

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Annual People and Inclusion Service Update	
REPORT OF Director of People and Inclusion	
FOR SUBMISSION TO The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee	DATE 24 February 2026
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report has been compiled in response to the Committee's request for an update on the Council's workforce. The report provides an overview of the People and Inclusion Service and its role in supporting the Council in attracting, motivating, and developing high-performing employees to deliver the Council's ambitions for the borough's future.</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: Zoe Hoskin Employment & Total Reward Lead Corporate Services 5 Pancras Square London N1C 5AG Telephone: 020 7974 1807 E-mail: zoe.hoskin@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.</p>	

Signed:



Date: 12 February 2026

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report has been compiled in response to the Committee's request for an update on the Council's workforce, as part of its role to scrutinise the strategic and corporate policies and performance of the Council.
- 1.2. The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report, which provides an overview of the People and Inclusion Service and its role in supporting the Council to effectively attract, motivate, and develop high-performing employees to deliver the Council's ambitions for the future of the borough. Key areas of focus include:
 - Workforce composition
 - Workforce health and wellbeing
 - Pay terms and conditions
 - Workforce culture and environment
 - Employee Experience
 - Workforce Resourcing
 - Workforce Development

2. Economic and Labour market context

- 2.1. The Council continues to operate within a challenging and uncertain external environment, shaped by evolving national economic and labour market conditions. These factors continue to impact the Council's ability to recruit and retain staff across various service areas.
- 2.2. The UK economy continues to show modest growth amid ongoing macroeconomic pressures. Latest data indicate that inflation remains above the Bank of England's 2% target, measured at around 3.4% in December 2025, driven by sustained increases in key living costs such as food and transport. Interest rates have remained elevated to manage price pressures, though market expectations suggest possible reductions later in 2026 should inflationary trends moderate. Economic growth has been positive but subdued, with quarterly GDP expanding marginally in late 2025. Cost-of-living challenges persist nationwide and are particularly acute in London, where higher housing and essential costs continue to shape household and labour-market behaviour.
- 2.3. According to the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) labour market release, vacancies in the UK remained broadly stable at approximately 729,000 in the three months to November 2025. However, they are significantly lower than in pre-pandemic periods and have fallen year on year. The ratio of unemployed people to vacancies has risen, indicating a softening in labour demand across sectors.
- 2.4. Despite headline reductions in vacancies, labour demand remains comparatively strong in occupations essential to Council operations, including professional, technical, and care roles. Skills shortages in these areas continue to pose recruitment difficulties, particularly when competitive private sector pay and benefits attract applicants away from local government roles.

- 2.5. Broader labour market indicators from official sources show the UK employment rate holding around mid-70s per cent. In contrast, the unemployment rate has remained elevated relative to recent years, estimated near 5.1% in late 2025 - the highest level since early 2021. The number of people economically inactive remains substantial, reflecting ongoing barriers to labour market re-entry for some groups.
- 2.6. Camden continues to face recruitment and retention challenges for specialist and hard-to-fill roles. While flexible working arrangements remain a strength of the Council's employment offer, competitive pay, career progression opportunities, and targeted workforce planning are essential to attract and retain talent in a labour market where private employers may offer higher remuneration and benefits. Without a proactive and targeted reward strategy, the Council is at risk of elevated turnover, increased recruitment costs, and service delivery pressures.
- 2.7. In response to these conditions, the Council will maintain rigorous pay benchmarking, introduce targeted pay supplements where necessary, and further develop its employment proposition, including enhanced non-monetary benefits and workforce development support. Despite some easing of inflationary pressures at the national level, ongoing cost pressures - particularly for food, energy, travel, and housing in Central London - continue to influence staff financial wellbeing. The Council remains committed to ensuring a fair and competitive reward package that recognises staff's contributions and reflects the real cost of living.

3. Camden Context

- 3.1. We Make Camden¹ – The Council's vision for the future of Camden, published in March 2022, sets out the Council's ambitions for the future of the borough. Camden has identified 10 major issues facing the borough, including four Camden Missions and six Camden Challenges.

The 4 Missions we want to achieve over the coming years are:

-  **Diversity:** By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community – and the next generation is ready to follow
-  **Young people:** By 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure
-  **Food:** By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food
-  **Estates and neighbourhoods:** By 2030, Camden's estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity

The 6 Challenges we want to achieve over the coming years are:

-  **Safety:** Everyone is safe at home and safe in our communities
-  **Debt:** Everyone can get the support they need to avoid debt and be financially secure
-  **Digital:** Everyone in Camden can access and be part of a digital society
-  **Loneliness:** No one in Camden is socially isolated without the means to connect to their community
-  **Housing:** Camden has enough decent, safe, warm, and family-friendly housing to support our communities
-  **Climate emergency:** Camden's local economy tackles the climate emergency

