

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People & Culture 2026	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People & Culture	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee	DATE 23 February 2026
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People & Culture provides the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee with her annual report for discussion. The report gives an overview of Camden’s intervention approaches to address disproportionality, explores how we incorporate the voices of our residents into the Council’s work, evaluates our early intervention and prevention approaches, celebrates our vast culture offer, assesses how we respond to social inequality while also supporting an inclusive economy and job attainment and conservation in Camden.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report</p> <p>Contact Officer: Hannah Bennai, Cabinet Officer Corporate Services 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG Telephone: 020 7974 1750 Email: hannah.bennai@camden.gov.uk</p>	
RECOMMENDATION	
The Committee is asked to comment on and note the contents of the report.	

Signed: 

Councillor Sabrina Francis, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People & Culture

Date: 9 February 2026

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. This annual report provides an overview of the activities and achievements within the Jobs, Young People & Culture Portfolio over the past year, December 2024 to January 2026. It summarises key initiatives and strategic priorities aimed at taking an early intervention and prevention approach to youth violence while also taking a lead in the creation of jobs and supporting culture across the borough.
- 1.2. The report is to be presented to the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee to fulfil constitutional requirements for accountability and transparency.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Throughout the year, the Jobs, Young People and Culture portfolio has continued to play a central role in advancing opportunity, inclusion and safety for Camden residents, with a strong focus on young people and those facing the greatest barriers. The portfolio has worked across services and with partners to respond to need, strengthen communities and deliver practical improvements to people's day to day lives.
- 2.2. Supporting and protecting young people has remained a core responsibility. The Council has continued to work closely with partners including the police, schools, community organisations and young people themselves to improve safety and reduce harm. A significant achievement was the recognition of Camden's Youth Justice Service, where His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons commended Camden's strong culture of care, effective leadership and partnership working.
- 2.3. The portfolio has continued to lead the delivery of the Camden Youth Mission, supporting young people to access education, training and employment. Work during this period has strengthened pathways into academic and vocational routes, ensuring young people are better supported to build secure and fulfilling futures.
- 2.4. Helping residents find good quality work continues to be a priority as we support initiatives aimed at residents furthest from the labour market. Progress has been made in strengthening the Council's employment and skills offer to help more residents secure stable, well-paid and meaningful jobs.
- 2.5. This portfolio has continued to champion arts, culture and heritage, an essential part of community wellbeing within the borough. Camden continues to hold a strong sense of place, community pride and belonging across the borough and the Council continues to hold events and celebrations to honour our diversity.
- 2.6. Reading and literacy have continued to be recognised as essential to every day life, from employment and wellbeing to accessing services, employment and education. Our libraries continue to reflect the importance of literacy and the role it plays in enabling residents to navigate systems and opportunities with confidence.

- 2.7. Overall, the work delivered between December 2024 and January 2026 demonstrates continued progress in supporting Camden's people and places, while strengthening opportunity and wellbeing across the borough.
- 2.8. This report sets out the progress and impact delivered by the Jobs, Young People and Culture portfolio from December 2024 to January 2026.

3. Growth and the Knowledge Economy

- 3.1. The Knowledge Quarter is one of the most important innovation districts in Europe, with specialisms in health and life sciences, AI and machine learning, as well as screen industries. The Quarter is one of the fastest growing parts of the London economy, adding significantly to Gross Value Added.
- 3.2. Camden and our partners have been stewarding the innovation district as a key place for growth in London and the UK. Covering Kings Cross, Bloomsbury and Euston this dense walkable neighbourhood has seen the different sector clusters grow and cross-pollinate, with research universities, institutes and hospitals, now joined by investors, corporate Head Quarters, start-ups and growing companies.
- 3.3. Euston represents a significant opportunity to grow this further, with potential for additional £41bn in GVA once complete. While its strength was well acknowledged in the 2018 Science and Innovation Audit that partners produced, the area is now the most mature of all London's innovation clusters and was recognised as such by the London Growth Plan which was published in 2025.
- 3.4. As the innovation district grows and develops, there is an opportunity to build on these strengths. This year, Camden has been in dialogue with developers, investors, operators and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises(SMEs) in the Knowledge Quarter, to explore what makes an inclusive innovation district, with a specific focus on affordable workspace in Life Science and Lab enabled development.
- 3.5. The Council has agreed a proposition with a group of key developers and institutions around convening to agree a vision for Life Sciences and AI in the area and co-investing in an ecosystem coordination function which would work to map the life sciences eco-system more clearly and build a regular programme of events and communications. We intend to invest in people and resources with a specific focus on the life science and tech sectors in the KQ. We want to strengthen the cluster, support the institutions and companies who are here, as well as attract new people to land, and support our inclusive programmes. What we want to do is:
 - Agree a vision
 - Map the eco-system more, and data on investment and outputs.
 - Build to a regular programme of events and communications for the eco-system

- Establish clear partnership arrangements to steer this activity

Short-term outcomes

- Increased number of events to promote collaboration and the sector activity
- Delivery of lab workspace and housing to meet demand

Long-term outcomes

- Increased retention of enterprises Increased levels of investment and growth
- Increased number of local residents in work in the sector

- 3.6. The Council continues to secure social value opportunities through our planning obligations and through social value in our procurement. In 2025 development schemes approved by the Planning Committee have secured more than £1.5million for employment and skills support, 380 construction apprenticeships and 65 end use apprenticeships. Developers have also committed to engaging with the businesses and organisations who occupy their developments once built, to encourage them to engage with schools through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) and with Good Work Camden to increase local recruitment. Through the procurement of Council contracts we have created apprenticeship opportunities with suppliers such as Lambert Smith Hampton and delivered Green Skills Training at the Euston Skills Centre with The AD Construction Group.
- 3.7. This year we have worked to support the development of the draft new Local Plan with an updated policy covering affordable workspace provision through planning and development. The policy now provides greater clarity on the hierarchy of approaches to delivery; firstly, on-site provision of affordable workspace, secondly, if on-site is not suitable, off-site provision of affordable workspace on another site in the borough and finally, where it is mutually beneficial, consider a payment in lieu (PIL) of provision that can be invested by the Council, which is equivalent to the cost of on-site delivery. There is a significant opportunity to support the right infrastructure for high growth sectors and to redistribute investment to support enterprise in all our neighbourhoods.
- 3.8. New affordable workspace offers are being developed through the planning application process and the obligations which are secured as a result. This year's activity included:
- Office space in the Council Community Investment Programme (CIP) development at Liddell Place opening, with 20% of desks being made available to businesses registered in Camden to benefit from a 50% discount. This space is managed by IWG on a long-lease from the Council
 - Outline agreements for Euston Tower, for Town Hall by Il Bottaccio and for LifeArc at 105 Judd Street.
 - Successfully finding a new operator for the Undercraft workspace under the Ludham Estate, replacing the London School of Mosaic following their liquidation. The new operator ACAVA took over at the start of September and secured, at the time, the tenancies of 49 organisations across 55 studio spaces

3.9. This year we have also conducted research into Affordable Workspace in Life Sciences - a discreet piece of work was commissioned to develop our understanding of what kinds of businesses benefit from affordable, or accessible, lab space in the sector and what their needs are. The research included desk research and interviews with SMEs, lab operators and developers. Findings were discussed at a roundtable with developers, operators and institutions with a significant role in the Life Sciences ecosystem to refine recommendations. The work will play a role in how we shape development in the Knowledge Quarter area and support the growth of the Life Sciences sector in Camden.

Working with our Business Networks

3.10. Over the past 12 months, the Council has maintained and strengthened its contacts with business representatives through our Five Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Camden Place Board [consisting of BIDs and other business partnerships including commercial landlords].

3.11. We have continued to work closely with our BIDs as part of their day-to-day activities and as part of wider projects or collaborative pieces of work. This year Central District Alliance (CDA) undertook a successful re-ballot securing a further 5 year term and the Council will be support re-ballots for Camden and Euston Town and Hatton Garden in 2026. In 2025 the Council has worked closely with all of our BIDs to co-ordinate an approach to issues of community safety and rough sleeping in their areas. In Euston we supported the Euston Town BID with their Drummond Street lighting scheme and three artist-led mural installations in alleyways identified as intimidating and poorly monitored, as well as with Chalton Street signage and the lighting poetry projection project.

Signposting and partnership

3.12. We use our business support webpages and business e-newsletter to signpost businesses to the business support programmes available to them. In 2025 we have strengthened our partnership with Grow London Local (GLL), the unified business support brand for London provided by London & Partners, ensuring that local provision is listed on their directory and delivering joint events for small businesses. GLL staff also deliver information sessions and drop ins at community locations in the borough.

3.13. In 2025 I signed up to the Federation of Small Businesses' Local Leadership Pledge and committed to becoming the Small Business Champion for Camden, reinforcing our championing small businesses as a priority and embedding their needs within our policies and support programmes. The pledge was announced at the opening our new workspace for small businesses, delivered through the Community Investment Programme, in Liddell Place, West Hampstead.

3.14. In addition to signposting and partnerships, the Council directly-delivers business support initiatives, such as Rebel Business School and the Future Camden Fund (see below), where we see specific opportunities to deliver our missions. In 2025,

the Council and our partners supported more than 470 businesses through our programmes and events.

