

Update of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care

Health and Adult Social Care Committee 10th February 2026

1. Purpose of the Cabinet Member update

- 1.1. This paper provides a short round of updates from across the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care. It presents an opportunity for the cabinet member to speak directly to the Health and Adult Social Care (HASC) Scrutiny Committee and highlight key pieces of work, both to share successes and identify challenges and opportunities in the coming months. The Committee are invited to consider the information below and ask questions of clarification at the meeting subject to the Chair's discretion. Requests for additional information can be addressed to the relevant director/s outside of the meeting. The Committee may also use the cabinet member updates to inform their scrutiny work planning for the coming year.

2. Adult Social Care (ASC)

2.1. Safeguarding

- 2.2. The Camden Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board continued to improve how local services work together to keep adults safe. This quarter, the main areas of focus were self-neglect, mental health, and people facing multiple disadvantage. The Safeguarding Adults Review Implementation Group met regularly to check that lessons from past safeguarding reviews are actually being used in day-to-day work. Partner organisations shared examples of how they are changing practice on the frontline, improving decision-making and sharing information better. This has helped staff be more confident, consistent and curious when dealing with complex and high-risk situations.
- 2.3. This quarter also saw the launch of a new Cuckooing Panel. This brings together services such as Adult Social Care (ASC), housing, Community Safety and the police to better protect adults whose homes are being taken over or used by criminals. The panel helps agencies share information, manage risks together and take action to protect people and disrupt criminal activity.
- 2.4. More safeguarding concerns are being referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), following changes to mental health social work in June 2025. This shows that concerns are being spotted earlier and reported more clearly. While the higher number and complexity of cases has made some decisions take longer, cases are closely overseen and safeguarding support for residents remains strong.

2.5. Service Pressures

- 2.6. Adult Social Care continues to see unprecedented levels of people requesting support, with more than 4,500 people at the end of Q3 25/26. If current levels continue, around 6,000 people are expected to request support this year - the

highest number ever recorded for Adult Social Care and the fifth consecutive year of rising referrals.

- 2.7. In addition, people approaching Adult Social Care are presenting with increasingly complex needs, often requiring more intensive and higher-cost care and support.
- 2.8. The transfer of initial contact arrangements from ASC to Contact Camden, continues to embed and is intentionally supporting earlier engagement, resulting in high volumes of initial assessments. Alongside this Adult Social Care's assessment and review processes and forms have been reviewed and updated, with the new workflow and forms now live.
- 2.9. These arrangements are designed to strengthen early intervention, ensuring people receive advice, information and signposting at the earliest opportunity and that more proportionate responses are made where appropriate.
- 2.10. Over the next twelve months Adult Social Care expects to see these processes mature, with more proportionate assessments, reduced duplication and a reduction in outstanding work. Neighbourhood and service managers continue to monitor allocation and workload closely to ensure equity and timely responses for people drawing on care and support.
- 2.11. **Who Cares?**
- 2.12. *Who Cares?* is a borough-wide online conversation about adult social care. As part of Britain's largest trial of digital democracy, the project uses digital technology to enable participation both at scale and in depth, exploring new ways to place residents at the heart of decision-making.
- 2.13. In December, Phase 2 brought together a randomly selected, representative Resident Panel of 41 people for three online sessions. Panel members heard from seven experts about the care and support system and its challenges, then worked in small groups to refine a set of ambitions for care and support in Camden and nationally. The outputs from Phase 2 have been shared for reflection and feedback from anyone aged 16 or over in Camden until 8 February.
- 2.14. The Panel will reconvene at the end of February 2026 to consider funding challenges, roles and responsibilities, and next steps in the conversation. To learn more about the project and what residents have shared so far, visit the project website: <https://who-cares.commonplace.is/en-GB/>
- 2.15. **Community Equipment**
- 2.16. The new provider of community equipment, Provide, started to implement their service across the 8 boroughs that make up the North London Equipment Partnership (NLEP) in early October 2025. The service was completely new but as a critical service in extraordinary circumstances it was necessary to slowly start delivery and repair services alongside development of the new service and IT systems. Progress has been rapid due to

commitment from both Provide and officers across the 8 boroughs and progress up to December was noted in the last update.