¹ <https://www.wemakecamden.org.uk/about/>

- 3.2. 'We Make Camden' focuses on what the Council wants to achieve, and 'The Way We Work' focuses on how the Council will go about achieving it. The Council is taking an innovative approach, so 'The Way We Work' brings together all the lessons learned, helping more people understand the approach and contribute to its success.
- 3.3. During 2025, Camden became the only local authority nationally to receive the highest possible 'Outstanding' ratings from all three major inspectorates. In February, Adult Social Care Services were rated Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), making Camden the first local authority to achieve this under the CQC's new assessment framework. This was followed in April by Outstanding ratings for Children's Services from Ofsted and for Youth Justice Services from HM Inspectorate of Probation, providing strong independent assurance of service quality across the Council's most critical statutory functions.
- 3.4. The year also marked a period of organisational renewal, with the appointment of a new Council Leader in July 2024 and a new Chief Executive in August 2025. In November, the Council undertook a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC), which described Camden as a well-run, values-led, and ambitious organisation, with strong political and managerial leadership and a smooth transition to the new leadership team. The CPC highlighted Camden's well-embedded relational approach, underpinned by trust, inclusion, and anti-racist practice, and noted a culture in which staff and partners feel valued, supported, and able to work collaboratively. Partners particularly praised the Council's openness, flexibility, and shared sense of purpose, which supports effective joint working and positive outcomes for communities.

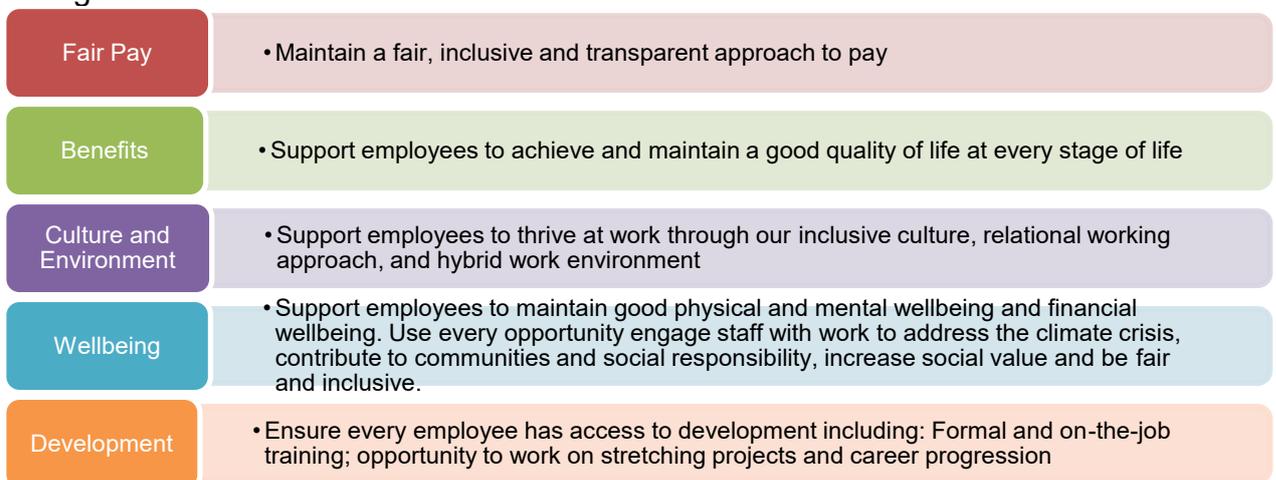
4. People and Inclusion Service

- 4.1. Camden aspires to become the leading public sector employer in the country, establishing a benchmark for exemplary work practices and fostering a climate of fairness and inclusivity in employment. The People and Inclusion Service offer a range of services to both the Council and Camden's educational institutions and partners, working towards delivering the visions outlined in We Make Camden and The Way We Work. Camden's ability to attract, motivate and develop high-performing employees is a key factor in delivering the Council's ambitions for the future of the borough.
- 4.2. Camden recognises that since the pandemic, there has been a significant shift in the way organisations are operating, and this has opened a range of opportunities in the way the Council can define, design, and accelerate the way we work in Camden. The Council has taken forward work to support people connecting with each other, the Borough, and its communities; rethink its workplaces; support leaders in helping staff work in new ways; and develop its digital workspace and technology to support staff to thrive in a flexible working environment.
- 4.3. The Council continues to focus on how we work to deliver the ambitions as set out in We Make Camden and The Way We Work. This is about how the Council creates the context and conditions in which people are supported to do their work with an increasing degree of trust, autonomy, and proactivity - and to clarify the expectations and role of leaders and managers in embedding and nurturing this throughout the Council.