Rebel Business School

3.15. In 2025, we worked with the Rebel Business School to deliver neighbourhood based business start-up training and supported potential new market traders to take advantage of the night market initiative in Inverness Street in February. They also delivered two in-person courses at The Old Diorama Arts Centre in Euston and the Abbey Centre in Kilburn, three online sessions, and a series of taster sessions in our neighbourhoods, including Gospel Oak, Camden Town, Regents Place and Kilburn. 140 people attended these courses.

Future Camden Fund

3.16. The Future Camden Fund (FCF) is the council's programme of finance and business support for socially impactful early-stage businesses that are either based in Camden or have a strong connection to the borough. It is a blended repayable finance and grant fund developed by the Inclusive Economy service for young businesses delivering social value in Camden or with underrepresented founders.

3.17. In 2025 we made 11 new business awards through the fund, taking the total supported since the programme launched in early 2022 to 39. Businesses have been awarded a range of grants, match-traded grants or loans. 53% of businesses on our programme are female-founded or led, 21% of entrepreneurs have a disability; and 63% are Global Majority ethnicity. So far 83% of match trading grant recipients are on track to reaching their income growth targets.

3.18. Through our investment in these businesses we have secured a range of social value benefits for the borough including 826 specialist consultancy hours donated to Camden's VCS and training for unemployed and young people in areas such as retail and product development to create a clothing product line, soft skills and work experience in the coffee and hospitality industry, job readiness training and sustainable fashion.

Inclusive Business Network

3.19. The Inclusive Business Network (IBN) continues to encourage and promote good work standards. The network has strengthened its reach and influence across 2025, growing to over 50 employer members actively engaging with inclusive employment activity.

3.20. The launch of the IBN website within the wider Good Work Camden platform increased visibility, improved access for employers, and created a dedicated online space for member resources and engagement.

3.21. Through well-attended training and close partnership working with Good Work Camden and other council services, IBN supported employers to improve inclusive employment practice and contributed to wider diversity and inclusion outcomes.

4. Employment Support & Jobs

4.1. Good Work Camden (GWC) is the Council's employment support service. Neighbourhood-based job hub advisors work with residents, no matter what their employment status, to support them to improve their employment situation. GWC is a neighbourhood-based, relational and strengths-based service with no eligibility criteria. We work with people for as long as they need us and we value outcomes along the way, such as increased well-being and confidence and engagement in education and training. The team provide one to one support but also a range of community-based employability workshops and training sessions, with an embedded benefits advice offer.

4.2. This year, our neighbourhood job hubs worked with Adult Community Learning to support residents to gain their Level 2 Food Hygiene and a partnership with Future Dreams, a breast cancer charity based in King's Cross, has led to a new volunteering partnership to practice kitchen skills and cookery in a beautiful, calm space. We continue to support residents to gain their Level 1 and then Level 2 Food Hygiene qualifications, and then move into relevant work experience should they wish to.

4.3. In 2025 our neighbourhood job hubs provided one to one advice to 410 people who went on to develop personal action plans and supported 353 people into work, self-employment or training. A further 189 people were supported into construction jobs through our Euston Skills Centre and 206 people have started apprenticeships.

Jobs and Skills Fair 2025

4.4. The annual GWC Jobs & Skills Event was held in May at the British Library, attracting over 300 local attendees. Employers such as The Crick, Transport for London (TFL), National Health Service (NHS), and Shaftesbury Theatre took part, offering panel discussions and one-to-one networking. A Networking Masterclass was hosted in advance by the Regent's Park Job Hub at the Last Word Café at the British Library. A number of job outcomes were confirmed following the event.

Sector specific interventions - LIFT, NHS partnerships, Hospitality

4.5. We deliver specialist programming and brokerage within Good Work Camden's universal offer to reflect the opportunities in our economy:

- We are part of a three-borough partnership (with Islington and Hackney) which aims to deliver more inclusive pathways into jobs in the creative, tech and scientific sectors - the LIFT programme.

- We have dedicated resources to support residents into the NHS and social care jobs, working in partnership with the North Central London Integrated Care Board.
- GWC also includes the Euston Skills Centre, where we deliver construction and built environment skills and employment brokerage, including green skills.
- We are working on a new offer around hospitality with our partners at Kings Cross Recruit and Dominus Hospitality – a major hotel investor and developer.

Disability Job Hub and Work and Health

- 4.6. The Disability Job Hub team provide 1-1 support and are co-located in several locations within the community across the borough, including a regular presence at the Greenwood Centre. Advice includes CV, interview and job search support and also advice on reasonable adjustments, Access to Work applications and in-work support. The team offer benefits advice and often advocate for individual residents with employers.
- 4.7. In 2025 the Disability Job Hub delivered skills-for-work training for residents with Learning Disabilities, specialist Autism pathways to employment programmes and disability equality training for employers, as well as hosting a Reverse Jobs Fair for disabled residents to meet directly with employers. The Reverse Jobs Fair, developed in partnership with Islington Council, Unity Works and Kaleidoscope, saw ten residents present their skills and experience and host stalls, while employers were invited to move around the room with questions prepared by the event organisers. Employers attending included; Arsenal, Shaftesbury Theatre, Oliver Bonas, Morgan Sindall and Erith.
- 4.8. The Disability Job Hub has created 10 Paid Work Placements for disabled residents. These are up to 6 months, paid at London Living Wage. Placements are co-designed to be fully supportive and were delivered within various sectors such as; User Experience (UX) Design, IT, admin, carpentry, events, marketing and more. These placements regularly lead to longer term work opportunities for our residents.
- 4.9. In 2025 36 Disabled people attended our in-house workshops and training sessions, 9 were supported into work, 12 into volunteering and 5 into education or training.
- 4.10. The challenge of integrating health, disability and employment support provision remain critical and are at the heart of the 10 year NHS plan, the Get Britain Working White Paper and the Keep Britain Working review findings.
- 4.11. In Camden we are working closely with our partners in the NHS and with Central London Forward to ensure that the commissioned, sub-regional work and health programmes, Work Well and Connect to Work, are effectively integrated in Camden. We have established a local Work and Health Steering Group which brings together health and work providers to coordinate activity in our area, and our

Public Health team have commissioned a GP lead to support this work and embed it in primary care.

Refugee Support

- 4.12. To date over 200 refugees have been supported by our Good Work Camden refugee advisors, plus 108 asylum seekers in our contingency hotels. 90% of registered participants were enrolled in education courses of some kind – largely essential ESOL, but also other functional and digital skills programmes. Other outcomes include people supported into jobs, volunteering and work experience and delivery of insight events with partners from the NHS and care sectors.
- 4.13. In July we piloted community language workshops, running two Bengali and Somali language sessions to help residents better understand how ESOL progression ties in to career opportunities and with the aim of encouraging enrolment in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses starting in September.
- 4.14. In October and November 2025, the Council delivered a Voice and Pronunciation coaching workshop for refugees and asylum seekers registered with Good Work Camden. The objective of the workshop was to help participants in essential articulation skills in English pronunciation to enhance verbal communication skills and confidence in job interviews.
- 4.15. We started our first full term of drop-in English conversation classes for ESOL learners at the Euston Skills Centre. These conversation classes are intended to run alongside formal, accredited ESOL which is provided through Further Education Colleges and through Adult Community Learning, providing an opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to practice their English and, just as importantly, to build their social networks. A Job Hub Advisor is on hand to support residents before and after the sessions.

Euston Skills Centre

- 4.16. The Council, in partnership with our training partner The College of North West London, continue to train over 200 people a year in construction skills at the Euston Skills Centre (ESC), and to broker apprenticeship and job opportunities across development sites through commitments secured via planning obligations.
- 4.17. In 2025 the ESC delivered two Groundwork and Civil Engineering Bootcamps. These are short employer led training programmes supporting adults to gain sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with an employer. These initiatives help unemployed Camden residents access employment on sites across the borough – filling roles secured through section 106 (S106) and social value.
- 4.18. In September, the ESC and High Speed 2 HS2 launched Euston Skills Yard – a purpose-built outdoor training space on the Euston HS2 construction site that has

been delivered in partnership with HS2, Skills People, and employers from HS2's supply chain, including Mace Dragados, Mace and Wates. It will facilitate skills courses in civil engineering, groundworks, and construction operations. The courses have been co-designed with construction industry leaders to meet current skills shortages and workforce needs, with every participant guaranteed an interview for a job at the end of the course. To date, three successful cohorts have completed the program, resulting in over 15 participants securing full-time employment. Our goal is to deliver one course per month, with training aligned to job opportunities across various Camden sites.

4.19. In November, ESC hosted a successful social value contractor information session. Camden Council social value contractors attended to learn about the training centre's offer and Camden's social value objectives and their implications for contractors. Two apprentices recruited via ESC shared their experiences, emphasizing the importance of employing apprentices to build a future workforce. The session concluded with a tour of the centre, where contractors met students engaged in practical workshop activities as part of their diploma.

4.20. In 2025 the Euston Skills Centre further developed its after-school enrichment programme broadly focused on careers as part of the Camden Education Strategy Opportunity Centres initiative. Opportunity Centres facilitate learning beyond the school day. At the ESC we have delivered after school sessions in design and the built environment, money management, entrepreneurship and enterprise skills, animation, fashion design, beauty therapies and archaeology with the Museum of London. In the summer, the centre hosted courses specifically for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) students in film, fashion upcycling, drawing, woodwork, jewellery making and British Sign Language. Through the Opportunity Centres programme, the centre has reached 188 young people to date.

