognising and building community strength.

Equalities

Organisations led by and for Camden's diverse communities, particularly those experiencing multiple inequalities. These organisations often work borough-wide, but many also have a strong neighbourhood focus.

Camden Map of Community Partner Organisations and Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025



About this Evaluation

This evaluation draws on several sources of data:

- An **annual update** form was completed by Community Partners in April 2025. 37 forms were received. In addition, our 3 Infrastructure Partners also completed an annual update form.
- Notes from an **annual reflection conversation** between 36 of the funded partners and their key contact in the Community Partnerships Team
- Partners were invited to shared additional **case studies** with us. 13 partners shared additional materials
- **Photo-journalist case studies** with four Community Partners supported by West Creative

More information about our methodology can be found in appendix 1.

Learning and analysis is set out in sections below which focus on:

- Community Outcomes
- VCS Outcomes
- Our Grant Making approach

We are grateful for all the information Community Partners shared with us. Sitting behind this report are lots more insights, case studies and reflections. The evaluation gives a flavour of all the work being carried out by partners. For more information on each partner and their work please do visit their website.

Community Partner Fund in numbers

37 organisations



2,425 volunteers



Supported 140,000
individuals in
Camden



Employing more than 400 people
in a wide range of roles

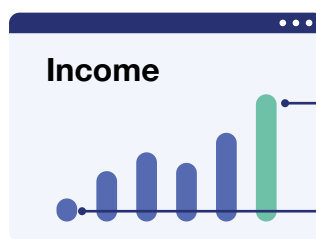
Unrestricted Funding - the multiplier effect 2024

For every £1 we donate, charities bring in £10 to support Camden communities



All Community Partners are small to medium sized Camden charities who are deeply rooted in Camden communities.

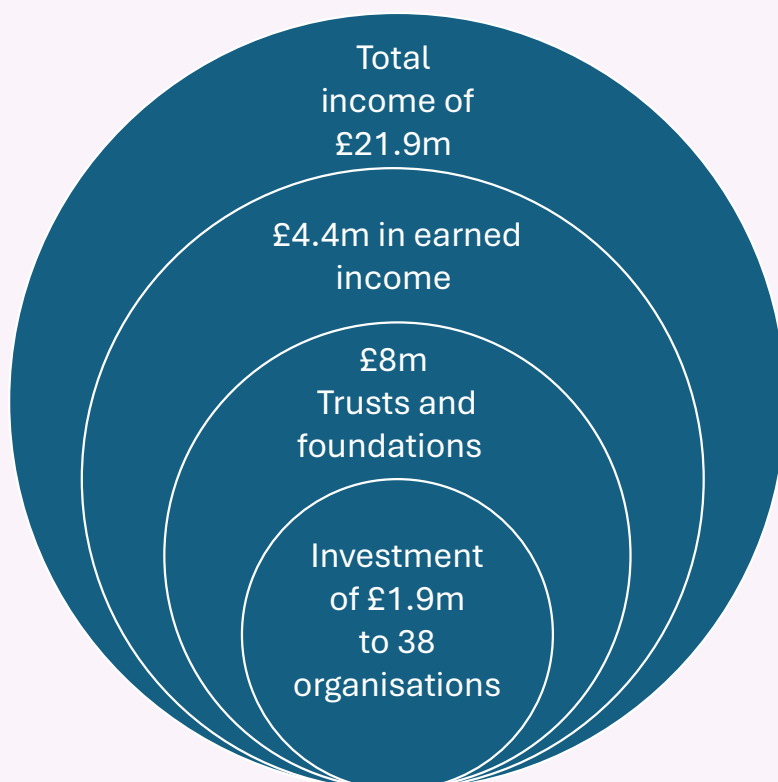
The smallest organisations have income of less than £100,000 and the largest has an income of £2.7m per year.



Largest
£2.7 million

Smallest
less than
£100,000

They have been able to leverage in significant external investment to Camden's communities. Our analysis found that for every £1 we give through a grant, charities bring in a further £10 to support Camden communities.



The figures represent income for 37 Community Partners for their most recent end of year accounts as of February 2025.

Part 2: Community Outcomes

This section focuses on the following
Community Outcomes of our Theory of Change.

Theory of Change Community Outcome: Improved access to a range of services and activities helps people to be happy and healthy

Theory of Change Community Outcome: Builds community strengths and a deeper sense of belonging across Camden's diverse communities through activities and community spaces that bring people together.



In this section we will look at the community impacts of The Community Partner Fund. This will focus on how Community Partners:

- Build **community strength** through activities and community spaces that bring people together and their contribution to:
 - The Camden Estates and Neighbourhoods mission
- **Enable social action** and volunteering and their contribution to:
 - The Camden Youth mission, developing youth leadership and opportunities for young people
 - Volunteering pathways to employment
- **Enable community voice**
- Contribute to **tackling the root causes of inequalities** and the Camden Diversity mission

Building Community Strength

Community Partners are creating welcoming, local spaces where people can connect with others from their community. These spaces create a sense of belonging, build connections and provide activities and advice to their communities. They enable individuals and communities to tackle difficult issues early and are a huge resource to the community and the council in terms of a preventative approach that strengthens health and wellbeing.

Across the 37 Community Partners, a huge range of activities and services are being delivered. From chair-based yoga to regular youth clubs. From coaching and employment support through to neighbourhood conversations. From food projects which enable neighbourhoods to share a meal together through to digital inclusion support. The case studies shared in this report show the powerful contribution our Community Partners make to supporting community strength, belonging and support.

“Our Community Activities Programme continues to play a vital role in improving health and wellbeing for local residents—particularly older and elderly people at high risk of poor social and health outcomes without our support.”

Abbey Community Centre

“We are incredibly proud to have run a successful breakfast club at Kentish Town School, creating a warm and welcoming space for families at the start of the day [...] With a focus on wellbeing and community, we provided a variety of wholesome breakfast options alongside board games and activities that encouraged interaction and a positive start to the morning. It's been a rewarding experience to support families in this way and help foster a strong, inclusive school community.”

Kentish Town Community Centre

Castlehaven Community Association

[Castlehaven](#) are based in the heart of Camden Town. They provide safe, inclusive community spaces and activities for all ages, responding to social, health, recreational and educational needs.

Castlehaven are using their grant to:

- Reduce loneliness and isolation in the community by designing social activities into all programmes and by developing partnerships with marginalised groups.
- Establish a rich programme of green therapies for Green Social Prescribing.
- Develop their volunteer programme, with volunteer recruitment and training schemes within all their services. Calthorpe supported 81 volunteers in the first year of this funding.
- Develop their advice offer, in partnership with the London Irish Centre.



Watch this 5 minute [film](#) about their Ageactivity 60+ project and the benefits this brings in terms of friendships, mental and physical health.



Camden Missions: Estates and neighbourhoods

Community Partners are key to achieving the mission of healthy, sustainable and creative neighbourhoods where everyone feels they belong. Being locally based and community-led helps to build trusting relationships. This is especially important for people who have faced barriers to accessing services elsewhere, and being supported by an organisation that is representative of the community and takes a tailored approach is important to building trust.

“Our engagement model prioritises meaningful relationships, early intervention, and preventative support. Through daily activities, informal check-ins, and outreach, we serve as the first point of contact for many older adults seeking assistance. This early engagement often leads to timely referrals to health, housing, and social services, ensuring that emerging issues are addressed promptly and effectively. The impact of this approach is clearly reflected in our latest annual survey, where 100% of respondents [115 people] reported an increased feeling of connection and sense of belonging to the community as a result of participating in TAP activities. In addition, 98% reported that their overall general health and wellbeing improved.”

Third Age Project – who work with older people in the Regent’s Park area

“Throughout the year, Forum+ held regular social events and activities which are designed to improve health and wellbeing and reduce social isolation for LGBTQ+ people.”

Forum+ who work with the LGBTQ+ community across Camden

“We are especially proud of our ability to deliver deeply person-centred support — whether it’s a young person gaining employment through our music studio, or an older resident regaining confidence through community fitness, or a struggling parent finding relief through our wraparound foodbank and advice services.”

Queen’s Crescent Community Association

Because of the role organisations play in the community and their ability to build people’s skills and confidence, they are also **equipping people to have a say** on issues affecting their community or have **wider influence** on their local area.

The Winch

The Winch run community spaces in Swiss Cottage and Belsize and work in communities across North Camden, with children and young people aged 0-25 and their families. Their mission *is to help each child succeed, regardless of their circumstances, by giving them the opportunities and support they need.*



They build strong foundations for neighbourhoods with strong approaches to supporting communities to design and lead projects that make a difference and in supporting young people's voices in decision making. They also provide direct support to those in crisis, requiring emergency accommodation or experiencing domestic abuse.