- 4.4. Camden continues its organisational transformation from a predominantly bureaucratic, process-led model to a more relational, people-focused approach. This shift is increasingly reflected in leadership practice and ways of working across the organisation. Feedback from the recent Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) provides strong external evidence of progress, noting that the Council demonstrates confident and effective organisational leadership. The CPC highlighted Camden's positive, relational, and resident-focused culture as both a source of organisational pride and a genuine enabler of performance, supporting the Council's ability to deliver high-quality outcomes for its communities.
- 4.5. Being relational as an organisation means putting people at the centre of what the Council does, building trust, having empathy, and fundamentally focusing on relationships. Starting from a position of trust where the Council treats employees as adults, trusting them to do work effectively and achieve results. Ensuring there is freedom with responsibility, anchored by guiding principles, and always maintaining coherence between the Council's values and actions, while coaching managers to use their judgement from a place of empathy, compassion, and trust.
- 4.6. The ambition of the changes made to the People & Inclusion Service is to ensure the service is best placed to support the organisation to envisage a different future. Following a comprehensive review and redesign, the refreshed People and Inclusion Service went live in January 2025 and comprises three key service areas.
- **People Operations:** this service is critical as the front door to People and Inclusion, being the first point of contact for help and guidance for staff with queries and supporting the organisation with recruitment, payroll, reward, data and systems, and health & safety. The payroll team currently manages 18 payrolls for the Council and other organisations, including payroll services for 52 schools.
 - **People Relations:** this service collaborates with managers and staff with deep empathy to create the right culture for people to perform their best at work and embed restorative practice and case management practices.
 - **Employee Experience:** this service has three core areas of expertise: Learning and Culture Change, Relational Practice and Insight and Inclusion and Wellbeing. These teams collaborate with colleagues to develop the structural conditions in which people work, foster the relationships they form at work, navigate challenging conversations with dignity and respect, and understand what enables people to thrive.
- 4.7. The goal of the People and Inclusion service is to enable Camden to be a more inclusive, people-focused workplace which reflects the organisation's commitment to its employees' well-being, diversity, and overall experience. This will enable Camden to effectively attract, motivate, and develop high-performing employees to deliver the Council's ambitions for the borough's future. Camden's Employee Value Proposition and Reward Strategy are integral to a strategic approach aimed at achieving these goals.
- 4.8. Camden's Employee Value Proposition (EVP) supports We Make Camden by setting out the key values and behaviours that the Council embeds in its work, which are the following.
- being ambitious in everything we do

- standing together with our communities to challenge inequality and call out discrimination
- seeking innovation and celebrating our creativity
- being confident in our diversity
- being brave to make tough decisions
- enabling and sharing our power with everyone around us
- being inspired by our history, but always looking to improve
- embracing our residents and welcoming everyone
- creating a place where everyone has a chance to succeed, and nobody gets left behind

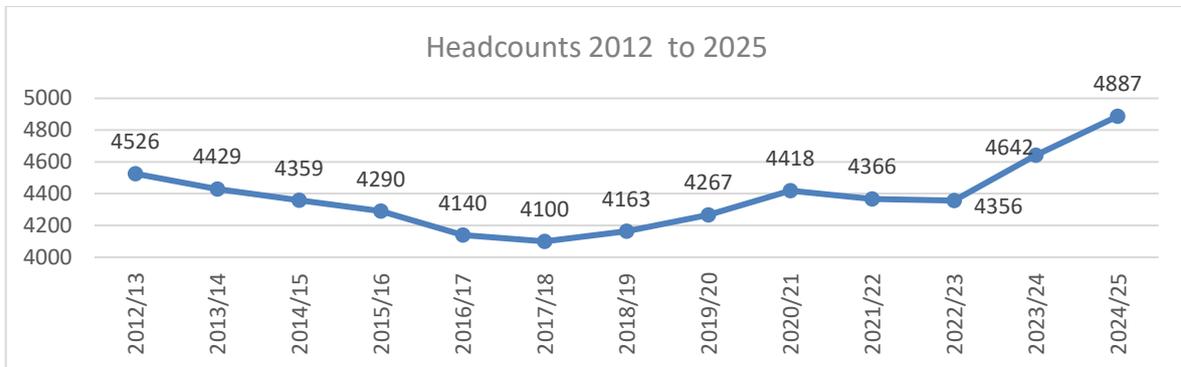
4.9. Camden's Reward Strategy supports delivery of We Make Camden by ensuring employees can work in an environment where they feel valued and able to do their best work and make a difference. The Reward Strategy is designed around key pillars that share common characteristics and reinforce one another. These are illustrated in the figure below.