Youth Mission: Camden Future Talent

4.21. Our youth mission talks directly to the objectives of delivering inclusive growth. It postulates that every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure. The Council has consolidated its universal offer, bringing services closer together and articulating the offer for young people and their families through a Youth Talent Guarantee.

4.22. The Camden Future Talent team work with other teams across the council to deliver this guarantee through brokerage of jobs, apprenticeships, internships and work experience.

4.23. The Council's apprenticeships programme offers structured training and paid employment. Roles are paid at London Living Wage and ring-fenced for Camden residents. This year 48 people have been supported into apprenticeships with a wide range of employers including the Council, the Francis Crick Institute, University College London (UCL), Lime, KPMS, PACE Camden and Koko. The team have

supported work experience for 21 people in 2025 – this is in addition to the year 12 STEAM work experience offer. Work experience was hosted by Council teams and also secured through our social value levers. Host organisations have included Lambert Smth Hampton, Arup, Archio, Bauer Media and AECOM.

- 4.24. In April we welcomed a our second cohort of 8 care-experienced interns who will be employed with us for 21 months across a range of teams including member support, children and learning, sports development, capital works and adult social care. Internships are paid at London Living Wage and come with a wrap-around support offer which includes mental health support, personal finance management and mentoring. Internships are viewed as paid learning opportunities rather than jobs, allowing participants to make mistakes and learn. Interns are offered an opportunity to transfer to an apprenticeship if that works for them and are supported to apply for their next job as they near the end of their time with us. Success is measured in terms of increased confidence and improved employability skills, leading to sustainment in the internship and onward progression. Of the last cohort of 6 care experienced interns who finished at the beginning of 2025, 4 are still employed here.
- 4.25. In November, we launched our new campaign Camden 100 in 100 – Pave the Way. The borough-wide campaign aims to secure 100 accessible employment opportunities in 100 days for residents who need them most. This includes care leavers, refugees and those with disabilities who can often be excluded from the labour market due to inaccessible recruitment systems. The campaign ends at the end of National Apprenticeship Week, 9th-15th February. At the time of writing (3rd February) we are at over 90 pledges and fully expect to reach our target.
- 4.26. In 2025 the Council launched 'Full Potential Camden', a Youth Guarantee Trailblazer funded by DWP/GLA. The high level aims of this national programme are to *bring services together and try new things*. In Camden we have designed our programme to be highly individualised and to draw expertise from our leaving care team and our employment support team to create a new project team who provide dedicated and patient support and bespoke action planning. We have also employed a care-experienced Peer Advocate (a graduate of our internship scheme described at 4.27) whose role it is to help us enrol young people on the project. The Trailblazer team work closely with the Camden Leaving Care team, the Virtual School, Good Work Camden and our partners at the Drive Forward Foundation. The Camden programme is part of a wider initiative across Central London managed by our Sub Regional Partnership, Central London Forward. A second year for the programme was announced by Liz Kendall, at the time Minister for Work and Pensions, at the Euston Skills Centre where she met a number of our programme participants. More than 50 young people are engaged in the programme and we've supported 14 into work and 23 into training. 14 have reported increased confidence following their participation in the programme.

Youth Pathways Finder

- 4.27. The Youth Pathways Finder project aims to provide one to one support to a small caseload of young people aged 18-25 who have been involved in the youth justice service. In 2025, the project supported 33 young people and delivered 15 paid work placements, representing significant growth compared to 2024.
- 4.28. The project achieved a strong 86% placement success rate, with participants either completing their placement or progressing positively within it. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the program in supporting young people who face complex barriers, including care experience, mental health concerns, SEND, and previous involvement with the criminal justice system. Intensive pre-placement support and ongoing mentoring have contributed to this high level of engagement and retention.
- 4.29. Over 70% of participants progressed into further employment or accredited training following their placement or IAG support. This includes participants moving into apprenticeships, college courses, vocational training, and permanent employment opportunities, highlighting the program's role in creating sustainable career pathways.
- 4.30. Extending placements from three to six months had a measurable positive impact. Care-experienced young people accessed up to 36 hours per week, allowing them to establish consistent daily routines, improve time management, and develop workplace skills. Longer placements also supported improvements in resilience, professional behaviour, and social skills, contributing to greater independence and long-term employability.
- 4.31. Participants accessed opportunities across a broad and expanding range of industries, including rail maintenance, construction, hospitality, creative and performing arts, beauty, museums, motor mechanics, and arboriculture. This diversity allowed the program to match participants' interests to placement opportunities, fostering engagement, skill development, and clearer career direction.
- 4.32. The project strengthened its Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision supporting 18 young people in 2025, a 12.5% increase from the previous year. These sessions provided tailored support for participants not yet ready for placements, helping them address barriers, build confidence, and access pathways into education, training, or employment.
- 4.33. Engagement with care leavers, prison leavers, and young people with SEND or mental health concerns increased significantly in 2025, with care leaver engagement up by 40%, prison leaver engagement up by 35%, and young people with SEND or mental health concerns up by 30%. This targeted support included pre-release meetings, tailored mentoring, and partnership working with specialist organisations, enabling smoother transitions into placements and community reintegration.

4.34. The project actively removed financial and practical barriers to participation by providing travel support, food assistance, professional equipment, digital devices, specialist software, and funded accredited training. These interventions ensured participants could engage fully in placements and learning, creating equitable opportunities for all young people regardless of their circumstances.

4.35. Employer engagement remained strong, with consistently positive feedback highlighting participants' work ethic, reliability, and willingness to learn. Pre-placement matching meetings ensured employers understood participants' needs and were prepared to provide supportive environments. Employers also benefited from guidance and ongoing liaison with the project, which helped address challenges early and contributed to sustainable placement outcomes

Camden STEAM

4.36. Camden's STEAM initiative is dedicated to reaching every young person in the borough from early years to post-16 every year, inspiring young people with exciting employer encounters. With a network of over 60 businesses and more than 200 STEAM Ambassador volunteers, Camden STEAM aims to break down barriers, inspiring young people toward employment and connecting them into the talent pipeline with an emphasis on STEM and creativity.

4.37. In the 2024/25 academic year, 13,000 students took part in 20,000 employer encounters across Camden schools, facilitated by the STEAM programme and its network. Over 500 work experience placements were also mobilised across the STEAM partnership.

4.38. Camden students are now accessing the London AI Campus, which has been established as a collaboration between Google, Camden Learning and the council. It aims to inspire, inform and educate students and teachers in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital skills.

5. Culture in Camden

5.1. Camden is globally recognised as a centre of culture. The borough is home to national and international cultural institutions such as the Roundhouse, the British Museum, Hampstead Theatre and the British Library, alongside creative businesses and grassroots organisations and artists. The Council plays a pivotal role within the local and national cultural ecosystem, through strategic support and collaboration, contributing to the growth and sustainability of the sector. Key highlights include:

- Having 31 Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations
- Being home to a number of Department for Culture, Media and Sport and sponsored organisations
- Recognised as 4th most popular film location in London
- Being the 6th highest evening and night time economy in the UK

- And having cultural and creative businesses account for 18.8% gross value added, higher than national average of 6.9%.

- 5.2. The creative and cultural industries have been identified as a key growth sector within the London Growth Plan, contributing approximately £52 billion to London's economy each year. With one in six jobs now based in the creative economy, the sector plays a vital role in driving innovation, employment, and economic development. This aligns closely with the Council's strategic ambition to promote inclusive and sustainable growth and our commitment to harnessing the potential of this sector to deliver meaningful benefits for communities across the borough.
- 5.3. Camden is a diverse and international borough with many artists, cultural organisations and creative industries choosing it as a place to live, study and work. The borough's population of 274,000 inhabitants is ethnically diverse, with over 140 languages and dialects spoken daily. In 2021, 40.5% of residents were from Asian, Black and other ethnic/cultural groups. According to the 2021 Census ethnic group categorisation, Black Africans form the largest minority ethnic group in seven Camden wards, Bangladeshi the largest minority in six, Chinese in one and Indian in one ward. Camden's largest communities with a distinctive cultural identity are the Bangladeshi, Indian, Chinese, Somali and Arab. Overall, in Camden, 21% of people aged 3+ did not speak English as their main language.
- 5.4. Camden is a relatively young borough, with a large population of students and young people living in the area. 43% of residents are aged under 30. 15.2% are reported as being disabled under the definition of the Equalities Act (2010), meaning that they assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses. Camden also has a diverse Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus (LGBTQIA+) community, with 17% identifying as LGBTQIA+, higher than the national average of 14%.
- 5.5. In a national context, local authorities remain the largest public funders of culture, and Camden continue to take a proactive approach to cultural development—particularly through unlocking additional investment via Section 106 agreements, as well as strategic and local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, positions us as a leader in driving cultural engagement, resilience and growth.
- 5.6. Culture plays a vital role in embracing the vibrancy and identities that come together to make our borough, Camden. Through celebrating and promoting our diverse cultures, we create a sense of belonging and unity for our residents, while also attracting visitors and fostering community pride. Throughout 2025 we delivered an exciting programme of cultural events to showcase the boroughs local talent and keep culture at the heart of our development and growth.