- 2.17. Provide continued to make significant progress during December. They began regular deliveries to equipment stores in hospitals to support hospital discharge, the service opened up to all health and social care prescribers across the 8 boroughs and minor adaptations and special equipment teams were established. Around 4,000 pieces of equipment are now delivered across the 8 boroughs daily, and the recycling and efficient use of equipment are being maximised. An enhanced emergency service was in place during the holiday period and a small number of equipment deliveries and repairs were made on each bank holiday.
- 2.18. Implementation of the service has necessarily focussed on the delivery, repair and maintenance of equipment to ensure residents are safe. Implementation is now moving into the next phase and the focus will be on improving any identified gaps, ensuring quality, developing the reporting framework for activity and finance and building the governance structure of the NLEP. The NLEP team, hosted by Camden, is being recruited and will work in partnership with Provide to develop the contract over the next few years.
- 2.19. The service was formally launched on the 19th January 2026 with officers from across the 8 boroughs and Provide present at the event.
- 2.20. **Home Care Transformation**
- 2.21. Over the past two years, council officers have worked closely with care providers to test new ways of delivering care at home. This work has helped them understand what leads to the best quality care for residents, while also improving pay, support and working conditions for care and reablement workers. Learning from these trials has been used to create a new approach to care and support at home. This approach is now part of a longer-term commissioning strategy that looks ahead, builds on people's strengths, and aims to prevent or delay the need for formal care services where possible.
- 2.22. The proposed new Care and Support at Home approach was presented to Cabinet in January 2026 and approved. A competitive tender process will take place in the first half of 2026 to select care at home providers. The new contracts will be organised around local neighbourhood areas and will focus on building strong, trusting relationships between workers and residents. They will promote care that is sensitive to people's experiences and backgrounds, encourage learning and shared values, and reflect Camden's wider priorities. The contracts will also aim to improve working conditions by giving care and reablement workers time and space to meet with colleagues, support one another, and reflect on their work together.
- 2.23. **Carers Board**
- 2.24. Delivery of the current Carers Action Plan priorities remains on track. The Board's governance structures are embedded and with three task-and-finish

groups in place (information, advice and communications; mental health and carers conversations), which are actively coproducing proposals for action plan delivery with carers. The programme has moved into full implementation, supported by a live work plan, a developing carers data dashboard, strengthened health engagement, and ongoing collaboration across Adult Social Care and partner organisations. Key areas of operational focus include longstanding challenges in carers' conversations, the need for clearer practice workflow design, contingency planning and hospital discharge, and improved integration of cross-service feedback into performance monitoring. Preparations are also underway for a boroughwide carers' campaign for Carers Week 2026.

- 2.25. In July it will be two years since the Carers Action Plan launched at full Council meeting. Attention is now turning to ensure ongoing sustainability of the current programme, leadership continuity, and the future model for coproduction. This includes proposals for an evaluation. Strategic decisions are required on governance alignment, leadership handover, and embedding carers' priorities within wider Adult Social Care and health system developments to ensure momentum is maintained into the next phase of the programme. Further information on the Carers Action Plan can be found on its website: <https://carersactionplan.camden.gov.uk/>.

3. Health and Wellbeing

3.1. "Know what you're drinking" alcohol reduction campaign

- 3.2. Camden's Alcohol Strategy identifies middle-aged and older adults as a priority group for prevention. Many do not recognise they are drinking at harmful levels due to the normalisation of alcohol, and routines of regular drinking. Residents also find it challenging to understand alcohol guidelines, and find units to be particularly confusing.
- 3.3. In December, the Health and Wellbeing Department launched the 'Know what you're drinking' alcohol reduction campaign to help lower risk drinkers aged 45 to 65 to understand their drinking patterns and cut down if they need to. 'Know what you're drinking' was developed as an action from Camden's Alcohol Strategy, and provides clear, simple actions residents can take if they do want to cut down their alcohol intake: supporting long term improvement to health and wellbeing as well as shorter term benefits around sleep, mood, mental health and weight management.
- 3.4. The campaign signposts to a [campaign webpage](#)¹ on the Council's website, and to [the free TryDry app](#)² from Alcohol Change UK so that residents can log their alcoholic drinks and units. A mix of print, digital and face to face channels signpost to the campaign webpage. A printed leaflet with a unit calculator and calendar gives residents the option to record their units and drinks with a paper and pen – these leaflets have been distributed to libraries,

¹ <https://www.camden.gov.uk/know-what-youre-drinking>

² <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/managing-your-drinking/dry-january/get-involved/the-dry-january-app>

GPs, pharmacies, leisure centres, sheltered housing and VCS partners, as well as a direct mailout to tenants and leaseholders in the target age group. Posters and leaflets in community languages have also been shared with partners, and bus stop adverts are live for 8 weeks. The campaign has been featured in the Camden Magazine and in an advertising wrap of the Camden New Journal, as well as in partner and council newsletters. Paid and organic social media continues, and community outreach is planned during the campaign and throughout the year.