The Winch's The Good Neighbourhood Project is a standout example of their approach to community-led development.

“In its first phase, the initiative engaged more than 300 residents through festivals, workshops, and performances in partnership with local organisations.”

The Winch invite everyone aged 14+ who lives or studies in the Swiss Cottage or South Hampstead area to help shape a greener, friendlier and more connected community- and join the debate about what makes a good neighbourhood. A strong equalities focus that involves tackling racial injustices and poverty through a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion lens runs through all their work.

Holborn Community Association

“ We think that [we have] made a big difference to the shape, feel and content of Holborn Vision which centres residents and children’s needs in a way it didn’t before. This in turn has helped maintain HCA relationships with developers locally who continue to engage and seek views on new schemes - sometimes with added support for activities.”

Holborn Community Association (HCA) has equipped residents to engage with and shape their neighbourhood:

“ Increasingly we act to facilitate people’s direct involvement and influence upon wider issues in the area.”



Holborn Community Association supported the planning team and consultants to engage groups from across the area in meaningful ways that were fun. Using their existing trust and connections in the community, they gained insights from under 5s, families, older adults and everyone in between! As a result, the Holborn Vision now emphasises:

“ Child led design, residents and social infrastructure- a major change in emphasis from past iterations.”

Special Delivery

The busy Sherriff Centre is making a difference with its debt advice, food share and soft play. But it's also a place to relax in the café or attend an evening gig. Here Director Jane Edwards discusses the centre's work and the ways Camden professionals can make use of their grassroots expertise.

Interview by Nicola Baird. Photography by Chloe Rosser.

How do you know St James' church in West Hampstead? With 2,000 people using this venue each week it might be your go-to for soft play, or debt advice, savouring a cappuccino at the café, enjoying a gig or escorting the kids to a party. Or maybe you've been to a Camden conversation event or noted that local councillors use it for surgeries? The range of activities is

testament to the way the Sherriff Centre meets grassroots needs, and if these change, then it's willing to pivot.

"We only came to life in 2014, and I was involved in set up for 18 months before that," explains Jane Edwards, director of the Sherriff Centre which was set up because locals wanted a post office. The happy result is a combo between

commercial and charitable in a West Hampstead working church. And even though the post office has set opening times (9am-5pm) Jane says: "It's not like a regular post office! Because our staff know they work for a not-for-profit organisation it's got a community feel. Post office staff will say, 'This woman can't pay their electricity bill is there something we can do?'" The answer might be a meeting with debt adviser, Paul, or a referral for a food parcel.

"We run various commercial services, post office, café, soft play, rent space, put on events and a lot of live music and employ 22 staff to run those. My job is to make sure those run profitably. We also liaise with church who we have an agreement with," says Jane who is responsible for the charity and the trading subsidiary which offers a post office, café, soft play, events and private hire.



“It’s also my job to be strategic, oversee finances, any HR, and basically guide and manage the team. But for the charity we only have one part-time debt advice worker, that’s FCA (financial conduct authority) regulated,” explains Jane who sometimes works from home, which her dog likes, though the Sherriff Centre is easily walkable.

The charity’s three main strands provide debt advice, food poverty and support for families. “Our first service was the debt advice. Paul, our debt adviser, is incredibly skilled and does outreach and works a lot with Brent council and Camden council. During covid we set up a food share project in part to reduce food waste,” says Jane who reckons it was the first local centre to host a Camden community fridge. There are also shelves for surplus food (eg, donations of bread from Gail’s) that can be taken by anyone.

“We tackle food poverty with a donation box and do food parcels by referral. A lot of these referrals come from our debt adviser, but we also have good links with nearby family centres, from family support workers and all kinds of Camden services that know about our services. We don’t have a huge volunteer presence, so mainly rely on people coming into the building to pick up our food parcels, but we do some Amazon Fresh services for people who are housebound,” she says.

The Sherriff Centre has a popular soft play area in the building, but Jane’s pleased with some new scheduling for 2025.

“We were approached by parents for separate sessions for children with autism and neurodiverse because their kids find it difficult to join in, and the parents found the open sessions stressful,” explains Jane. “We do that for free once a week after hours and keep the café open.”

There are Sunday services still, and morning prayer on Monday and Tuesday, plus the vicar, Robert, is also chair of the trustees. “It still looks like a working church,” says Jane (and the busy Instagram feed has



“We don’t say ‘30 minutes’ with this client, we say ‘you’ve got as long as you need’.
Debt is really complicated...” **Jane Edwards** ▼

lovely images of the stained glass windows) “but us, as the Sherriff Centre, we’re not a religious affiliate organisation, but we have shared governance with the church, as it came from why we were set up.”

Jane reckons the Sherriff Centre is a useful contact for Camden professionals needing to support people short of money or food.

“The thing we are most proud of is that we are a direct access debt advice service, which is becoming rarer,” explains Jane. “If you call the number for our debt adviser, you will speak to him, you won’t



be signposted or triaged anywhere else. We don’t say ‘30 minutes’ with this client, we say ‘you’ve got as long as you need’. Debt is really complicated and has its roots in all sorts of things. He’s had clients facing eviction, repossession, and incredible amounts of debt rent – which impacts on all services from council tax to housing. If you can unravel debt, then you are solving problems and giving relief to other services and Camden residents.”

The Sherriff Centre also has a referral service and food share project (accessible from their website), “so if someone needs immediate access to food today, they are pretty much



going to get it because we are quite small, so we can work quickly and make it happen,” says Jane.

Another good tip from Jane is knowing about the Sherriff Centre’s USP. “We are one of the only soft plays in London that does additional needs sessions, that’s useful information for people to have. And when we have clients from our debt advice or our food share, we can link them up, and give them free sessions in our soft play. It’s a place people can come,” she says explaining that the Sherriff Centre is keen to give parents respite, as well as solve a need for food.

And then when the soft play and Post Office are closed for the day the public can discover new music, from sound baths to singer songwriters, in this super cool venue thanks to the partnership

Opening times:
Sherriff Centre Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm
Post Office Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm



with Sofar Sounds, which organises around two Saturday night events a month. “They like unusual venues and to showcase different artists. We regularly get 200 people. It brings in people who are looking to try something new,” says Jane who hopes to launch the Sherriff Centre’s own live music act in September after a couple of trials and a standout concert with Tom Walker (famous for Leave A Light On), 18 months ago.

“I’ve always found Camden as a council really supportive of our organisation, and now we have a fantastic link officer who will email us with all sorts of relevant opportunities, like funding or resources available, so that connection has been really good. Working with Camden feels really positive and collaborative,” concludes Jane.

thesherriffcentre.co.uk
Insta **@sanctuarysessionsldn** 7,000+ followers
Find a gig at the Sherriff Centre: **sofarsounds.com/cities/london**





Camden Missions: Food



Kentish Town City Farm- Sustainability seeds

Many Community Partners are connecting people through food and addressing the root causes of poverty. They have shared examples of how they are contributing towards the food mission, making sure people have access to affordable, nutritious and sustainable food. This links strongly to one of the key principles of the Community Partnership Fund, which is prioritising prevention. Many partners are working to tackle the root causes of social challenges and support wellbeing, rather than just addressing immediate issues.

“ [We] Transform[ed] the outer edge of centre car park - used for unauthorised parking and abandoned vehicles - into a lovely green community garden offering future opportunities for food growing and horticultural activities, and creating a more protected green space for all ages for outside workshops and socialising.”

Sidings Community Centre

“ We have connected community residents to local cooking facilities to support their ambition to autonomously achieve access to healthy and nutritious food.”

The Winch

“ The group learned how to menu plan, shop, budget, and rota to cook meals. The young people made food each day of the trip.”

Mary's Charity

Food can be a way to bring people together but is also often used as an opportunity to connect people to other support.

“ Our Community Kitchen and Warm Space is our proudest achievement in 2024. [...] Since its inception, the initiative has grown and we now have 2 paid staff (cook and activities coordinator) and on one of the days, we partner with registered charity FoodCycle which means we can offer a broader support and outreach to people who are in need. [...] Each month, the coordinator also supports people attending with understanding or replying to personal letters (hospital, doctors, housing), she issues food vouchers to vulnerable people, and she directs people to apply for the cost of living crisis fund that Camden Council operate.”

St Pancras Community Association

This provision often extends into further advice and support to tackle poverty more holistically.