Camden High Street Live

- 5.7. In February 2025, the Council agreed to an 18-month trial pedestrianisation of a section of Camden High Street aimed at creating safer and healthier public places for residents, businesses, and visitors. A key area of the pedestrianisation is a 12-month culture programme which launched in May 2025 with a community focussed street party. Other activities have included a free music event featuring young people from HVH Arts and Camden Music Service, a sustainable fashion show as part of London Fashion week, curated by Bloomsbury based fashion house TAMMAM and a Festive Family event. These activities aim to bring local residents to the high street and to provide a platform for local talent to perform to an international audience.



LGBT+ History Month

- 5.8. As part of LGBT+ History month, the Culture Service partnered with Queer Britain, the UK's first and only LGBT+ museum to host 'From Protests to Progress: LGBT+ Activism in Camden'. Chaired by Michael Burgess, Founder and Director of Creative Resilience International, the panel brought together a diverse range of voices and expertise which included Ryan Lanji TV Host, DJ, and LGBTQIA+ activist, Lisa Power Co-founder of Stonewall and Trustee of Queer Britain and Ellie Lewis Trustee of Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust to discuss the borough's rich history of LGBTQIA+ activism, culture and community over the last 60 years. The event teamed up with Forum Plus as a charity partner, donating proceeds from tickets to support the work they do in the borough.
- 5.9. Alongside the event, the Camden People's Museum, an online platform, hosted a collection of stories celebrating the borough's LGBTQIA+ legacy. The collection featured trailblazing figures, iconic venues, and personal experiences, shining a light on Camden's vibrant role in shaping queer history.
- 5.10. The Culture Service launched a commission for artists to create artworks which celebrate Camden's LGBT+ communities. Artist Ted Tinkler was commissioned to work with members of the LGBT+ to produce quilt artwork embellished with printed stories and designs from the community and from Camden's LGBTQIA+ history. The quilt will be installed in the Grand Lobby in Camden Town Hall in February 2026, with

an unveiling during LGBT history month. The artwork will be accessioned into the Camden Art Collection.

- 5.11. Artist Nikolas Wereszczynski is has been working digitally with members of Camden's Trans community to inform five new printed artworks for exhibition in the Swiss Cottage Gallery poster spaces. The exhibition will open in February for LGBT history month.

Pride

- 5.12. Following on from the success of the 2024 Pride Queer Market in St Giles Square, the Culture Service curated a Family Zone programme in collaboration with surrounding businesses Almacantar and Central District Alliance. Gospel Oak based Mother Canteen were commissioned to curate a Queer Arts and Cultural Market featuring 10–12 queer makers and stallholders alongside family friendly craft activities under the theme 'Cafa-Queer-ia', a playful take on school lunchtime craft and cabaret. The event attracted an audience of up to 800 throughout the day.

Windrush Pitt Lecture

- 5.13. The annual Pitt Lecture took place on the 19 June at Bloomsbury Studio to honour the legacy of Lord David Pitt whose legacy has impacted and transformed activism, health and social inequality and politics. The evening marked the 60th anniversary of the UK's Race Relations Act with the keynote delivered by Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey, a lifelong social justice advocate and cultural champion. Baroness Young shared candid reflections on her journey growing up in foster care in 1950s London, the power of reading as a gateway to hope, and her dedication to supporting young people leaving the care system today. Her Excellency Rachér Croney, High Commissioner for Grenada provided reflections on Lord Pitt's impact in medicine and politics and a panel discussion, featuring and Geoffrey O. Williams, Chair of Bernie Grant Arts Centre, sparked lively conversations around the importance of equality, diversity, and how we can all drive change today.

The Homecoming Celebration

- 5.14. The annual Homecoming event took place on the 22 June at Talacre Town Green. This was a one-day free event to celebrate the borough's Windrush story and showcase Camden's Caribbean heritage, culture and communities. The line up included performances from Janet Kay MBE, Louchie Lou and Michie One, Winston Reedy and DJs set from the Apex Project young people and DJ Keith Franklin. The service worked with Camden Black History Group, Grass Roots Arts, Black Owned London, The Apex Project and Talacre Playcentre to produce the Homecoming event. The event attracted an audience of over 3000 throughout the day. Feedback and support from the community for the Homecoming Celebration has been positive with residents commenting via the survey form: *'I think it's fantastic that Camden*

provides such events for the community. Amazing event' and 'A beautiful Windrush event — so full of heart, culture, and community. The performances, stalls, and warm atmosphere made it truly special. Thank you!'

Funding has been secured from Strategic CIL for a further two years which comes to an end in 2027. After this additional funding will need to be secured in order to make it sustainable.

Caribbean Carnival Blue Plaque

5.15. On 26 June, a blue plaque was installed on Camden Town Hall to celebrate Britain's first Caribbean Carnival. The plaque commemorates one of the most significant events in the building's history, which took place in response to the racist attacks on the Caribbean community in 1958, known as the Notting Hill riots. On 30 January 1959, activist Claudia Jones and her colleagues at the *West Indian Gazette* organised the first Caribbean Carnival at Camden Town Hall on Judd Street (then St Pancras Town Hall) as a vibrant celebration of Caribbean culture. The legacy of this landmark event went on to inspire the Notting Hill Carnival, which today attracts around one million people each year. The event was hosted by Linett Kamala with speeches from Allyson Williams MBE (Genesis Mas Band) Beverley Reviero-Awonaya from the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. Young people from Camden Music Service Youth Steel Band and Argyle Primary School provided music and poetry. Mahogany Carnival Designs provided a beautiful display of Caribbean costumes throughout the building.

Windrush Public Art Commission - Camden Blossoms

5.16. Following an artist call out use our culture connections to find a suitable artist to appoint and in collaboration with a community panel which included Camden Black History Group, Grassroots Arts and Sankofa Storytelling Art, the Culture Service commissioned local artist Matt Small to create a permanent artwork which celebrates Camden's Windrush community. The artwork entitled 'Camden Blossoms' consists of a wall mounted art works that will take the shape of geometric flowers. Each blossom will have a theme that symbolises the contributions made by the Caribbean community such as public services, activism and arts and culture and will feature notable figures from the borough. The project engaged young people from Rhyl Primary, Haverstock School, and Talacre Playgroup, as well as community groups including the Camden Black British History Hub, Salvation Army, and Thanet Youth and Community Centre. In total, 139 participants contributed to shaping the final artwork, which will be installed at Talacre Sports Centre in 2026. The Windrush programme attracted an audience of nearly 4000.

Inverness Street Bloc Party

5.17. Inverness Street Bloc Party theme celebrated club and dance music highlighting Camden's pivotal role in developing the genre. The culture service

commissioned DJ Matt White part of the original Kiss FM which started in Camden to curate the event. Performances included young people from Camden based the Apex Project alongside legendary figures such Gordon Mac MBE, founder of Kiss FM and BBC Radio 6 broadcaster and DJ Giles Peterson. The day was one of the best attended events of the year, attracting an audience over a 1000 throughout the day.

Thanks @Lovecamden, fantastic afternoon, big choons, big people, great vibe – Instagram

Today was lit! – Instagram

If I could grow up again it would definitely be in Camden - Instagram

South Asian Heritage Month

5.18. The theme for 2025 was 'Roots to Routes, reflecting the journeys and heritage of the South Asian communities. The culture service continued their partnership with Old Diorama Arts Centre and Remix Dance to present a programme of South Asian Dance within the annual Regents Roots Festival on Saturday 2 August which was attended by an audience of 1000.

5.19. The service also supported the Camden Mela which took place on the 13th July. It was attended by an audience of 6500 and supported activity around the 'Pearly sari' a co-curated exhibition by a Sylheti Women's Lotus group celebrating their creative expression via domestic textile traditions. The sari was inspired by an artwork by British Bangladeshi artist Saif Osmani reinventing the London Pearly King/ Queen tradition of pearl button suits in this 150-anniversary year of the original Pearly King Henry Croft a Somers Town character.

Black History Season

5.20. Our Black History Season programme ran from October to December 2025 with the theme of "Standing Firm in Power and Pride," a powerful tribute to the resilience, strength, and unwavering commitment to progress that defines the Black community across the globe. The service worked in partnership with community groups, grass roots artists and young people to curate a community driven cultural programme as well as with prominent artists, bringing new work to Camden communities. Partners included Outernet, Samsung KX, Everyman Cinema, Castlehaven Community Centre, BFI screening rooms and KOKO who provided spaces for artists to platform their work. Over 30 events were delivered across the season which included a range of talks, Black history walks, Film, exhibitions and workshops featuring a host of high-profile artists/lecturers which include Dr Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, Neil Kenlock, Indra Ové, Rob Bucker, Burt Ceaser and Kiss FM's Henrie. This year the programme has teamed up with Camden and Islington based Umoja Health Forum as a charity partner, donating income from events to support Black futures. To date the programme has raised just over £1000 and attracted an audience of 512,655 of which 512,000 was for the Notting Hill Carnival Through the Lens of Ian Watts exhibition hosted by Outernet.

Swiss Cottage Gallery

5.21. Between April 2024 and April 2025, the Swiss Cottage Gallery delivered five exhibitions. The programme opened with our annual collaboration with Central Saint Martins curatorial students, who developed an exhibition drawn from the Camden Art Collection exploring different communities within the borough; this year's focus was Camden's markets and their users. This was followed by the highly popular London Quilters exhibition. Then the (Kilburn based) Paprika Collective curated a South Asian Heritage-focused exhibition which looked at the history of immigration in the Kilburn area. The gallery's contribution to Black History Season was a significant survey of photography by Neil Kenlock. This year also marked the introduction of an exhibition for LGBT+ History Month, a painting show by a local artist which will continue through to March 2026.