- 3.5. The campaign will last through to the start of March. Impact will be measured using social media and website analytics. This is the first approach to an alcohol campaign, with further iterations to follow.

3.6. **Reducing Drug Related Deaths and Harm**

- 3.7. The rate of drug related deaths is increasing locally, regionally and nationally and the presence of adulterated and high strength drug supply also pose a public health challenge. As a result, reducing drug related deaths and harm became a short-term priority of Camden's Health and Wellbeing Board this year. This also supports similar national priorities outlined in the national ten-year drug strategy: [From Harm to Hope](#).³
- 3.8. Health and Wellbeing officers held a well-attended event for partners to come together to learn about emerging issues for people using drugs which are likely to cause harm and for some people, death. At the event, guest speakers shared research on better supporting people using opiates whilst in hospital, the impact of providing safer smoking equipment and some innovative communication work in Leeds. Partners were able to access naloxone training and to contribute their own thoughts about the challenges and opportunities for the borough to consider. The identified challenges and opportunities will be

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

further explored by the newly established Drug and Alcohol Partnership Group (this group is Chaired by Health and Wellbeing officers and held its first meeting in November).

- 3.9. To further support the Health and Wellbeing Board priority, officers have commissioned harm reduction interventions which will be implemented in the new year. These include:
- A drug checking service provided by the charity The Loop. The service is due to start in spring 2026 (dependent on Home Office licence approval)
 - Production of a library of harm reduction materials which will target specific cohorts e.g. young people, women, LGBTQI community. The materials can be used to share harm reduction messages via social media and other communication channels.
 - Training programme for Camden's night-time economy venues; the training will include information of changing drug trends, and how venues can safely manage a drug-harm incident if one occurs on their premises.

3.10. Healthy Weight Acceleration and the Food Mission

- 3.11. There has been consistent feedback from frontline workers about the need for training around supporting the people they work with to move to a healthier weight. As there are few training programmes available, Health & Wellbeing have developed a training programme working first with the Enablement Team focusing on good hydration and nutrition support for those recently discharged from hospital. This was in response to a training gap for staff and a key need to reduce the risk of readmission from these risk factors. Two training sessions have been held so far, for 14 staff in each session, lasting two hours. The photos below were taken from the most recent training session held at Charlie Ratchford Court this month. The plan is to train all staff in the service, developing a train the trainer model to ensure a sustainable programme. Learning from this training prototype will be drawn on to support the needs of other frontline workers.



- 3.12. The **Healthier Catering Commitment** is starting to be rolled out again in Camden. This is a London-wide scheme that encourages caterers to make small changes to how they prepare their food, and this can have a big impact on the health of their customers. Eligible businesses need to meet food safety standards and meet a minimum of eight healthier eating criteria from a list of 25, including: how they use fats, oils and salt; the availability of lower sugar drinks and snacks, and fruit and vegetables; four compulsory criteria, and for businesses that fry food, a further three. Businesses are encouraged to sign up to more than the minimum, and to add more over time.
- 3.13. The first seven businesses in Camden have been signed up to the commitment. The team will be building on this, testing approaches to working in specific geographies, school catchments, and newly registered suitable businesses.

4. **Health System updates**

- 4.1. **North London NHS Foundation Trust and Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust Merger**
- 4.2. North London NHS Foundation Trust and Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust have confirmed plans to explore merger by acquisition of Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. The transaction is intended to enhance and strengthen children and adult mental health services in North London and will establish North London Foundation Trust as a leader in mental health research and education.
- 4.3. Both parties still intend to complete the process by 1 April 2026. In parallel, plans are progressing to implement a North Central London Provider Collaborative arrangement, bringing together NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) providers (NLFT including what is now the Tavistock, the Royal Free and Whittington Health) to take on some delegated strategic responsibilities from the ICB.

- 4.4. In 2026/7 the focus will be on developing a more consistent and accessible model of care across NCL, addressing entrenched disparities, promoting equity in health and minimising duplication.
- 4.5. In Camden, we are establishing a new local CAMHS Partnership Board chaired by Nana Bonsu, Director of Relational Practice, to help us sustain our strong local relationships with NHS CAMHS colleagues, continue delivering local health and social care priorities and provide ongoing assurance about the impact of the Council's investment into CAMHS services.