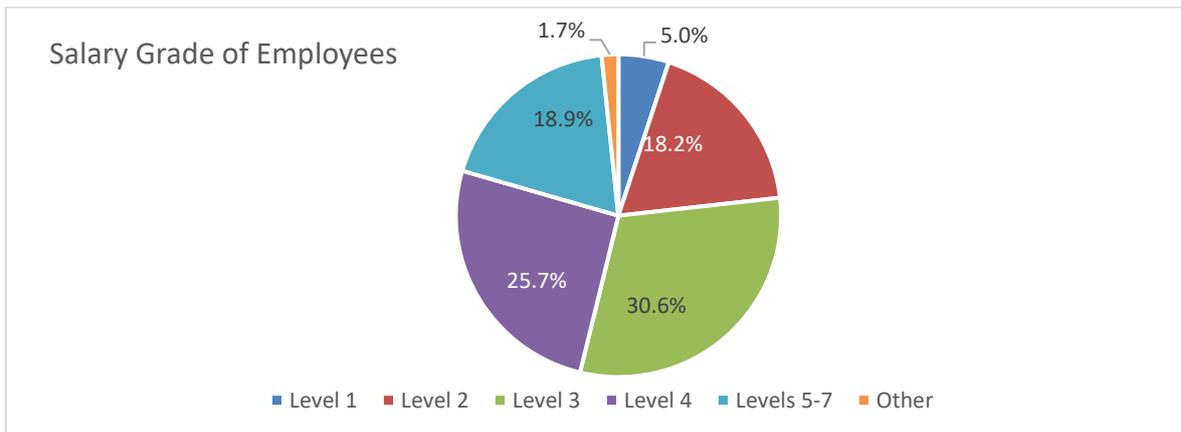
5. Workforce Composition

- 5.1. The Camden Annual Employment Profile offers an analysis of the workforce's size, composition, and various recruitment and employment areas, including age, disability, ethnic background, gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, where applicable data is accessible. This analysis plays a crucial role in ensuring that Camden fulfils its responsibilities under equality legislation, particularly the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2. The Council is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is representative at all levels. To meet this objective, Camden's employment profile reporting provides a higher level of detail, analysis, and comparative data, all of which is openly disclosed. Workforce figures provided in this report are taken from the most recent Annual Employment Profile and reflect the position as of 31 March 2025.
- 5.3. The number of staff employed by Camden increased 5.3% during 2024/25, with the workforce growing to 4,887 at the end of March 2025. As illustrated by the figure below, the rate of growth slowed compared to 2023/24, which followed two years of contraction. There were a range of reasons for this growth, including some insourcing

of services and a focus on recruiting for skills-shortage roles to reduce agency usage and overall workforce costs. More recent workforce figures show the workforce continued to grow at a slower rate during 2025, with 4,953 staff employed at the end of September 2025, an increase of 1.35% on March 2025.



5.4. There has been no notable change in the proportion of staff employed at each salary Level. Most staff (56.3%) remain employed at salary levels 3 and 4.



5.5. A key priority outlined in We Make Camden is to enhance employment opportunities for residents, and it is positive to see that the number of local residents employed by Camden continues to increase, with 825 residents (16.9% of the workforce) employed as of March 2025 compared to 14.8% (687) in March 2024. The Children and Learning directorate has the highest proportion of its staff living in the borough at 17.9%, whilst Adults and Health has the lowest at 9.2%.

Directorate	Headcount		Percentage	
	Camden Resident	Non-Camden Resident	Camden Resident	Non-Camden Resident
Adults and Health	69	563	10.9%	89.1%
Children and Learning	189	749	20.1%	79.9%
Corporate Services	171	900	16.0%	84.0%
Supporting Communities	396	1850	17.6%	82.4%
Directorates Overall	825	4062	16.9%	83.1%

5.6. There is, however, a consistent pattern that shows that as staff progress or join at higher salary levels, they are less likely to live in Camden. Level 1 continues to have the highest proportion of Camden residents at 29.3% closely followed by Level 2 (28.4%). Levels 5-7 have the lowest proportion of Camden residents at 4.7%.

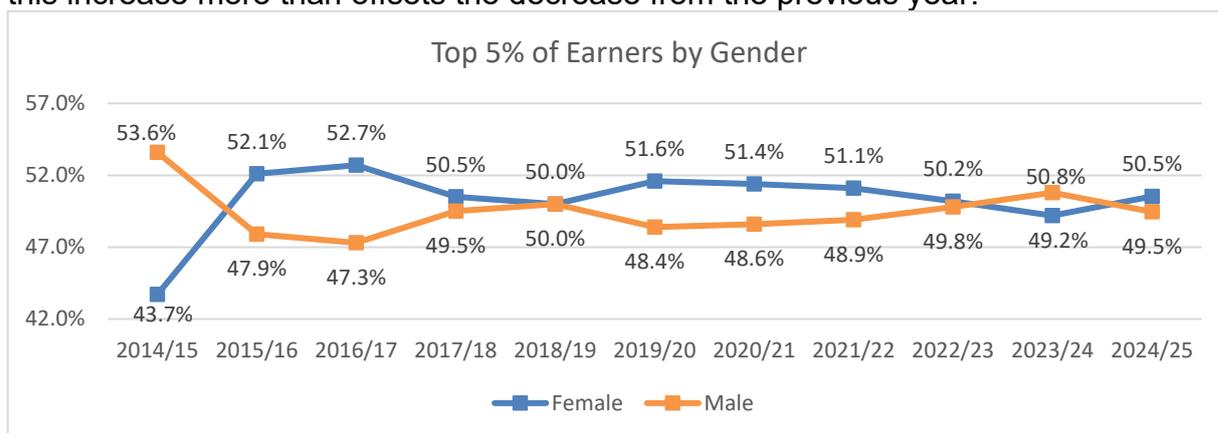
5.7. Camden’s workforce is, however, still very much local, whilst not necessarily resident in Camden, a considerable proportion of the workforce (72.1%) live within a 10-mile radius of the Council’s main office building (5 Pancras Square), a slight increase of 0.5% compared to last year.