5.22. Across the five exhibitions, the gallery welcomed 5,964 visitors. In addition, smaller-scale exhibitions were presented in the poster space within the Swiss Cottage Library atrium. In preparation for the Cultural Strategy document, we commissioned a consultant to review the gallery's programme, audience profile, and organisational practices, with the aim of increasing awareness, engagement, and alignment with C's strategic priorities.

5.23. The 2025 Love Camden Cultural programme engaged an audience of 533,964 and created over 200 paid opportunities for local artists and the creative sector.

Steam Work Experience

5.24. 32 Year-12 students from Camden sixth forms and colleges signed up for the week-long programme about the work delivered by the culture services and our partner organisations. During the week, the students visited the Universal Music HQ to learn about the variety of roles in the music industry, had a guided tour of the Euston Story trail art installation from the team at Old Diorama Art Centre and engaged in film and media activities and masterclasses with Fully Focussed Productions and the Camden Film Office (FilmFixer). Throughout the week the students were mentored by Culture officers to deliver 'Culture Den' presentations to an expert panel. Participating students gave an average score of 4.4 out of 5, 95 % said the experience met their expectations and 76 % people were confident that they could achieve their career ambitions after taking part in the placement.

5.25. The Camden Artist Network aims to create meaningful connections and collaborations, support provisional development and enhance access to creative opportunities. It currently has 356 registered members on the mailing list. There were 95 attendees across the 2 in-person networking events in April and September 2025.

5.26. The Love Camden Advisors group currently consists of 8 residents. This year four steering groups were created to enable deeper discussion on topics raised during

the main group meetings. The steering groups are themed around Communications & Evaluation, Funding & Development, Programming & Commissioning, and Access & Equity.

- 5.27. The Culture Education and Learning Support Fund was set up in response to the Arts Council funding cuts, and now £300k has now been awarded to support 27 organisations across the 3 rounds. All projects are due to be completed by March 2026 and an external evaluator has been commissioned with their report due in July 2026.
- 5.28. Set Ready is a Film Fixer initiative where Camden's film service provider position is leveraged to secure paid work placements on shoots in the borough. The course is entirely free and provides entry-level opportunities to those aged 19-54 who want to get into the film industry. Film Fixer have between 20-25 places to offer in each cohort securing participants paid Location Marshal placements on professional film sets in London. 15 Camden residents attended the course in 2025.
- 5.29. Film Fixer (Camden Film Office) between January and November Camden has hosted 566 film days including 21 feature films across 67 film days and 23 TV dramas across 92 film days. In addition, the film office facilitated 213 film days for commercials, online, promotions and stills and 93 film days for charity/student shoots among others. The most notable productions that filmed in Camden was the Apple TV flagship show *Slow Horses* starring Gary Oldman and Netflix feature film *I'm Not an Easy Man*, filmed in Highgate and Camden Town.
- 5.30. Community Festival Grants £35k is allocated to the community festivals grants programme. In 2025 46 grants were awarded to community organisations to deliver festivals in their neighbourhoods between April '25 – March '26. These include events such as Alma Street Summer Fair in Kentish Town, The Jester festival in Fortune Green, Sankofa Arts Lab: Festival in Regents Park, the annual York Rise Street Party in Highgate, and the Somali Women & Children's Culture Day in Haverstock.
- 5.31. The Event Management service has continued to support community events whilst attracting commercial clients to the borough. Over the year they supported 314 community events and festivals in the public realm, attracting an audience of over 267,000 as well as facilitating 157 community events across Camden's indoor portfolio. A total of 175 commercial events were supported by the service across the indoor and outdoor portfolio.
- 5.32. Camden's first Cultural Strategy 2026-2031 was approved by Cabinet on the 12 November and sets out a bold vision for cultural development. Between July 2024 – 2025, the council undertook extensive engagement with residents, cultural organisations and partners, schools, higher education institutions, Knowledge Quarter partners, Business Improvement District representatives, young people, the Disability Oversight Panel and Council colleagues, receiving over 400

responses. The views and ideas gathered have helped shape the strategy, including its vision and ambitions, detailed below:

As a global capital of creativity, Camden will harness its world-leading thriving creative economy to uplift every community, spark meaningful connections, and create a vibrant, inspiring borough where everyone can live, learn, work, grow, visit, and invest. Through culture, we will build a joyful, healthy, and enriching environment that strengthens the fabric of Camden for all.

5.33. The strategy is built around three overarching themes of People and Place, Learning and Skills, Grow and Thrive underpinned by guiding principles of Equity, Creative Health and Wellbeing, and Sustainability. Grounded in both identified need and our aspiration to recognise and celebrate the creative lives of all residents across the borough and stands as a clear demonstration of our ongoing commitment to culture. It demonstrates the Council's continued investment in culture as a driver for growth, social cohesion and wellbeing and will be officially launched on the 24 February 2026.

6. Libraries

6.1. Camden libraries continue to serve as neighbourhood spaces where residents can engage and escape through their reading choices. Our libraries continue to see growth in visitor continuing to read, explore and connect with our services. Physical visits saw a 16% increase when comparing quarter two 24/25 (July-September) with quarter two 25/26. Physical book issues also increased when comparing quarter two 24/25 (July-September) with quarter two 25/26 contrasting against a national decline. A recent report commissioned by Libraries Connected and produced by Independent Mind 'Library Loans Review report' highlighted that the sample of local authorities had seen a 16% decrease in physical issues between 23/24 and 24/25 where Camden's reduction was only 6%. The report also described the surge in digital lending which Camden is mirroring with borrowing of e-books seeing a 27.5% increase between quarter two 24/25 and quarter two 25/26 and borrowing of e-magazines and newspapers increasing 46.5%. The report describes adult lending being more digital based, but children's borrowing remaining largely physical loans.

6.2. Camden libraries key performance indicators for January 2025-December 2025 are

Physical Visits	854,143
Events and activities	Number of Events 2,749 Number attending 31,164
Physical Issues	251,975
New Enrolments	12,075

Number of PC sessions	127,973
Digital Library	Documents viewed 196,860
	Downloads / Issues 305, 277

- 6.3. In 2025 Camden Libraries we saw an increase in those engaging with the Summer Reading Challenge. The Challenge was launched at the British Library for the second year with 250 primary school children attending. This was supported by additional funding received from The Reading Agency and a programme of outreach. As part of the Summer Reading Challenge extension activity. Visits took place across the borough to two children's centres, a community hub, two schools (attending 11 school assemblies as part of general school engagement), and a refugee accommodation centre. Weekly reading and crafting activity sessions were run in these venues helping people sign up to the challenge and to the library if they did not have a card. Using the training received as part of the Mercers' funding applied for by the Reading Agency, Chatterbooks sessions were delivered at Pancras Square and Kentish Town Libraries. Thanks to the Children's Book Project partnership, donated books were gifted to families during the outreach sessions. This targeted outreach engaged 87 children with the library and the reading challenge which represented 12% of the total engagement this year. The Challenge had a direct impact on new memberships with 325 new registrations, 715 children starting the challenge, 215 completing and a total of 23837 books issued.
- 6.4. Whether escaping through reading or listening to a book to navigating systems or applying for a job, reading is key to people's lives. Which is why Camden collaborated with key partners and stakeholders to produce our Camden Reading Together Strategy 2025-30. The key ambitions of the strategy hope to:
- Widen understanding of reading and its benefits - Promoting literacy and reading engagement across diverse community groups.
 - Nurture lifelong learning, reading, and skills development - Supporting educational and skill development opportunities for various age groups.
 - Build skills and pathways from isolation to engagement - Reducing social isolation and enhancing community connections.
 - Promote and support health and wellbeing
- 6.5. To improve health literacy and wellbeing outcomes, the service applied for Community Infrastructure Levy funding to support an eighteen-month Health and Wellbeing Librarian role to build the creative health aspect of the service making a programme that supports connection and growing links with Public Health. The post holder is developing programmes and evaluating their impact e.g. for Green Libraries Week in October 2025 an impact report was written demonstrating impact using a wellbeing measure.

- 6.6. Some tangible outputs from the strategy that have taken place in 2025 including the launch of the Share and Read with Baby packs in November working with Early years and Registration Services. Families that live in Camden and register a birth receive a pack with a library card and a range of leaflets to support new families. This initiative was funded by S106. On the 2nd of December the service launched the Imagination Library in collaboration with the Dollywood Foundation and the People's Postcode Lottery. Within less than three weeks there were 1173 registrations. As part of this, each child will receive a free book posted to them at home until their 5th birthday.
- 6.7. The service will work with Early Years, schools, and partners such as the British Library and Doorstep Library to reach families that find it harder to access or approach our services (such as libraries and family hubs) to make sure books are accessible.
- We collect donated books across five of our libraries.
 - The donations are curated by the Children's Book project and gifted to families that do not necessarily engage with the libraries.
 - The libraries have also used some of the donated books to set up pop up libraries at GP surgeries and leisure centres.
 - Plans for 2026 will include the auto enrolment of all primary aged children into library membership a milestone for the National Year of Reading. The Insight Learning and Impact Team will work with the Library Service in 2026 to put in place an evaluation framework.
- 6.8. The service reopened two libraries and a children's library post refurbishments in 2025. West Hampstead Library saw a decarbonisation project and redecoration including:
- Replacement of the original single glazed timber and metal windows with double glazed units, keeping with the existing window design to maintain the heritage of the building.
 - Replacement of the dated gas boiler system with an air source heat pump which provides more efficient heating throughout the library.
 - Replacement of all non-LED lighting with new LED fittings, which will save in electricity costs and minimise future replacement of light fittings.
- 6.9. Holborn Library also saw a refurbishment to make the space more comfortable, inclusive, and flexible funded by S106, local community infrastructure levy funding, and capital funding to support libraries becoming neighbourhood spaces. The space now offers the flexible use of laptops and study desks; a pod for group work of meetings; a sensory space in the children's library; comfortable nooks for reading; and a more appealing Local Studies and Archive space. The redecoration and adaptations also impacted the basement and the third floor of the library. This has enabled the service to experiment with different partnerships with ShiftED moving into the library and engaging primary aged children Monday to Thursday and young people in an after school offer. The space where ShiftED are located is a Clore Learning space with funds from the Clore

Duffield Foundation supporting the refurbishment. The basement is now being used as a co-working space in partnership with Wimbletech and for a piano academy working with Camden Music Service and the Lang Lang Foundation. There are other plans for the remaining basement spaces which should mature in 2026.