“ Through our advice project we have offered invaluable support to 90 people throughout the year. One example was an elderly client and his wife, who lives with a disability, and were struggling to make ends meet. Relying solely on Pension Credit, their limited income forced them to depend on local food banks just to get by. With support of our advice volunteer we were able to help them carry out “a Better Off calculation” to assess the couple’s eligibility for additional support. As a result, they were able to claim an extra £834.20 every month in disability, housing and council tax benefits. Reflecting on their situation, the couple shared, “We are grateful for the support we received. It has made a real difference in our day-to-day lives. We can now afford the things we need and feel less anxious about making ends meet. It’s a relief to know we have some stability.”

SHAK (South Hampstead and Kilburn Community Partnership)

“ We are especially proud to have helped so many women maximise their income through applications for cost-of-living grants, hardship grants, welfare benefits, and debt waivers, successfully alleviating poverty and hardship. Seeing the positive changes these services have brought to their lives continually reinforces the value and impact of our work.”

West Hampstead Women's Centre

Please see appendix 2 for a list of all Community Partners working in the Food mission space.



Home-Start Camden and Islington: family preparing a meal

Social Action and Volunteering

Theory of Change Community Outcome: Greater opportunities for community members to volunteer, lead projects and have a voice on issues that are important to them.



Kentish Town City Farm

Community Partner Fund organisations provide support, space and encouragement for local residents to develop ideas for community activities and projects, helping to get these off the ground. Through this flexible funding partners can do this in an agile way – responding to ideas from the community and turning these quickly into initiatives.

Camden is home to 2,400 voluntary and community organisations, which includes 723 charities led by 4,266 trustees. The Volunteer Centre Camden released a report in 2023, calculating the monetary value of trustees in Camden to be £145 million per annum.

In this first year of this programme, we heard powerful stories of how people in Camden have been supported to have a voice and get more activity involved in their communities, lead on initiatives and take an active part in decision making. Volunteering has been highlighted by many organisations as a key pathway for people who attend activities or use services to step into a more active role in shaping their communities.

Many of the examples here show the active role Community Partners play in creating progression routes for people to gain the skills and confidence to take a more active leadership role through volunteering.

They also highlight the importance of Community Partners in supporting the Youth Mission, creating many opportunities for young people.

Volunteering and Inclusive Growth

Within the Community Partner Fund...



2,425 volunteers

2,425 volunteers play a wide range of roles in organisations – including designing and running activities, giving people a chance to shape what is offered and make a difference in their community



254 trustees

254 trustees: community leaders who steer the strategy, direction and management of community organisations



171 organisations

171 organisations: Supported to manage volunteers through volunteer fairs, workshops, forums and volunteer manager cafés by the Volunteer Centre Camden

Volunteering develops **leadership skills and capacity**.

“We also promote leadership through involvement in governance; our efforts have led to increased participation of Somali parents as school governors.”

British Somali Community Centre

Having more volunteers also increases the range of activities or services that can be offered.

“We support over 130 volunteers annually across a wide range of roles, including befriending, tech buddy support, kitchen help at community lunches, running activities, and outreach.”

Abbey Community Centre

In many organisations, people who perhaps initially came to use services or take part in activities then got involved in volunteering to help out and now lead activities themselves – creating a **pathway** for personal development, job skills and community leadership. This is particularly clear for some of the youth opportunities case studies shared below.



Camden Chinese Community Centre

“Where people can contribute the ideas and skills they have, but also get what they need, just like a family.”

Established in 1981, [Camden Chinese Community Centre](#) is a thriving centre based in the heart of Bloomsbury providing a wide range of inclusive services, activities and events for over 500 of its members from various Asian backgrounds and the wider community across Camden and beyond. The organisation provides high quality services to support older people, vulnerable groups and socially isolated people through its daily lunch club, exercise and fitness classes and regular social events within the safe confines of its Grade II listed building. It also has a specialist team that provides CQC regulated domiciliary care to around 25 housebound older people in Camden and surrounding boroughs. The centre collaborates with bodies like the UCLH and Camden Health Watch to provide information on topical health issues to its members through organised talks and health open days.

Since the start of 2024 the centre has developed its volunteering programme with young people to assist in widening its reach to the community and its intergenerational work. More than 80 volunteers have helped to initiate and host a wide range of social, cultural and educational programs which are now regular events on the centre's calendar. These include music and arts events, supper club, movie evenings and games sessions all from ideas developed and led by the young volunteers. Volunteers also help with fundraising events such as the centre's open day sales of donated and recycled items, annual talent show and celebration of traditional festivals that promote inter-generational work with older members.



These successful initiatives with the need for extra staff resources and a new part-time volunteer co-ordinator have been made possible through the flexibility of Community Partner funding and income raised from chargeable events together with generous contributions from donors and sponsors. The centre looks forward to building on these achievements in fulfilling its aim to be an inclusive family where everyone feels warmly welcome and free to take part and contribute to its work.



Camden Missions: Opportunities for Young People

Focus on youth leadership

Camden's Youth Mission aims to ensure every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure.

Working with young people is an area where involvement, leadership and capacity building is particularly evident amongst Community Partners. Several organisations are working with young people and have developed opportunities for them to volunteer, with strong progression routes towards employment in many cases.

“ This year we developed a course called Know Your Power and during this process young people were integral to the design and the information in the course. They are not just participants but also involved in planning and delivering arts, music, sports events, and community outreach activities. This programme helps them develop vital skills in teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. Through this initiative, we've learned that when young people have ownership over projects, their engagement and sense of responsibility increase significantly.”

Mary's Charity

Many organisations have opportunities for young people to have a say on what activities or services they would like to see.

“ For Pet Club, young people have been involved in designing the programme and delivering the activities. We held workshops to co-create the leadership training programme and the Pet Club structure and activities. Young people are actively leading this programme, and we hope to expand this approach to other areas across the Farm.”

Kentish Town City Farm

“Our strategic goal includes preparing young people to become future community leaders by involving them in programme delivery and planning, especially through our supplementary school and holiday schemes.”

British Somali Community Centre

Organisations help to build the skills for young people to get their voices heard both within the organisation but also more widely in public life.

“We support disabled, learning disabled and neurodivergent young people aged 16–25 to have a voice in shaping inclusive services and influencing wider community change... one of our youth leaders won the Voice of Camden Award at the Camden Youth Awards for their role in representing youth perspectives.”

Elfrida Rathbone Camden

“Through the Chalcots Estate Social Action project, young people were empowered to present their concerns directly to Camden Council. This resulted in tangible outcomes—such as the installation of new bike sheds, improved access to communal spaces, and youth representation on the Tenants & Residents Association. This showed us that when young people see real impact from their involvement, their confidence and engagement grow significantly.”

The Winch

Pathways to employment

Volunteering builds skills and confidence and can also be a route towards employment. Several Community Partners have developed clear pathways for young people to take on leadership roles – moving through from helping to run activities, to shadowing youth workers, even taking youth work qualifications and becoming leaders and obtaining employment in their own organisations or in other organisations in Camden.

“Through our trainee programme in play and youth work, we supported 10 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of whom left school with few qualifications, to gain recognised qualifications and go on to full-time work or higher education. As part of their training, they were given real responsibilities in delivering sessions and activities, building their confidence and leadership skills while directly contributing to our services.

We also work to engage young people in delivery - acting as ‘helpers’ for those too old for groups, taking on volunteering/accreditation roles within sports activities and paid roles co-facilitating sessions with our staff.”

NW5 Community Play Project

“Last year, three Young Leaders supported service delivery while representing their peers. Many start as volunteers and progress into paid roles, gaining valuable skills and experience.”

Coram's Fields

This is not just limited to young people – volunteering can provide a bridge towards employment at any age:

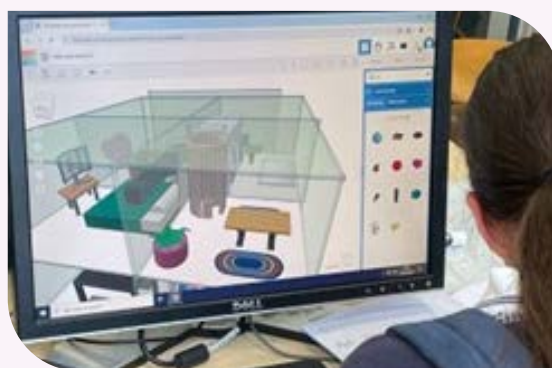
“We are also very proud that this group provided a developmental opportunity for its ESOL tutor, a Camden resident of Bengali origin, who is also a single mother of six. She first came to us looking for a volunteer work to get practical experience as a volunteer English teacher. She was very shy in the beginning and lacked confidence. Through her voluntary work with Training Link she did not only manage to get practical experience and confidence, but after a few months she was offered a paid employment as ESOL Tutor.”