Mile Radius to 5 Pancras Square	Proportion of Workforce
Within 5 miles	41.9%
5-10 miles	30.2%
10-20 miles	14.5%
20+ miles	13.4%

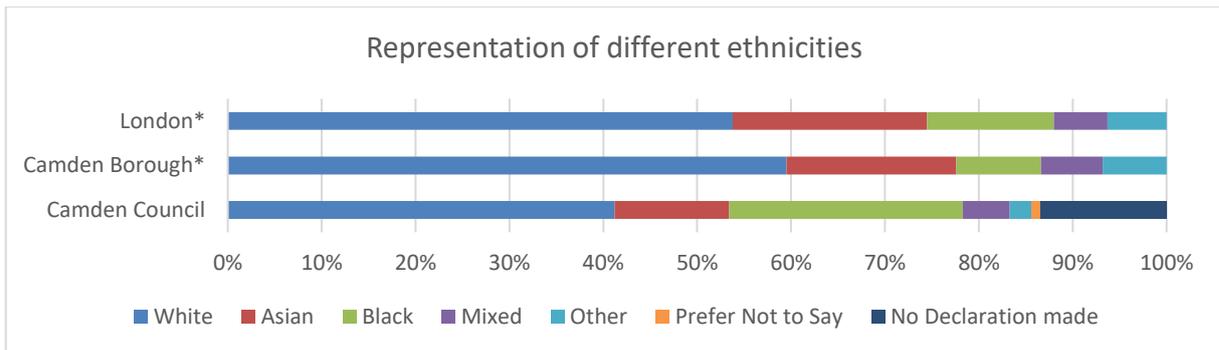
5.8. Female staff continue to be the majority at Camden, the proportion increasing slightly from 55.6% to 56.5% compared to the previous year. The gender ratio within Camden Council has remained consistent over the past ten years, with the average percentage of female workers within the workforce during this period being 56.1%. The Children and Learning directorate has the highest proportion of female staff within its workforce, whilst Supporting Communities has the lowest.

5.9. Historically, employment numbers for women in local government tend to be higher than those for men. This is attributed to the greater prevalence of flexible and part-time work opportunities in the public sector. Compared with other London Councils, Camden has the eighth-lowest proportion of female staff, below the London Councils' median of 60.08%.

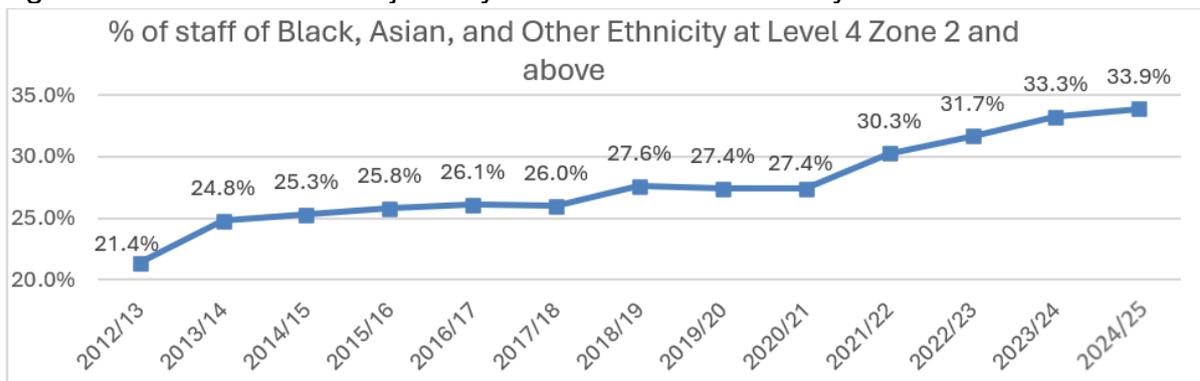
5.10. 50.5% of the Council’s highest 5% earners are women. As the figure below illustrates, this increase more than offsets the decrease from the previous year.



5.11. The following chart illustrates the representation of different ethnicities within the Council’s workforce compared to the working-age population of the Camden borough and London. White staff make up the largest single ethnic group at 41.2%, a 0.7% decrease from last year. The second-largest group, accounting for almost a quarter of the workforce, is Black staff. The proportion of staff of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicities increased by 0.7% overall to 41.32%.