- 6.10. Swiss Cottage Library celebrated most of its 60th year during 2025 with the refurbishment of the children's library working with Jan Kattein Architects funded by a bequest and local community infrastructure levy funding.
- 6.11. The Children's library has been created to inspire storytelling and sharing through dressing up costumes; toys; magnetic story board; craftery learning space and story juke box. The refurbishment also saw the creation of a youth space offering comfy seating and places for study. To celebrate the end of the sixtieth year for Swiss Cottage Library Local Community Infrastructure Levy funds were secured to work with Digital Works to train local residents to record oral histories. The residents then interviewed residents and library team members from the past and today to create a film, an Open Book Swiss @ 60.
- 6.12. Camden Libraries applied to be part of the Europe Challenge in 2025 to celebrate social cohesion with libraries collaborating with community partners on projects. Camden were chosen for their Camden Connects project working with Families for Peace and Belsize Library. The service also hosted one of two summits welcoming half the European delegates to Swiss Cottage Library in November.
- 6.13. We were one of the first three Green Library Hubs being funded thanks to National Lottery funding applied for by Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). The project launched in September 2025 and Camden will benefit from £86000 of funding which will support a joint Green Hub co-ordinator role which will be shared with the British Library for three years. This project will support Camden's Climate Action work. The libraries have also worked with Think & Do to support the establishment of sharing spaces in some of the libraries. These spaces enable residents to come together share ideas on what activities they would like to see and do in the libraries; share energy saving tips;

and access our pre-loved clothes rail and in some cases a toy swap. Another initiative launched in 2025 through Local Community Infrastructure Levy funding, was the Flow Happy cabinets designed to make periods accessible and end period poverty. Cabinets have been installed in all of our libraries to ensure all who need essential period products have access to them.

Young People Library Use

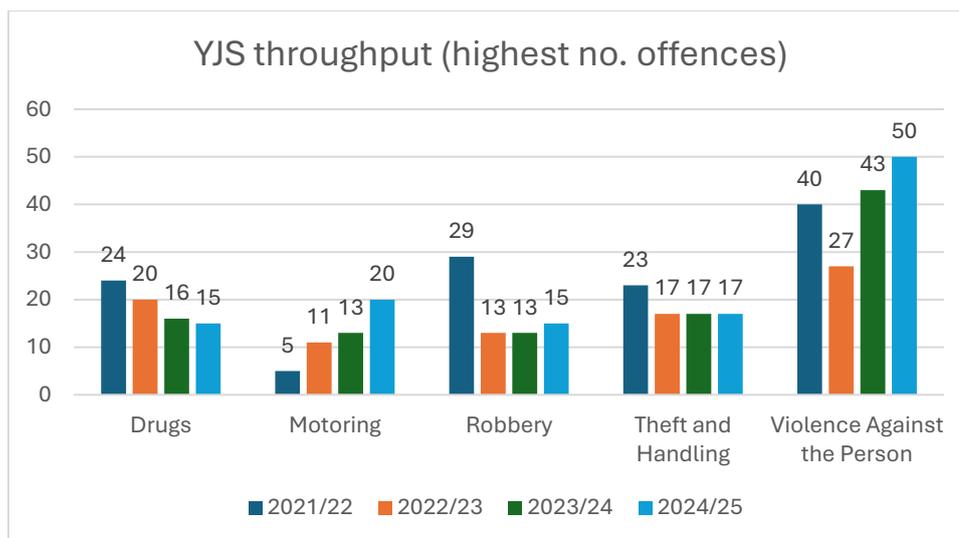
6.14. The Apex Project have worked with Swiss Cottage Library in 2025 to deliver employability courses. A large number have been aimed at under 25-year-olds. The statistics below show the reach of these courses. The libraries are great supporters of young people for study spaces. Many young people do not have space at home to study. The libraries provide that much needed space, free wifi and access to computers and physical and digital resources.

7. Young People

7.1. Camden's Youth Justice Service (YJS) was once of the first service to be rated Outstanding by His Majesty's Inspectorate Prisons (HMIP) in May 2025, under the new inspection framework focussed on our work with children and victims.

7.2. The inspection found that our YJS has an authentic culture of care and innovation for the children, families, and victims. It highlighted that the service is supported by a strong management board, which has ensured that the needs of YJS children and families are prioritised across the partnership. It found that YJS senior leaders are aspirational and tenacious which is combined with a highly skilled and well-supported operational staff team. It found evidence of strong assessing, planning, and delivery to ensure that achieving positive change is effectively balanced with the safety of the child and the community. It highlighted that this work was supported by comprehensive partnership working, which enabled timely sharing of information, clarity in roles and responsibilities, and the provision of responsive interventions to address the identified needs of children.

7.3. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, 154 offences led to 61 children receiving criminal justice outcomes. 11 children received more than one criminal justice outcome. This is similar to the previous annual figures where 113 offences led to 49 children receiving criminal justice outcomes. Of the 154 offences, 50 (32%) were for Violence against the Person, 20 were for Motoring offences (13%) 15 were for Drugs (10%) and 15 were for Theft and handling (10%). Most of the children in the cohort are 16 and 17 year-olds and make up 72% of the group. 4 of the group are girls, (7%) and 57 are boys (93%). 12 of the 61 children have been a Child Looked After, representing 20% of the YJS cohort, which is an overrepresentation compared to the general population.



7.4. Camden has seen an increase in First Time Entrants to the YJS since last year, but numbers are still lower than they have been prior to the pandemic. In the period April 2024 to March 2025, 40 children became First time Entrants compared with 34 in 2023/24. Between October 2022 – September 2023 there were 36 children open to Camden YJS. 17 of those children (47%) went on to reoffend in the following 12 months. During the period April 2024 – March 2025, there were 4 disposals that resulted in a custodial sentence. This is an increase on the previous year. 14 children (23%) have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Youth Justice Plan:

- 7.5. The YJS now has a new 3 year Plan in place for 2025 – 28. Some of the highlighted achievements from the 2023 - 25 Youth Justice Plan include:
- Maintained low first-time entrants into the service
 - Expansion of the Deferred Exclusion Programme, predominantly benefitting Global Majority children, keeping them in school
 - Increased use of out of court disposals for Black children (rather than court ordered interventions)
 - Investment in adultification training, leading to reduction in over assessing risk
 - Expansion of the paid work experience placements for 16+ children, with positive feedback from children and employers
 - 15 Assessment Qualification Alliance (AQA's)'s awarded to 13 children completing reparation activities
 - secured funding for part time Educational Psychologist
 - consistently strong feedback on impact of YJS engagement from children
 - Recruitment of new peer advocates to support collaboration and engagement with YJS cohort
- 7.6. The revised YJS priorities for Camden for 2025-28, alongside the 3 Key Performance Indicator KPIs (Reducing First Time Entrants to the youth Justice System, Reducing Re-offending, Reducing Custody), are:
- Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA)

- Supporting Victims of Youth Crime
- Addressing Disproportionality
- Enhancing Education, Training and Employment Offer (ETE)
- Continue to expand and improve on the YJS Prevention Offer
- Enhancing transitional safeguarding and reduce the risk of reoffending for children leaving our service

Youth Safety Steering Group

- 7.7. Keeping Camden's young people safe remains a key priority for the Council, and we continue to work in partnership with the police, schools, community organisations, and young people themselves with the aim of creating a safer borough all around. The Youth Safety Steering Group provides strategic oversight of the Youth Safety Taskforce recommendations, aligned with the Good Life Camden outcomes framework. Its work focuses on reducing violence involving young people, increasing their sense of safety, and building trust between young people and those in positions of authority.
- 7.8. The Steering Group meets biannually in community spaces across the borough, ensuring that discussions are grounded in local experience. It brings together a wide range of professionals from across the Council and the voluntary and community sector. Membership has expanded over the last year welcoming new partners, including a primary headteacher and the founder of a community organisation supporting young people through mentoring, and confidence building opportunities. Workshops have included contributions from schools and guest speakers with lived experience, supporting shared learning and understanding across the partnership. Between meetings, partners are kept informed through highlight updates, and the approach is currently under review to ensure that information is shared in a timely, proportionate, and effective manner.
- 7.9. Young people play an active role in the Steering Group, with youth representatives and peer advocates contributing meaningfully to discussions. Feedback from young people has been consistently positive, with attendees valuing the opportunity to engage directly with senior leaders and partners, access local data, and share their views. They emphasised the importance of prevention, trauma-informed approaches, and practical, community-led initiatives that support positive choices, helping to make Camden a safer and stronger community. This feedback highlights the importance of maintaining and expanding opportunities for young people's voices to be heard.
- 7.10. In addition to their involvement in governance and strategic forums, young people's voices are amplified through borough-wide engagement and celebration activity. Camden's Youth Celebration Fortnight, delivered in November alongside National Youth Work Week, brought together partners, youth workers, and young people under the theme *Building Brighter Futures: Safe places, trusted support, and opportunities to thrive*. The programme celebrated the contribution of youth work to safety, wellbeing, and positive development, while creating inclusive spaces for

learning and connection. During 2024/25, more than 3,700 young people accessed youth programmes across the borough, with 808 achieving recognised accreditations, supporting confidence, skills development, and positive pathways into adulthood. Key events included the Camden Youth Assembly, which engaged over 150 young people in shaping a new rights-based participation framework, and the Youth Safety Multimedia Competition, now in its fifth year, providing further opportunities for young people to influence and contribute to Camden's vision for a safer future.