Training Link

Covent Garden Dragon Hall

Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust

(CGDHT) is a charity who run community spaces in central London. Their community centre in Covent Garden provides a range of services and activities for the whole neighbourhood with a strong focus on building community connectedness and belonging.



Since 2022, Dragon Hall has developed and delivered significant work around Mentoring, Coaching & Employability. To date this has supported 1300 children, young people and young adults to develop STEAM skills, knowledge, understanding, networks and work-based competences.

Covent Garden Dragon Hall's wider youth work has a strong mentoring, coaching and employability focus. Their work already supports young people who attend their activities to explore opportunities for learning and external work opportunities. They are currently working in partnership with UK Youth to deliver their national Summer Jobs programme, a paid work intervention for young people at-risk of youth violence.

Over the past year CGDHT have provided paid employment for four global majority young women. This is part of the wider approach to Dragon Hall formalising their work around the 'Youth Work Journey' for young people, taking them from passive attendance all the way through to paid work. Their structured approach to this sees opportunities for young people to take on volunteering, be on steering groups, become peer mentors, access work placements, and the creation of paid work opportunities at CGDHT. Resilience Coaching is a core part of this new model, delivered by a qualified Coach offering support to these young leaders and the wider group of young people that Dragon Hall supports.

Community voice

There are lots of examples of how organisations **respond** to the needs of the community and **adapt or co-design** services in response.

“An example of a recent consultation was fathers asking us to widen the coding club to adults, so they can also learn and support their children or even become more tech savvy for themselves.”

SYDRC (Somali Youth Development Resource Centre)

Unrestricted funding supports them to do this by enabling that **flexibility** and not demanding prescriptive activities or outputs – rather, enabling the organisation to work with the community to **respond** to what is needed, and equipping people to **take a lead** through, for example, volunteering.



Kentish Town City Farm photo

“We’ve also seen great success in training and supporting local residents to lead our green social enterprise, where they work alongside Trustees to improve outdoor spaces. This has empowered them to see themselves as change-makers within their community.”

Maiden Lane Community Centre

Somers Town Community Association

“We want local people to access a space that enables them to learn in a manner that suits them best using past, present and future learning, traditions and cultural know-how, so that Somers Town can learn more about how to tackle/deal/stop climate change in terms of individuals actions, but also as a community by working together.”

Somers Town Community Centre

In 2024 [Somers Town Community Association](#) opened the **Community Climate Learning Hub** to provide a space where residents can come to get help and support for their day-to-day needs, whilst also learning about the challenges of climate change and what this will mean going forward to them and their families.

The Hub provides activities that will help people to deal with extremes of temperature, power cuts, air pollution (both in terms of avoiding creating it and dealing with the consequences of it), and water both in terms of flooding and drought. Crucially the hub will also support practical action to understand how to reduce food waste and grow healthy food in **Grow it Yourself** sessions and learn how to recycle, mend, reuse and make in **Do-it-Yourself** sessions.

Through this work they are providing space for local voices to be heard on a national and international platform. Somers Town Community Association features in a BBC series commissioned by C40 Cities to showcase sustainability and greening initiatives happening globally and is actively running workshops and events to align with the global United Nations Conference of Parties (COP climate meetings).





Camden Missions: Diversity

Equalities and Community Strength

Theory of Change Community Outcome: Builds community strengths and a deeper sense of belonging across Camden's diverse communities through activities and community spaces that bring people together.

Theory of Change Impact: Camden residents' lives are improved through contribution to tackling the root causes of inequalities.

Camden's diversity is a huge strength, and this is reflected in Community Partners working to tackle barriers and develop community leadership. Their work supports Camden's Diversity Mission, which aims to ensure that by 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community – and the next generation is ready to follow.

Many Community Partners are equalities-led organisations. These organisations play an important role in ensuring strong voice, representation and leadership across our Camden communities as well as bringing people together to connect and celebrate diversity through cultural events and activities.



VCS leaders on the Systems Thinking and Leadership course 2025

The trusting relationships and bespoke approach these organisations take is particularly important for supporting groups who experience inequity and barriers to accessing services. They equip people to develop their confidence and leadership skills through volunteering and social action, so that they can get their voices heard and helping tackle barriers and blockages that they experience in their daily lives.

Hopscotch

Hopscotch works across Camden to address racial and gender inequality and empowers women facing this injustice and disadvantage in a culturally sensitive way, so they can be included and equal in society. As part of this work, in 2024 they supported 288 service users to move towards employment.

In 2024, Hopscotch supported 410 women facing domestic abuse. Women such as Priya¹. Priya arrived in the UK from Bangladesh in 2022 on a spousal visa with her seven-year-old daughter. Speaking no English, she was trapped in an abusive and controlling relationship, confined to her home, and denied contact with family or friends. She was only allowed to take her daughter to school. As the abuse escalated, Priya was deprived of money and necessities.

When she was violently attacked with a knife and fork in 2023, she encouraged her daughter to call the police. The case was taken forward by the CPS, and the perpetrator was removed from the family home. Struggling with severe emotional distress and an unfamiliar environment, Priya found navigating support services overwhelming due to the language barrier. In November 2023, she was referred to Hopscotch Women's Centre, where she received specialist Bengali-language support. Hopscotch helped Priya gain confidence by familiarising her with the local area, providing weekly emotional support, attending court hearings for moral support, and assisting with her Indefinite Leave to Remain application. She was enrolled in an ESOL course at Westminster College, received financial assistance, and was supported in applying for Universal Credit. Working with Children's Services, Hopscotch ensured her daughter received the necessary support. Now, Priya communicates in English at a moderate level and navigates London independently, rebuilding her life with confidence.

¹ Names have been changed

Camden Disability Action

Camden Disability Action (CDA) is a pan-disability, user-led organisation pressing for the removal of barriers that disable people with conditions or impairments.

CDA is a members-based Disabled People's Organisation (DPO), run and led by Disabled trustees, staff and members. All their work is underpinned by a commitment to the social model of disability and informed by direct, first-hand experience of disability discrimination.



As well as providing an advice service, CDA supports Disabled people to get their voices heard and works with organisations to become fully inclusive of Disabled people.

One of their proudest achievements this year was their work in leadership development, equipping Disabled people to become activated and lead change.

Alongside this, they have developed **Camden Disabled Voices**, a leading project for Disabled people in Camden to report on the issues that matter to them. This platform now has over 140 first-hand accounts which can be used as an instrument in delivering change.

The Age of Wonder

In Cumberland Market, at the heart of Camden's biggest estate, the team in the little office of the Third Age Project make sure that older Camden residents are getting the best out of London life – from art and trips through to digital skills.

Interview by Nicola Baird. Photography by Chloe Rosser.

Naomi Nehemen Palacios joined the Third Age Project as the general manager two years ago. Speaking from the busy neighbourhood office of this community project for older adults (60+) who live in Camden, it's clear why so many seniors head to TAP, as it's better known.

"Every day is different," explains Naomi who grew up in the Regent's Park ward and is still able to walk to work. Here the three staff ensure the smooth running of the two-room centre. You can turn

up for chair-based exercise, or a Bollywood class or for help with welfare issues, often connected to changes with PIP. There's also ESOL support and plenty of events to look forward to, including a trip for 30 to Ruislip Lido Lake and Railway.

It's this mix of practical and artistic that makes TAP such a draw – the 200 members pay £15 a year (£1.25 a month). Events and classes follow school terms, so there's an annual summer show

to put together by the drama group (in 2025 staged at the New Diorama Theatre down the road) and a Christmas panto. There are also craft classes, ukulele, Bollywood dancing, art and British country dancing.

Co-production within Camden's services is also used to support the members. TAP already takes advantage of Camden's digital inclusion volunteers, who offer 20-minute individual help, but Naomi's planning to organise a course about devices too as, "We have lots of members that don't have devices, or the confidence to use them, and so are dealing with the anxieties that that brings – the feeling of getting left behind."

"Camden Council have been vital to TAP's success, providing consistent support that has enabled us to deliver our services more effectively. Their funding, guidance, and collaboration have





Opening times:
Mon-Fri, 9:30am-5pm
(closed at weekends)



choices too. “People will say ‘I could wear this new dress’, or will wear a dress ‘I haven’t worn for years’. It’s an excuse to put on things that make them feel special.” One highlight in 2024 was holding “the biggest Christmas party since pre-pandemic, with 80 members at the impact hub. We partnered with British Land and Overbury who provided volunteers. The ukulele group, Bollywood choir and British Land choir performed while people were having Christmas dinner; it was a really magical event. Those social connections are so valuable, as isolation is such a rife thing.