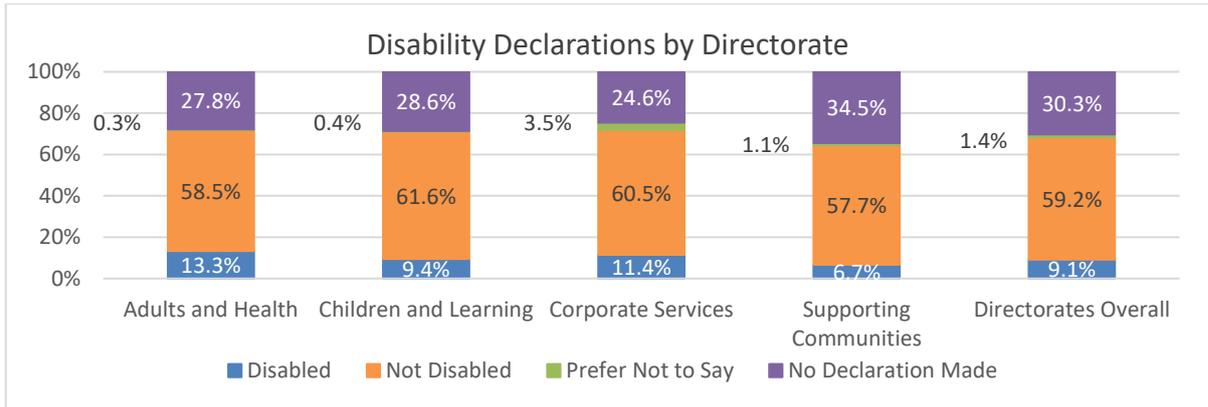


5.12. There has been an increase in the representation of Black, Asian, Mixed, and other ethnic staff across all grades, except Level 1, compared to last year. Black, Asian, and Other ethnicity staff make up the majority of staff at Levels 2 and 3 within the Council at 52.1% and 52.4%, respectively. The most significant proportion of White staff remains at Levels 5 to 7, but it continues to decrease, falling by 2.5% from 59.8% to 57.3%. As the table below illustrates, the proportion of staff from Black, Asian, and Other ethnicities working at Level 4 Zone 2 and above continues to increase. There has been a slight reduction at the Chief Officer level this year. 32.14% of our Chief Officers (Level 7) are Black, Asian, or Other ethnicity compared to the Camden Residential population (40.48%) and the workforce (41.32%). With the appointment of Jon Rowney as Chief Executive, we have Camden’s first Chief Executive of colour, a significant milestone in our journey to reflect our community.

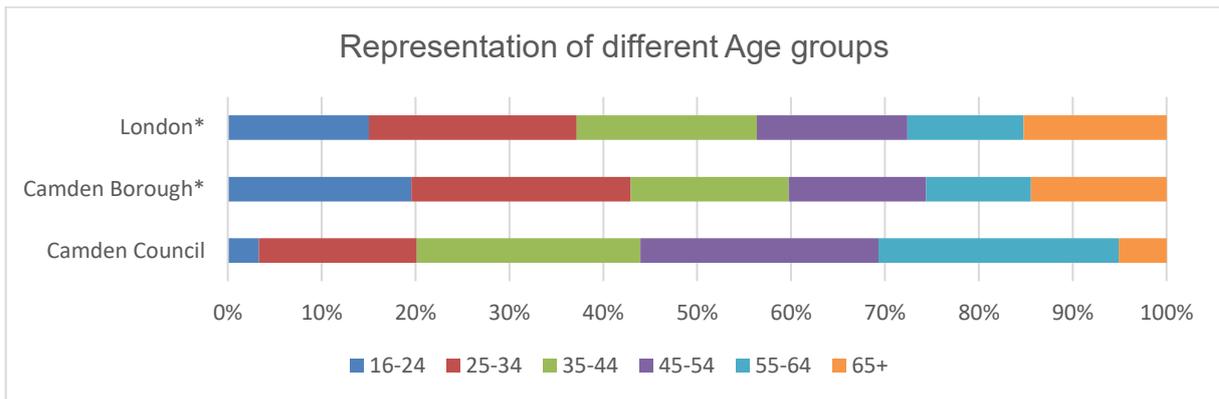


5.13. It is essential that Camden is a disability-friendly organisation. The Council has worked over the years to ensure that disabled staff feel welcome and included, for example, by making all Council buildings accessible and establishing disability working groups. Over the last few years, particularly, the Council has made a concerted effort to create a more disability-inclusive workplace, celebrating Disability History Month, launching the Camden Disability Charter, embedding a Wellbeing Passport, and rolling out a Disability Inclusion Learning Offer.

5.14. Unfortunately, the Council has had significantly low declaration rates for many years, meaning the workforce data does not reflect an accurate picture. At present, 30.3% of staff have not yet made a disability declaration. This is a slight improvement, with 0.9% more declarations than last year, and the Council continues to focus on ensuring that disabled staff who have not declared feel comfortable doing so. As the chart below illustrates, there are variances in declarations across directorates. Still, overall, the proportion of staff who declare they have a disability continues to increase, reaching 9.1%, up 0.6% from last year.