Youth Hubs

- 7.11. Camden's Youth Hubs go beyond creating social and recreational provisions they bring together different types of support from education, employment services, mental health support, mentoring and more into one space. Our Youth Hubs play a key role in ensuring there is sufficient recreational and leisure time activities for children, young people up to age of 25, and also have wider benefits around building relationships, developing key social and educational development and knife crime prevention.
- 7.12. There are 3 youth hubs in Camden. Somers Town Youth Centre; Netherwood Youth and Family and Highgate Haven Youth hub (formerly Fresh Youth Academy). Each Youth Hub is staffed by a multidisciplinary team, which includes Youth Workers, Connexions and Careers Advisers, Substance Misuse Workers, and Youth Early Help (YEH) Case Managers. The hubs provide universal, targeted, and specialist services tailored to meet young people's personal, social and emotional needs.
- 7.13. The government announced Youth Future Hubs in July 2025 as part of its cross-departmental strategy to improve outcomes for 10-25 years old. Camden has hosted a number of Department for Education visits to Camden's Youth Hubs – this has influenced the direction of National Policy. There is also a large amount of work in Camden around national reform in children's social care – this includes looking at all-age family support including Youth Hubs and moving to an integration of services that support an entire family through our Family Help model.
- Accredited courses: AQA Awards, First Aid, Food Hygiene, Duke of Edinburgh
 - Sports: football, boxing, gym, basketball, boxing, martial arts, gym
 - Arts, Creative workshops, volunteering, and youth forums
 - Careers advice and study support
 - One-to-one support
 - Girls-only sessions
 - Arts, cooking, DJing, filmmaking, gardening, healthy relationships sessions
 - Careers advice, CV writing, budgeting
 - Music studio sessions
 - Trips, residentials, and holiday programmes

- 7.14. We are also constantly working to improve our Youth Hubs Offer and we are currently undergoing with to explore how to link our Youth Hubs to Family Hubs. We are also exploring how to ensure our Youth Hubs are accessible as possible for autistic and neurodivergent children and young people.
- 7.15. As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable young people, we are developing a targeted transition programme within our youth hubs for year 6 children. This initiative will focus on children who may face challenges moving from primary to secondary school. In collaboration with local primary schools located within each hub area, we aim to support year 6 children to ensure a smoother, more confident transition into secondary education.
- 7.16. In addition, we have strengthened our mental health support offer. From 24th November 2025, the South Hub Child Adolence and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Crisis Service (North Central London – Islington & Camden) has operated from our Highgate Youth Hub two days a week. This service provides on-site mental health crisis assessments for children and young people.
- 7.17. In 2024–25, a total of 805 young people accessed our three youth hubs. Of these 273 achieved Recorded Outcomes, meaning they gained or enhanced skills, confidence, and resilience. 189 earned some form of accreditation, including AQA Award Units, Food Hygiene certificates, First Aid qualifications, and more. 63% identified as male, 35% as female, and 2% chose not to disclose their gender. 32% identified as White, 22% as Black or Black British, 18% as Mixed, 11% as Asian, 9% as Chinese, Arabic, or other ethnicities and 8% did not declare their ethnicity. We are also in the process of setting up girls only sessions in youth hubs to encourage and increase girls and young women participation on youth hubs. Overall, there has been 4% increase of girls and young women attending in 2024-25 across all youth projects.
- 7.18. In addition to open access universal youth provision delivered in youth hubs, we also offer more targeted support, recognising that some young people require more intensive support due to their vulnerability and exposure to risky behaviour in the community.

ENGAGE Youth Diversion Programme

- 7.19. The ENGAGE team works to deter young people from further offending and into positive activities by providing appropriate and targeted intervention for them at a “teachable, reachable” moment when they are detained in police custody in Camden or Islington and continue to support them back into the community when released from custody. The team develop trusted relationships, carry out direct work with young people (separate to the criminal investigation) signpost and facilitate the introduction of children to targeted interventions within the local area; support parents/guardians, as they are fundamental to providing stability, care and support for young people to make positive life choices. Targeted intervention includes, one to one support, workshop around, peer pressure / healthy

relationship, consequential thinking, victim awareness, rights and responsibilities, safety advice, online safety, access to education/positive activities

- 7.20. In 2024-25, 110 children from Camden were seen at the police custody suites by our ENGAGE_team. Of these, 16 (14%) were female. 82 (75%) of the children seen were male and 91% of the children were aged between 14 and 17.
- 7.21. Of the 110 children, 40 (36%) are White, 21 (19%) are Black or Black British, 25 (23%) are Asian or Asian British, 9 (8%) Mixed heritage and 2 (2%) Other ethnic groups. The data suggests that global majority children are disproportionately represented in custody, representing 60% of the Camden cohorts identified individuals.
- 7.22. To analyse the reoffending rate amongst the ENGAGE cohort, we review young people offending history 12 months after coming to contact with ENGAGE worker. In 2023/24 out of 19 children previously supported by ENGAGE 17 (89%) have not received any youth justice outcomes evidencing the positive impact of early intervention.

FWD - Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service

- 7.23. FWD is a specialist, young people's substance misuse service for 8-25 years olds inclusive of SEND offers information, advice, guidance and tailor-made support and interventions for children and young people using or at risk of substance misuse. The service is also for children and young people who may be affected by parental and peer substance use. We divide the levels of support we provide into Tiers. Tier 1 being our universal services aimed at raising awareness of substance misuse issues and educating children, young people and their parents on the potential risks and possible harm posed by drug and alcohol use. Tier 2 consist of interventions targeted at risk and are particularly vulnerable to substance misuse and Tier 3 is our specialist, non-medical intervention targeted at children and young people who have substance misuse problems
- 7.24. Over the course of the year FWD received 306 referrals for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, an increase of 24.7% from previous year and exceeding the annual target of 250. In addition, 662 young people and parents access FWD workshops and 181 professionals accessed substance misuse training in Camden.
- 7.25. There were 135 Tier 3 referrals, 72 (53%) were male and 63 (47%) were female. Of the 135 Tier 3 referrals, 33% (45 young people) identified as White, and 57% (77 young people) were from a Global Majority background. For the remaining 10% (13 young people), ethnicity was either not stated or unknown.
- 7.26. 80% young people discharged from Tier 3 in a planned way, 20% unplanned disclosure, which includes transfer to Adult Services (5%) and other transfer (4%) and declined or dropped out (10%), Of the planned discharge, 55% report drug drug-free and 26% reduced their consumption and became occasional users, 92%

of young people were satisfied with the service they received at discharge, 100% of Children Looked After identified as having substance use were offered support

Youth Early Help

- 7.27. In 2024/25, Camden's Youth Early Help (YEH) services processed 885 referrals via Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) across all programmes (FWD, Engage, Targeted /family support etc). In 2024-25, 158 young people were accepted for family/targeted support work.
- 7.28. The majority referrals were from school, followed by police and self/parent/carer. The top five presenting needs identified amongst young people who received targeted support were SEND, parenting issues, mental health and self-harm, children missing education, and young people exhibiting problematic behaviour.
- 7.29. The proportion of Global Majority young people accessing the service has remained consistent with the previous year. However, there has been a decrease in the proportion of Asian young people accessing the service, falling from 22% to 16%, a decrease of 6 percentage points. Conversely, the proportion of White young people accessing the service has increased from 33% to 39%, representing a rise of 6 percentage points over the past year.
- 7.30. Case Study: Young Person 1 (YP1) was referred to Evolve following their arrest for a serious violent offence. YP1 was supported throughout their remand, trial and sentencing. Work with YP1 centred on helping them reflect on their family role, peer influences and the factors that made them vulnerable to exploitation. YP1 engaged well in discussions about relationships and responsibility. Sessions also explored the impact of their disrupted education, supported them to recognise their achievements, and helping plan how to use custody constructively, including pursuing education.
- 7.31. A significant focus was YP1's emotional wellbeing. Over time, they became more open about the traumatic losses and violent incidents they experienced, the anxiety and sleep difficulties that followed, and their previous reliance on cannabis. In custody, they have begun using healthier coping strategies such as journaling and talking about their feelings.
- 7.32. Throughout the intervention, YP1 showed strong engagement, growing insight and motivation for change. YP1 has demonstrated interest in personal development and maintained a hopeful outlook as they work towards long-term positive change.