Now we’ve had people going on trips together they all buddy up, and will ask if so and so has put their name down, if not they say they will tell them to!” says Naomi.

“There’s so much value working with older adults. I feel really privileged to know that they are able to tell me about their lives. I’m not forcing them, it’s really important to listen to what they’re saying to you,” says Naomi who makes sure that the TAP programme follows the five ways of wellbeing research from Warwick University – to help you live a fulfilled life and encourage wellbeing through connections, activity, by keeping on learning, mindfulness and helping others.

“At TAP we are encouraging life-long learning – every day

is a school day if you allow it to be. At least you’ve tried, and are trying not to get into a rut. There’s so much potential from continuously learning,” says Naomi who is passionate about unlocking people’s creativity, whatever their age. “I don’t want anyone to feel that they are a number, they are a person who comes through the doors, who is seen and heard and valued. Lots of people have mentioned that when they walk in it’s like a ‘home away from home’. That’s always been something I’ve wanted.”

This fresh take on services with fun, conversation and learning is definitely helping Camden residents in the heart of the borough tap into the pleasures of being a little older.

“Change is a big thing when you’re older. To get people’s trust is a hard thing, people underestimate it, but if I don’t know my members how can I give them the best services?” **Naomi Nehemen Palacios**

helped us reach more older residents and respond to their needs with greater impact. We value their partnership in helping improve the lives of older people in our community,” says Naomi.

Naomi, 35, reckons another reason people like to attend TAP is its ability to make life feel fun, connected and invigorating. “When things are getting tougher people’s priority is not to go to an art show it’s paying their bills. I’m seeing the reality of life here every day. But they do deserve to have fun. Depression is the number one clinical diagnosis within the borough,” says Naomi who started her career as a volunteer with community arts projects.

“People deserve to have something to look forward to, but people get into routines – good or bad – and go to the same places. Also, if you’re living alone, you don’t sometimes have that push to do it yourself, it’s not that appealing, but if you know you’re going with other people it’s an exciting thing,” says Naomi who is currently planning a trip to Buckingham Palace which she hopes will encourage members to have a go making their own mini adventures. That’s why TAP has re-engaged with the Royal Parks and given members the chance to see live opera at the ENO via dress rehearsals.

Naomi’s noticed how events put a pep into TAP users’ fashion



thirdageproject.org.uk

Contact Naomi Nehemen Palacios, General Manager
020 7383 4922 / 07880 238 966

Laamiga

Laamiga is a trusted space for women from minority ethnic, migrant and refugee backgrounds to build confidence, develop skills, and create meaningful connections through training and mentoring. Laamiga acts as a bridge between women's current needs and their future aspirations, helping them take practical steps toward independence and success.

Mentoring is a key part of this approach. One of Laamiga's proudest achievements this year has been increasing opportunities for in-person connection to help reduce isolation among women in the community. Many mentoring pairs now meet in local cafés and community spaces across Camden, building lasting relationships of trust and support.



The impact of this mentoring network has been significant:

- Some unemployed lone mothers have gone on to attend and graduate from university.
- Several employed women have achieved career promotions with guidance from their mentors.
- Others have gained the confidence to address discrimination at work and advocate for their rights.
- Mentors have also helped mentees navigate housing and legal challenges, acting as trusted advocates.

Community connection and events

Laamiga has seen the power of bringing together mentees, mentors, volunteers, and supporters from all walks of life to share experiences, encouragement, and inspiration. Laamiga arranges a wide range of in-person activities designed to strengthen community bonds and celebrate shared achievements. In the past year, women from across the Laamiga network have come together for trips to the British Museum, Eid celebrations with partner organisations, annual picnics, and walks through local green spaces including Highgate Woods and Primrose Hill.

Through these events, Laamiga has not only reduced isolation and also strengthened local partnerships, welcomed new volunteers, and deepened relationships among trustees and participants. These connections help the charity stay active, collaborative and closely attuned to the needs and experiences of Camden's diverse community.

Doorstep Homeless Families Project

Doorstep works with homeless families living in hostel accommodation. Doorstep help families to manage in these difficult circumstances, which can often see them in temporary accommodation for long periods of time. The support of Doorstep helps children develop and thrive in difficult conditions.

When Naz² started using the crèche at Doorstep she was non-verbal, she and her family had a low understanding of English, but she also had difficulty understanding her home language, instead she just smiled or shook her head to communicate. Within three months of attending the setting she started picking up objects that she wanted to use or pointed to resources to express herself. Using suggested activities from the Speech and Language partners at the crèche sessions meant that after six months she was using single words of English and mime, when she didn't know the word. Now Naz is a busy member of the crèche cohort, joining her peers in games and making suggestions for songs at singing time. At tidy-up time she will help staff tidy up the room, collecting toys asked for by name, and talking about her home and family 'I'm making dis for Mumma' With Doorstep's support she is now meeting all of the expected milestones, on track for her age compared with the Early Years Foundation Stage for language and physical development.



Sayed³ aged 12 and his family, came to England as refugees. He displayed very challenging behaviour, swearing and being extremely disruptive. His behaviour was also causing problems at school where he was frequently placed in isolation and sometimes excluded. Doorstep gave clear boundaries around behaviour whilst reinforcing the positive aspects reminding him that he is bright, capable and could be funny. He opened up to staff, saying he recognised that his behaviour was often a problem but that he didn't seem able to control it, but that he was worried about being permanently excluded from school. Doorstep gave him some tools and techniques to help him control the behaviour and offered him a reward, of his choosing, if he managed to avoid any further isolations or exclusions for the rest of term. He decided he wanted to earn this reward, but he also wanted to earn it for the whole group, giving himself the responsibility of trying to succeed not just for himself but for his peers too. These tools and incentives worked for him, and he was successful in earning the reward for the group.

² Names have been changed

³ Names have been changed

Community Impact in Year 1: Summary of progress so far.

Theory of Change Impact 1:

Camden Residents lives are improved through contributions to tackling the root causes of inequalities.

Theory of Change Impact 2:

Camden Residents feel a sense of control of their lives.

Theory of Change Impact 3:

Camden Residents feel a connection and belonging to the area.

Theory of Change Impact 4:

Camden has healthier and happier communities.

There is strong evidence that the community spaces and activities being provided by Community Partners are creating connections and belonging in neighbourhoods and supporting happier and healthier communities. Community Partners are also playing a vital role in tackling inequalities for individuals they work with and supporting communities to raise their voices about issues that impact them. There is evidence that Community Partners are contributing to the Camden Missions, often working across several different missions. They are contributing to the Diversity Mission through opportunities to develop leadership within the diverse groups of residents they work with.

Learning and next steps

- Moving forward there is more that could be done to support Community Partners to share their experiences of what works and to enable their communities to have a voice in shaping policies and practice that impact on them.
- More can be done to bring partners into the strategic conversations about the We Make Camden missions, recognising they are often time poor, but expertise rich.
- There are lots of great examples of how youth organisations are supporting young people into volunteering, training and employment. In the coming year the Community Partnerships team are exploring opportunities for access to apprenticeships for VCS organisations and working with infrastructure partners like Young Camden Foundation to determine what is needed.

PART 3: VCS Outcomes

Supporting organisations to be well run and sustainable

Theory of Change VCS Outcome: Support the identification and management of key risks on key areas of well-run, sustainable organisations such as finance, governance, strategic planning and delivery, workforce development and impact evaluation.



This section looks at the impacts on organisations who have received the Community Partner fund focusing on the outcomes for VCS organisations outlined in our Theory of Change. We explore the value of this long-term unrestricted funding and the difference it makes to financial stability, partnership and collaboration, voice and strategic leadership.

The importance of long-term, unrestricted funding

Funding is a key pillar in our Theory of Change for the We Make Camden VCS Investment Programme, supporting a thriving VCS in Camden that delivers impact for our communities. Our underlying premise outlined in our Theory of Change is that multi-year, unrestricted funding allows VCS organisations the flexibility to respond to community needs and creates a sustainable and responsive sector.

The Community Partner Fund provides an unrestricted, 7-year grant. We asked organisations to tell us what difference this grant is making to their organisation. Here are the key themes:

Financial stability & security – providing stability in a challenging funding environment.

“The 7-year unrestricted Community Partner Fund grant is transformational... providing stability, flexibility, and confidence, three things that are often missing in the short-term, project-based funding landscape.”

Elfrida Rathbone Camden

Ability to respond flexibly to local needs – the unrestricted nature of the funding allows organisations to adapt, innovate, and respond quickly to emerging needs.

“Unrestricted funding means we can be responsive. Whether it's stepping in to support residents in the absence of the Community Champions host, launching new women-only fitness sessions, or providing extra food and wellbeing support during school holidays, we can act quickly and confidently when our community needs us most.”