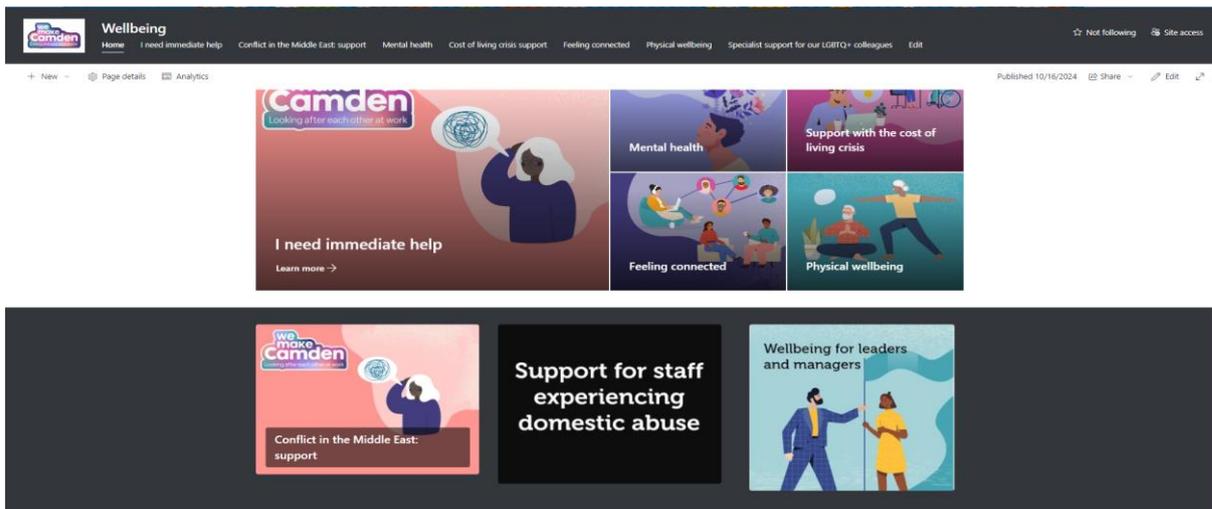


5.15. The chart below illustrates how Camden's workforce is balanced across the key working age bands, 25 to 60 years old. Whilst only 3.3% of the Council's employees fall within the 16-to-24-year age bracket, compared with 19.5% of the working-age population in Camden, this is largely anticipated, given that Camden hosts the largest student population in London, owing to the presence of 11 higher education institutions within the borough. Many individuals in this age group are engaged in some form of education or training.



6. Workforce Health and Wellbeing

- 6.1. Everyone in Camden, including colleagues, should be able to live a healthy, independent life. The Council is committed to putting health and well-being at the forefront of all it does and to intervening early to avert long-term illness. As an employer, we want to ensure workforce wellbeing reflects the Council's ambition for the borough.
- 6.2. The Council aims for a workplace where everyone feels valued, safe, and respected and the wellbeing offer is designed to support employees' emotional, mental, physical, and financial wellbeing in addition to ensuring people feel connected to the Borough and each other.
- 6.3. The Council's wellbeing offer is broad, and the diverse offerings are consolidated on a dedicated wellbeing microsite to help staff quickly find the support they need.

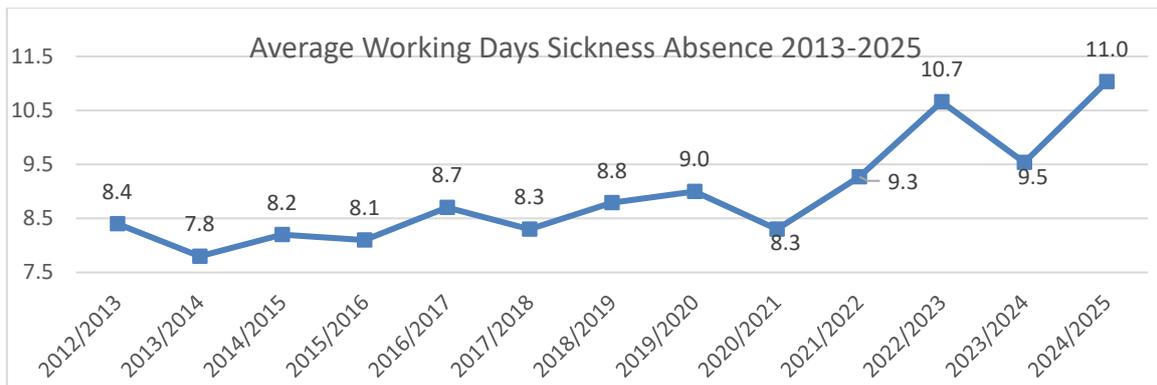


- 6.4. The microsite offers a range of wellbeing support, conveniently organised in categories as illustrated in the figure above. The microsite is regularly updated to align promotions with national wellbeing events, such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day. It also connects staff with Camden, for example, by highlighting physical wellbeing opportunities provided by the borough's green spaces, outdoor fitness areas, and complimentary fitness events.
- 6.5. The Council continues to produce its in-house podcast series dedicated to various aspects of wellbeing pertinent to Camden. These podcasts aim to highlight staff experiences and narratives, illustrating how they have managed difficult situations, and to provide information on available resources to bolster staff wellbeing.
- 6.6. The Council is always keen to receive staff suggestions about workplace wellbeing, and the workforce choir continues to go from strength to strength. During 2025, staff sound bath and meditation sessions, as well as a book-sharing scheme, were also introduced.
- 6.7. As a result of the Council's earlier anti-racism work, it became apparent that many staff are contending with a broad spectrum of issues and emotions linked to trauma. This includes experiences such as grief, loss, burnout, and the enduring impact of racial and various other types of deep emotional issues. These may have been exacerbated by the heightened attention on the injustices that many staff still grapple with. Consequently, the Council regularly looks at what is required to support staff affected by emotional dysregulation in all its manifestations. It includes trauma-informed coaching and access to qualified counsellors specialising in trauma-related matters. This program complements the existing Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- 6.8. The recent Peer Review acknowledged the impact of the focus on relational practice, equality, diversity and inclusion, and supporting staff to be at their best most of the time. It explicitly references the value and impact on colleagues, who, in turn, report feeling valued and invested in.