Detached Youth Team updates around delivery of service

- 7.33. The Detached Youth Team undertook some targeted work in the Hardington Estate. The area became a hotspot for youth anti-social behaviour and suspected drug activity. The Detached team worked with a group 10 young people, partners and Voluntary Community Services, the Evolve Team and Khady's Dream to deliver

workshops. The focus of these sessions were understanding the consequences of committing crime, learning about the magistrate court system, gaining insight into the crown court process and providing a glimpse into prison life and its challenges.

Street-Based Youth Work

- 7.34. Across the year, the team has maintained a strong presence in south and central Camden, engaging young people in areas including Somers Town, Regent's Park Estate, King's Cross, Warren Street, Coram's Fields and the Bourne Estate. This visible and reliable presence has been particularly important in a period where patterns of youth activity have continued to shift and public spaces have become more contested. Street-based work has provided continuity, reassurance and a relational bridge between young people, services and the wider community.
- 7.35. The Street-based work has led to the formation of new groups through engagement around Regent's Park Estate. Relationships built through detached walkabouts developed into regular work with a sixth-form boys group from Regent High School.
- 7.36. Similarly, engagement with a group of young women in the same area evolved into the Regent's Girls Group. Following initial relationship-building, the team delivered targeted sessions in response to identified needs, including weapons awareness, substance misuse and First Aid.
- 7.37. Partnership working has remained integral to street-based delivery. The team has worked closely with local voluntary and community organisations including Fitzrovia Youth in Action, Coram's Fields, Queens Crescent Community Association, the British Somali Community Centre, Castlehaven and Pirate Castle. These relationships have strengthened local youth infrastructure, improved signposting and ensured that young people encounter a more connected and coherent offer across spaces they already use.
- 7.38. Across the year, delivery has focused primarily on secondary schools and specialist settings, reflecting both need and the team's commitment to targeting resources where vulnerability is most acute. Programmes have been delivered in a range of contexts, from large mainstream schools to smaller alternative provisions, allowing the team to adapt content and approach while maintaining consistency in quality and safeguarding practice.
- 7.39. The team have continued to deliver X's Story, a narrative-based programme exploring knife crime, exploitation and consequence through lived experience. Delivered in settings such as the Camden Reintegration Base and community venues, the sessions create space for honest conversation around responsibility, harm and the ripple effects of serious youth violence. The inclusion of emergency first aid training within these sessions has reinforced practical life-saving skills while grounding discussions in real-world scenarios.

- 7.40. Community engagement continues to be a defining feature of the Detached Youth Team's approach, sitting alongside street-based and schools work as a key mechanism for reaching young people, strengthening local relationships and supporting safer, more connected neighbourhoods. Over the year, this strand has focused on building trust, increasing access to support and creating opportunities for meaningful participation within the places where young people and communities already spend their time.
- 7.41. The Regent's Roots festival took place in August 2026. This was developed with close working between the Regents Park Community Champions and the Regent's Park Guardians. The festival was shaped by a shared ambition to strengthen cohesion, promote safety and place young people at the centre of community life. A deliberate focus on celebrating South Asian histories, culture and creativity has ensured the event reflects the diversity of the neighbourhood and creates space for communities that are often underrepresented in public cultural activity.
- 7.42. Thriving Through Togetherness the 3Ts Community Event in Castlehaven Ward brought residents, young people, local services and voluntary organisations together in a shared community space to strengthen connection, visibility and access to support. Developed in response to gaps in service awareness and community connection, the 3Ts initiative focused on taking services out of buildings and into the heart of the neighbourhood.
- 7.43. The National Day of Action at Euston Station formed part of a targeted safeguarding initiative devised by the Camden Detached Youth Team in partnership with the Rainbow Children's Society and supported by a wide network of statutory and voluntary sector partners. The initiative was developed in response to ongoing concerns around child criminal exploitation and county lines activity, particularly within transport settings where vulnerability can escalate quickly. Detached Youth Team staff worked alongside British Transport Police, Railway Children, Network Rail, train operating companies and safeguarding partners to engage with passengers and staff throughout the day.
- 7.44. Strike Back with Confidence was a young women-only pilot event delivered at Euston Community Hub in July 2025. The initiative was developed in response to young women's expressed need for spaces where they could feel safe, confident and supported, particularly in the context of navigating public and community environments. The event offered a carefully designed programme combining confidence and self-esteem workshops, a self-defence session led by trained instructors and time for reflection and peer connection. Delivered in a trauma-informed and youth-centred way, the sessions prioritised choice, consent and mutual respect, allowing participants to engage at their own pace and define what safety meant to them.
- 7.45. The most recent Youth Assembly has further strengthened the role of young people as active contributors to local decision-making play. Over the year, the group

expanded in size and confidence, taking on a more substantive role in planning workshops, shaping discussion spaces and supporting the facilitation of the Assembly itself. Their involvement ensured that the event reflected young people's lived realities and priorities, while also modelling meaningful participation in practice.

- 7.46. Voices of Change emerged as a direct response to heightened tensions and increased experiences of hate and discrimination affecting young people across Camden. Developed in partnership with local voluntary organisations, the project created space for young people to process, articulate and share their experiences through creative and narrative-led approaches. A central output of the project was a youth-led animated film exploring the story of a fictional child whose life becomes shaped by exploitation, poor choices and missed opportunities.
- 7.47. Somers Town Guardianship Programme delivered in partnership with Fitzrovia Youth in Action, the British Somali Community Centre and Somers Town Youth Club, focused on strengthening community capacity to recognise risk, respond early and support young people in shared spaces. The programme has progressed through structured phases of relationship-building, training and co-design. Young people from Somers Town have worked alongside experienced peers from the Regent's Park Estate Guardians, benefiting from mentoring and shared learning around what it means to act as a guardian within their community. This peer-led approach has helped embed understanding, build confidence and ensure the programme reflects local context.
- 7.48. The Camden Primary Schools Careers Day 2025 welcomed 206 Year 4 pupils from 22 Camden primary schools to the British Library for hands-on, interactive workshops and employer-led activities. Co-designed with deputy headteachers with a SEND focus and delivered by Camden Council and Camden Learning, the event challenged stereotypes and linked school subjects to real-world jobs. Supported by 20 employer partners across STEAM sectors, eight workshops developed teamwork, problem-solving, and confidence. Aligned with Camden's Youth Mission and STEAM Strategy, the day broadened aspirations and built cultural capital. Children described it as "the best school day ever," while employers praised its fun, impactful outreach.
- 7.49. The Community Wealth Fund (CWF) Youth Panel has been central to shaping and agreeing the new Youth Mission Investment Strategy. Applicants applied through an open and inclusive process, 15 young people aged 16–26 bring diverse lived experiences from across Camden. Over the past year, the Panel met weekly with the CWF team, building skills in investment, business and decision-making, supported by experts in youth services, social investment and venture capital. Their insights highlighted barriers to employment, including limited opportunity, low confidence, poor mental health and lack of diversity, directly shaping the Youth Fund's Theory of Change. Applications closed in September 2025, and the Panel now leads assessment, due diligence, and investment decisions.

- 7.50. Our member sessions help us explore the ways in which we can reach our We Make Camden Youth Mission. We delivered the fifth and sixth sessions in our series of deep dives on the priority cohorts in 2025.
- 7.51. Our fifth session focussed on improving school attendance across Camden's priority cohorts. Education leaders, council officers and community partners explored the scale of persistent absence affecting over 4,000 children, its impact on life chances, and agreed practical, inclusive solutions to embed attendance as a core Youth Mission priority.
- 7.52. Our sixth session focused on two cohorts and how Camden could improve outcomes for children and young people with EHCPs and disabilities, focusing on early work readiness and supported internships. Education, health, social care, and community partners came together to examine how young people could gain the skills, confidence, and support networks needed for meaningful employment and independent lives. Discussions highlighted challenges such as lower attainment, higher absence, and limited post-16 opportunities. Participants identified gaps, barriers, and enablers across sectors, and explored ways to expand supported internships, strengthen cross-sector coordination, and embed wellbeing, aspiration, and inclusion, in line with Camden's Youth Mission and SEND Strategy.
- 7.53. Our Camden Youth Mission commits to creating a borough where our young people have access to economic opportunities that enable them to feel safe and secure. Part of this work has included prioritising care-experienced young people as one of the five key cohorts in the Youth Mission, recognising the significant challenges they face transitioning to adulthood, including securing housing and entering the labour market. We continue to commits to creating a borough where our children and young people have access to economic opportunities that enable them to feel safe and secure.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This annual report demonstrates the continued commitment of the portfolio to supporting young people supporting culture and fostering economic opportunity across the borough. Through coordinated efforts, the portfolio has worked to create pathways for education, employment and personal development while celebrating the diversity and vibrancy of the local communities.
- 8.2. Looking ahead the portfolio will continue to prioritise access to economic opportunities, support for residents facing barriers to employment, and initiatives that promote social cohesion and wellbeing.

9. Finance Comments of the Director of Finance

- 9.1. The Director of Finance has been consulted and has no comment to add.

10. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

10.1. Legal Services have been consulted and their comments are incorporated in this report.

11. Environmental Implications

11.1. This report should contain no significant environmental implications for Camden.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Jobs, Young People & Culture Single Member Decisions