NW5 Community Play Project

“It also means we can respond to emerging needs, pilot new approaches, and invest in young people's long-term leadership pathways, creating sustainable change at individual, community, and systemic levels.”

Fitzrovia Youth in Action

Investment in core costs, staff, and infrastructure – for many organisations, the grant is used to cover operational costs, salaries and infrastructure that can be hard to fundraise for.

“The unrestricted nature of the funding has allowed us to invest in the professional development and training of our team, which has been pivotal in ensuring that our staff possess the skills and knowledge to meet the demands of a growing and diverse community.”

Third Age Project

Long-term planning & strategic development – the 7-year commitment enables organisations to make longer-term plans, develop strategy, try new things and invest in organisational development.

“Importantly, this funding allows us to plan for the long term. It gives us some breathing room to focus on what’s most important: delivering high-quality, relationship-based support that helps local people lead healthier, happier lives.”

Abbey Community Centre

“The Community Partner Fund grant has made a significant difference to our organisation by providing vital breathing space. It has freed up the Director’s time from constant fundraising pressures, allowing focus on strengthening the organisation and expanding our work.”

Fitzrovia Community Centre

Increased credibility to leverage other funding – the grant is seen as an endorsement, helping organisations secure additional funding and partnerships.

“Being chosen as one of Camden’s Community Partners is, in essence, a Kite Mark, stating to people within and outside the charity that our work is recognised, valued and important.”

Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust

“The secure 7-year funding has put us in an appealing position to trusts and foundation who we have been able to secure 3 and 5 year funding from as a directly result of the Community Partner Fund.”

Home-Start Camden and Islington

Strengthening the organisation’s role in Camden - The grant enhances the organisation’s profile and connections within Camden and allows the capacity to deepen relationships and influence locally.

“We are also finding that being part of the Community Partner Fund is helping us to make connections and build relationships with other organisations in Camden – from other partner organisations to local corporates open to collaboration. These opportunities to network, learn from other VCS organisations locally and generally embed ourselves more within Camden – the community we exist to serve – really are invaluable: thank you for having Likewise as a part of it.”

Likewise

Challenges facing organisations

Camden's Community Partners are delivering important services and activities in an increasingly challenging environment for both organisations and residents.

When asked about the biggest challenges facing their organisation, the most common themes mentioned by Community Partners were:

- **Funding and financial sustainability** - mentioned by nearly every organisation, funding cuts, deficits, rising costs, loss of income streams.
- **Staff capacity, recruitment, and retention** - capacity, recruitment and retention issues, workload and burnout.
- **Service demand and delivery** - rising demand, complex needs, outreach challenges, capacity to meet need.
- **Premises and building issues** - high costs, unresolved leases, repairs, accessibility.
- **An increasingly challenging environment** - changing funding priorities, policy changes, lack of council coordination.
- **Governance and board development** - skills gaps, diversity, succession, trustee turnover.
- **Partnership and collaboration** - competitive funding, lack of capacity for partnership work, collaboration challenges.
- **Volunteer management** - training, retention, capacity to support volunteers.
- **Infrastructure and technology** - data systems, digital inclusion, tech issues.

We also asked, 'what would help you tackle these challenges?'. The most common themes were funding (other long-term income sources), increased staff capacity and resolution of building / premises issues. Several also mentioned that it would be helpful to have better coordination between departments within the Council, further resource and connections for partnerships and collaboration, and resource for organisational development. Some partners flagged a clear role for the council in helping unlock resources and broker relationships with local businesses.

Partnerships and collaboration

Theory of Change VCS Outcome: Create an environment of cross-stakeholder collaboration to tackle social challenges across the programme, enabling a more joined up offer for residents.

Partnerships and collaboration are key funding principles for the Community Partner Fund and features strongly in our Theory of Change. Community Partners collaborated with a huge and impressively wide range of partners in 2024/25, allowing them to reach more people and deliver different support and activities.

The range of partners included businesses, other voluntary and community organisations, health organisations, schools, museums, children's centres, arts organisations, sports organisations, police, tenants & residents associations, many teams within Camden Council, and more.

“ We have over 30 different partnerships where we collaborate with organisations and colleagues from the VCS, Camden Council, Statutory, NHS, Public Health, Businesses and Knowledge Quarter institutions too for the benefit of our user members.”

KCBNA

Collaboration enabled organisations to:

Reach out to a wider community and residents who might not otherwise be aware of their services

“ Our collaboration with the Maiden Lane Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) has been invaluable in helping us reach older, socially isolated residents. Through this partnership, we've been able to identify and support elderly individuals in the area who might otherwise go unnoticed.”

Maiden Lane Community Centre

“ We ran a pilot project earlier in the year which saw us link up with a local Ukrainian support group, to bring people together around food, called Shared Tables. This was a new partnership, and we also had new, younger volunteers who were keen to work with this client group. We created some unique meals and interesting conversation!”

The Sherriff Centre

Provide opportunities and activities that residents might not otherwise have been able to access (e.g. physical activity, arts, digital inclusion)

“ We entered our 3rd year of partnership with the Foundling Museum and a local artist, to provide a 10-week Wellbeing Art course for 12 of our supported mums. This year, we expanded the project and brought the Children’s Centres into the collaboration so that we could offer council funded crèche workers as childcare for the entire course. This was an absolutely invaluable addition as the 2 hours of working on art in the group, is the only break and “me-time” that some of the mum’s get all week.”

Home-Start Camden & Islington

“ New partnership with Central YMCA gave 21 young people the chance to access free weekly swimming lessons, removing the financial barriers faced by many families and equipping young people with an essential life skill.”

Coram’s Fields

Connect residents with other wider support (e.g. advice, health, food provision)- supporting health and wellbeing preventative approaches.

“ We collaborated with Camden and UCLH community health teams as part of our quarterly Wellness Days, offering essential services including COVID-19 vaccinations for eligible groups, blood pressure and BMI checks, stop smoking advice, and loneliness risk assessments.”

Fitzrovia Community Centre

Influence decision making and representation

“ Collaboration with Camden Giving to ensure that disabled people are supported on onto the grant panel and as grant recipients.”

Camden Disability Action

“ Membership of NCL VCS Mental Health Forum ensures that we have a voice and an input in the development of local and borough wide mental health services and provisions that positively and sensitively impact our members.”

Henna Asian Women’s Group

“ A proud moment was our long term partnership with the Black Mary project coming to a culmination in a very well attended event (766 attendees) in June 2025. The partnership over a two year period also resulted in the installation of a statue of the historical figure Mary Wollaston.”

Calthorpe Community Garden

Deliver training and employment opportunities for residents

“ We also continued our close relationship with ethical brand Leiho, who provided 4 employment opportunities to our parents.”

Home-Start Camden & Islington

“ One of our proudest collaborations this year has been with Prospect Films and All City Arts College, through which we delivered a supported internship programme for five young people with learning difficulties. This initiative provided tailored, hands-on work experience in the creative sector, building confidence, skills, and aspirations.”

Elfrida Rathbone Camden

Evidence the impact of their work

“ We are now collaborating with Homelessness Impact Centre who are publishing an evidence paper on families in temporary accommodation and the kind of issues they face and the support they need. They are keen to use this opportunity to showcase Doorstep’s work and are planning a series of events for commissioners, funders and for others.”

Doorstep



Community
Partnership
Team

Cultivating Community

In Kentish Town and Gospel Oak, two long-established organisations are helping Camden residents find friendship, purpose and a sense of belonging. Though their approaches differ – one rooted in nature and animals, the other in social action – both Kentish Town City Farm and Queen's Crescent Community Association show how local charities have become anchors in neighbourhood life.

Interview by Nicola Baird. Photography by Chloe Rosser.



Foyezur Miah
Queen's Crescent
Community Association

Pamela Park
Kentish Town City Farm



A Place to Grow

Kentish Town City Farm might feel like a hidden corner of Camden, but it has been welcoming visitors since 1972. As the first city farm in London, it transformed a former timber yard and wartime bombsite into a much-loved green space where animals, nature and people mix easily. Behind the gates on Cressfield Crescent you'll find goats, donkeys and pigs, a vegetable garden, and a constant buzz of families, school groups and volunteers.

With 35,000 visitors a year, 14 staff and up to 70 volunteers, the farm is rarely still. Morning chores might involve feeding the pigs or checking the quails, while afternoons bring after-school clubs and pottery or craft workshops. "The more you turn up at the farm

the more you recognise faces," says Chief Executive Pamela Park. "You might visit for the animals but you come back for the people."

Pamela is now leading plans to bring horses back to the site for Riding for the Disabled, pony club and wellbeing sessions. She also hopes to expand nature-based activities for older residents and set up a coffee cart and small farm shop, so visitors can enjoy a chat over coffee while listening to hens cluck and trains rumble by.

She credits Camden Council's seven-year funding cycle for the farm's stability. "I don't know any other local authority in the country that will fund their charity partners for seven years. It just makes such a huge difference and gives us that

stability. We know that we've got that core part covered, and we can use it for match funding for other bids or use for external resources," she says. "We're so grateful for the seven-year funding. It's unique. It's a privilege." Still, with deep local roots – some staff have worked there for more than 30 years – the farm remains a cherished part of community life.

Farm animals, wildlife and vegetable growing in Kentish Town offers relaxation, education and a chance to boost wellbeing for young and old, so Pamela hopes Camden could help this city farm and all the groups it supports with an even clearer understanding of the numbers. "We're so grateful for the seven-year funding. It's unique. It's a privilege," she says.

kcityfarm.org.uk

Kentish Town City Farm
1 Cressfield Close, London, NW5 4BN
Opening time: Mon-Sun, 9am-5pm

A Lifecycle of Services

Like Kentish Town City Farm, nearby Queen's Crescent Community Association (QCCA) has a long history of serving its neighbourhood. It began life as the Allcroft Centre in the 1960s, once a social club for the Irish community. When it became QCCA in 1999, the aim was to make the area happier, healthier and more connected – a goal strengthened when it became a registered charity in 2002. Nearly 25 years later Chief Executive Foyezur Miah puts it simply: "QCCA offers a lifecycle of services."

That range is impressive. There's the Dome with its sports and activities for young people; two nurseries for pre-schoolers; The Peggy Jay Centre for events and venue hire; and QCCA's heart,

the community hub on Queen's Crescent, recently brightened by a mural celebrating local landmarks. A typical day might include lunch club, craft or line dancing workshops, youth clubs, or even cricket sessions led by Middlesex County Cricket Club.

During 2024 around 300 people used the food bank, which operates an optional £3 charge for a £30 bag – "to help people keep their dignity," says Foyezur. Another 100 people used the advice service, 289 over-55s joined older people's activities and 462 young people took part in sports or workshops. With 65 staff, many part-time, and around 60 volunteers, QCCA is one of Camden's busiest community centres.

QCCA's five-year plan aims to double its turnover to £2m by 2029 and to play a stronger role in shaping local policy. A new community café will provide training and jobs while giving residents another reason to gather. Foyezur has also found that joining Camden Council's leadership programme, run with the University of Birmingham's Birmingham Leadership Institute, is helping him use systems thinking to address the complex community challenges he tackles every day at QCCA.

Camden's seven-year funding model has helped make all this possible. "For every £1 Camden gives us, we bring in £10 more into this ward," says Foyezur. "That's what keeps this community thriving."

qcca.org.uk

Queen's Crescent Community Association (QCCA)
45 Ashdown Crescent, Gospel Oak, NW5 4QE
Opening time: Mon-Fri, 0207 267 6635

Barriers to collaboration

We also asked Community Partners to share with us some of the barriers they face to collaboration. These include:

Limited time and staff capacity

Partnerships take time and capacity to develop and maintain, which can be a challenge for small teams with many competing priorities.

“Collaborating with other organisations brings huge benefits, but it also takes a lot of time and resources to do properly and to sustain in the long term.”

Highgate Newtown Community Partners

Nearly all Community Partners highlighted the limited time and staff capacity to do collaboration well.

Funding

A lack of sustainable funding for specifically for partnership and collaboration can make it difficult to plan or sustain joint initiatives, when there are lots of other demands on resources. The competitive funding environment can also create barriers to collaboration. There can also be power imbalances when there is a difference in the size and resources of organisations in partnership.

Finding the right partners

For collaboration to work well, the values, capacity and relationships between organisations need to align. Strong communication and trusting relationships are crucial for productive and sustainable partnerships. Some organisations would like to develop corporate partnerships but don't have the right connections, while others commented on the capacity of staff needed to ensure partnerships are meaningful and useful.

Workforce

Community Partner Fund organisations range from being volunteer-led or with just one or two employees through to having 60 employees. In total, over 400 staff are employed across all 37 Community Partners. People are at the heart of everything these organisations do, from delivering direct support and running activities through to managing finances or coordinating volunteers.

[Camden's 2024 State of the Sector report](#) highlighted challenges around recruitment, retention, skills, pay, progression and wellbeing, which were reflected in the conversations held with funded organisations as part of this evaluation. When organisations experience increased demand for services or increasingly complex challenges in their communities, the impact is felt in staff capacity and wellbeing. Some organisations have managed to take steps to respond to this by providing extra support or supervision for staff. In conversations held with senior leaders of the organisations, many mentioned feeling overstretched across many priorities, balancing operational running of the organisation with more strategic work or external demands.

Issues of staff recruitment and retention also came up, with some organisations losing staff to higher paid roles elsewhere or struggling to recruit. Of the 37 Community Partners, 17 had at least one live vacancy at the time of filling in their annual update form, with three of those organisations having three or more vacancies. These gaps have a particularly large impact on very small staff teams where capacity is often already stretched.

Finances

When asked about the current financial year, 67% of Community Partner Fund organisations were working towards a surplus or break-even budget, while 32% were expecting a deficit.

We asked, ‘what are your priorities for your organisation’s finances at the moment?’. Many organisations talked about the need for income diversification in the face of uncertain future funding. As well as seeking multi-year grants and major funding applications from trusts and foundations, there was also interest in exploring other fundraising opportunities or bringing in additional fundraising expertise to the organisation or the board to support with this. Some organisations are already bringing in trading income, totalling £4.4m across the programme, while others may look to explore this. Rising costs were a concern for many, including both operating costs of utilities, building maintenance and staffing, as well as the impact of the increase in National Insurance contributions.

Our 2024 [State of the Sector report](#) has highlighted the financial squeeze felt by the sector in Camden and more widely. This evaluation shows that these problems have not gone away and, in the instance of National Insurance contributions and rising costs, are getting worse. This further underlines the importance of the long-term, unrestricted funding provided through the Community Partner Fund in a challenging funding environment.

Governance

Governance is a key component of a well-run organisation. A few common challenges with governance that emerged from conversations with Community Partners include:

- **Trustees Skills gaps** – such as fundraising, finance, HR, legal expertise.
- **Diversity and representation** – lots of organisations have been working to improve diversity in their trustee boards, making sure that they are reflective of the community they work with.
- **Engagement and succession** – many trustees are highly engaged and do a huge amount of work, while others play a more distant role. Succession planning can also be a concern where long-standing trustees are stepping down.
- **Board development** – ensuring boards work effectively, have clear roles and can keep up with challenges and changes in the organisation or external environment.
- **Pressures and Responsibilities** – Boards grappling with complex problems–e.g. leadership change or financial challenges.

VCS Outcomes in Year 1: Summary of progress so far

Feedback from Community Partners suggests that multi-year unrestricted funding is creating the conditions for flexible and responsive funding, but that wider economic circumstances and a changing funder environment are still having a negative impact on the long-term sustainability of the sector, including Community Partners. Long term unrestricted funding is providing a protective factor and enabling partners to leverage in external funding from elsewhere and bring in traded income but is not enough in itself to overcome the risks.

Community Partners are working with a wide range of partnerships and collaborations to achieve greater impact but would like help to build further connections and opportunities, especially in terms of maximising corporate partnerships and funding opportunities with businesses.

Learning and next steps

- There are clear benefits of long-term, unrestricted funding for delivering the best outcomes for Camden's residents and communities. As a council, we should consider how this learning could be applied to other grants and commissioned services.
- We will keep advocating for the importance of long-term, unrestricted funding with other funders, through networks such as [IVAR's open and trusting grant-making](#) initiative. We have also featured as a case study of best practice in the Government's new [Civil Society Covenant](#), which we hope will encourage other funders.
- We will collect consistent data each year to track trends, only asking for information that will be used, and commit to sharing back with organisations the insights from this and how we've put them into action.
- We will adapt the form for the second-year reporting to be able to draw out more information about the number of volunteer hours, review the DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) dataset being used and review the way we are asking organisations to report on staff numbers.
- We are working with our evaluation partner Rocket Science to help equip organisations to better tell the story of their impact.
- We will keep connecting organisations with opportunities to network and learn from each other through, for example, our regular Equality and Community Strength Forum.
- We will also look at ways to help facilitate corporate partnerships, through sharing examples of successful partnerships, such as Young Camden's Foundations business breakfasts, as well as connecting with Camden's Social Value team.

Part 4: Our Grant Making Approach

In this section, we'll explore the impact of our approach to funding and support through our We Make Camden VCS Investment Programme funding and our VCS Infrastructure support and our wider work to support a thriving voluntary and community sector.



Our Relational Funding approach

Alongside funding, the Community Partnerships team work with funded organisations to understand emerging trends and changing needs, share learning and identify opportunities for collaboration with other organisations or connecting with other parts of the council. The team aims to build good relationships to share successes and offer any support through challenges, providing a listening ear and helping to explore options for resolution. As well as regular check-ins throughout the year, the annual reflection conversation is an opportunity to take a step back and reflect on strategic priorities, community impact and organisational wellbeing.

As part of this evaluation, we asked Community Partner Fund organisations about any feedback they have for us, the Community Partnerships Team at Camden Council. These were overwhelmingly positive with comments appreciating support from the team, including regular check-ins and communication, and knowing that they can get in touch if there are any issues.

A couple of organisations highlighted specific challenges they had faced this year and that they appreciated the support from the team through this time. A few said that they would welcome more in-person visits from the team. Some organisations mentioned that they appreciated being able to meet others at regular events such as the Equality and Community Strength Forum. There were also a small number of requests for more networking and collaboration opportunities, or for support with brokering partnerships with, for example, businesses. Some also mentioned a lack of coordination between departments in the council and the length of time it can take to get a resolution to issues.

In terms of the update form and annual reflection conversation process which form the basis of this evaluation, most felt that this was broadly accessible and proportionate in terms of the amount and type of information collected. Feedback is that it has not been too onerous but still allowing space to highlight impact. A couple of organisations said that they would have liked to know exactly what would be included earlier (at the start of the grant). There were also technical issues with the update form, preventing people from saving answers as they go along. We'll make sure this is fixed for next year.

Supporting a Culture of Learning and Impact

Many organisations also talked about wanting to further develop how they evidence the impact of their work. With this in mind, we have commissioned an evaluation partner, Rocket Science, to work with funded partners over the next couple of years to provide training, one-to-one support, peer learning and tools to help organisations to tell the story of their impact. A working group of VCS partners helped us develop our evaluation approach to the whole We Make Camden VCS investment programme. We are grateful for their insights which helped shape this work. This will support us to understand the impact of the Community Partner Fund and our other grants as outlined in our Theory of Change and gather learning and insights to inform our strategic direction as a council. These insights, and community voice can inform our wider Camden Missions and State the Borough report.

Infrastructure support

As well as the direct support provided to funded organisations by the Community Partnerships team we work closely with VCS Infrastructure partners to ensure that support is available across Camden's voluntary and community sector. This includes

- Leadership and advocacy
- Partnership and collaboration
- Capacity building
- Volunteering

Our Infrastructure Partners Voluntary Action Camden (VAC), the Volunteer Centre Camden (VCC), Young Camden Foundation (YCF) and C4 (the Camden Community Centres Consortium) receive funding to provide a strong offer of support to the wider sector.

In 2024/5:

- 700 voluntary and community organisations signed up to the One Camden Directory as VAC members
- 2,000+ subscribers receive VACs weekly community news bulletin
- 308 children and youth organisations supported by Young Camden Foundation whom 22 are new organisations
- 171 organisations supported with volunteering by VCC
- 150+ Social Prescribing connections per month from Voluntary Action Camden, supporting individuals to access activities to help their health and wellbeing.
- 24 organisations are members of VACs new group network
- 29 training events (YCF), with 520 attendees from 95 unique member organisations
- 127 organisations and small groups supported by VAC consultancy – from setting up community groups and charities to support with fundraising; governance and networking.

Our Grant Making Approach: Summary of progress so far.

Our funder plus approach is welcomed by Community Partners and provides a solid foundation for a strong relationship with the council.

Infrastructure partners are offering a wide range of capacity building support and training. More can be done to communicate this offer to VCS organisation and to ensure a joined-up approach to tackling some of the key organisational issues organisations are facing.

Learning and Next steps

- We will continue to draw out learning from across the We Make Camden VCS Investment programme to test whether our approach to an eco system of grants is creating conditions for a wider range of organisations to receive our funding.
- We will keep aiming to build supportive, trusting relationship with organisations through our approach in the Community Partnerships team to enable us to flag any challenges or risks early and provide support where possible.
- We will share the insights, achievements and needs of organisations funded through this programme with other partners within the council and more broadly in Camden - enabling insights from the VCS to influence policy and practice within the council and its partners.
- We will work with local infrastructure organisations to help address cross-sector common organisational challenges around, for example, funding and governance.
- We will launch a new Organisational Foundation Fund to support organisations to address key organisational issues.
- We will work with our Infrastructure partners VAC and VCC to support the Trustee Network and ensure that trustees have the support and tool they need to be effective.
- With our partners VAC and Rocket Science we will explore ways to share the evaluation tools and learning with Camden's wider network of VCS to help equip organisations to better tell the story of their impact.
- We will help address workforce retention and leadership development by supporting a postgraduate qualification in Systems Thinking and Leadership for 24 VCS leaders from across Camden, delivered in partnership with the University of Birmingham's Institute of Leadership, with support from the Diversity Mission.

Final Reflections

This evaluation has highlighted the difference that organisations funded through the Community Partner Fund are making in Camden's communities, in an often-challenging environment.

This is the first year of the Community Partner Fund, and the first evaluation for this programme, so there is a lot to learn. The rich insights across this report are drawn together in the executive summary at the start of the report. We will use these insights and ongoing dialogue with partners to inform our own work and decision-making and to keep building on how we work together.

We hope this report helps to share the optimism and positive impact that these organisations are creating in Camden. We are excited about working with Community Partners over the coming years to support partners to capture insights and tell their impact stories.

We wanted to end this first year evaluation report by saying thank you to all the staff, volunteers and trustees across Camden who work hard every day to make people's lives better.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

Collecting data

This evaluation draws on four sources of data:

- An annual update form was completed by Community Partners in April 2025. 37 forms were received.
- An annual update form was also completed by three Infrastructure Partners VAC, VCC and YCF
- An annual reflection conversation between 36 of the funded partners and their key contact in the Community Partnerships Team
- Partners were invited to share additional case study materials with us. 13 partners shared additional materials
- Photo-journalist case studies with four Community Partners supported by West Creative

Analysis

The data sources used were:

- The completed update forms
- Notes taken by the Community Partnership Team during the annual reflection conversations
- Case studies submitted by partners

These sources were analysed using:

- Topic Modelling, through a machine learning approach supported by a Data Analyst in Camden Council
- Microsoft Co-Pilot
- Outputs from both of these were used as a starting point with further analysis from the Community Partnerships team

Our intention is to track changes annually over the seven years of the fund.

Appendix 2: Community Partners and Missions

List of organisation who indicated they are keen to collaborate and find out more for each We Make Camden mission when they applied for the Community Partner Fund 2024. **Green** are Equalities Community Partners and **Yellow** are Neighbourhood Community Partners.

Organisation	Diversity	Young People	Food	Estates and Neighbourhoods
Camden Chinese Community Centre	●	●	●	●
Forum+	●	●	●	●
Hopscotch Women's Centre	●	●		●
Laamiga	●			
British Somali Community Centre	●	●	●	●
Somali Youth Development Resource Centre	●	●	●	●
Camden Disability Action	●			●
Doorstep	●	●	●	●
Henna Asian Women's Group	●	●	●	●
Mary's Charity	●	●	●	
West Hampstead Women's Centre	●		●	●
The Fitzrovia Community Centre	●	●	●	●
Elfrida Rathbone Camden	●	●	●	
Fitzrovia Youth in Action	●	●	●	●
Abbey Community Centre	●		●	●
Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust	●	●	●	
South Hampstead And Kilburn Community Partnership	●	●	●	●
The Sidings Community Centre	●	●	●	●
Training Link	●	●		●
Kentish Town City Farm	●	●	●	
Maiden Lane Community Centre	●	●	●	●
Somers Town Community Association	●	●	●	●
Calthorpe Community Garden	●	●	●	●
Castlehaven Community Association	●	●	●	●
Highgate Newtown Community Partners	●	●	●	●
Kentish Town Community Centre	●	●	●	●
Queens Crescent Community Association	●	●	●	●
St. Pancras Community Association	●	●	●	●
Third Age Project	●	●	●	●
Coram's Fields	●	●	●	●
Holborn Community Association	●		●	●
King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association	●	●	●	●
The Winch	●	●	●	●

We Make Camden
VCS Investment Programme 2024 – 2031
Community Partner Fund
1st year evaluation report