- 6.9. The Council's Occupational Health Services are delivered by People Asset Management (PAM) Group. Demand remains sustained, with 671 referrals across 505 employees in 2025, primarily driven by musculoskeletal (31.89%) and mental health (27.57%) issues. This concentration presents an ongoing sickness absence risk, requiring a targeted approach within services with higher rates to support workforce health and wellbeing.
- 6.10. In 2025, an external audit of the contract by PricewaterhouseCoopers resulted in a Moderate Assurance rating. No critical or high-risk issues were found. However, the audit identified four medium-priority findings and one low-priority finding. Recommendations have been provided, and designated officers are currently implementing them. This included more detailed contract KPI's for monitoring every quarter, which is now in place.
- 6.11. Wellbeing Solutions continues to deliver the Council's Employee Assistance Program, providing comprehensive support for staff and their immediate family members. This includes a 24/7 helpline and a live chat function accessible through their web portal, with mental health-trained call handlers to direct staff to the most appropriate support at the first point of contact. Everyone who contacts them receives 1 hour of initial triage support, plus a further 5 counselling sessions if deemed necessary.
- 6.12. Across 2025, Directorate staff recorded an annual utilisation rate of 5.08%, which is consistent with the typical benchmark for EAP usage within the local authority sector. Engagement was strong throughout the year, with most interactions taking place through digital channels, particularly mental-wellbeing resources, which remained the most accessed area. The leading presenting issues across the year were anxiety and depression, followed by personal concerns and work-related problems, showing a stable pattern. Demographically, the 40-49 age group accounted for the most significant proportion of users, and female employees accounted for around two-thirds of all cases. Session attendance was steady, with approximately 82% of all sessions attended, in line with typical service behaviour.
- 6.13. The ongoing programme of health and safety audits continues, focusing on reviewing risk management systems, ensuring regulatory compliance, and providing advice to improve workplace safety. Audits have covered schools, children's centres, libraries, and sheltered housing.
- 6.14. Random drug and alcohol testing for a percentage of staff in safety-critical roles within Accessible Transport, Repairs and Facilities Management continues in line with recommendations from the Prevention of Future Deaths report following the Aspen House fatality in February 2020.
- 6.15. Health and Wellbeing colleagues provided workplace health checks to 173 frontline staff to improve access to healthcare and reduce barriers caused by work demands and long NHS waiting times. The health checks included comprehensive assessments of heart health, diabetes, cholesterol, mental health, dementia, and various lifestyle factors. Each staff member received a personalised health report with specific recommendations. These reports were shared with GPs for Camden residents, while others were encouraged to consult their own GP. The feedback was overwhelmingly

positive, and this initiative successfully supported staff wellbeing and enhanced continuity of care.

- 6.16. The average number of working days' sickness absence per employee increased by 1.5 days to 11.0 days, compared with 9.5 days last year. Supporting Communities continue to have the highest average number of sickness absence days per employee (12.2 days), followed by the Children and Learning and Adults and Health directorates (10.8 days). This is expected, as these directorates have the highest proportion of roles based in the community and involving manual work.



7. Pay, terms and conditions

- 7.1. Camden has a long history of leading the way on fair pay and equality. The Council became an accredited Living Wage employer in 2012. To build on this and narrow the gap between the Council's lowest- and highest-paid employees, the Council increased the pay of its lowest-paid staff from 1 January 2015, introducing a minimum earnings guarantee.
- 7.2. The Council has set its pay strategy to pay above the market median and target the upper quartile for all roles, which has meant the Council has moved away from the NJC pay spine to respond to this agenda locally, as have some other London Boroughs.
- 7.3. Remaining an upper quartile pay employer is important in retaining the Council's competitiveness in the employment market, although Camden's wider brand and employment offer is strong. This is vital to continue recruiting and retaining high-calibre talent, particularly given Camden's Inner London location.
- 7.4. As part of the Council's response to the challenging economic conditions and labour market pressures, it continues to review pay in key areas, particularly where there is a recognised skills shortage, and where appropriate, puts in place pay packages to support the recruitment and retention of staff.
- 7.5. Salaries at the Council's lower grades continue to compare well to the market. In April 2025, the third stage of restructuring for our lowest pay grades was implemented, completing an investment of c£1 million in the Council's lowest-paid staff. All the changes are illustrated in Figure 1 of Appendix 1.
- 7.6. These changes enabled Camden to commit to a new Minimum Earnings Guarantee, and the current minimum salary is £33,244 (£17.71 per hour), effective since April

2025. This is £2.91 per hour (or 19.6%) more than the current London Living Wage of £14.80 per hour.

- 7.7. Increasing pay transparency is a topic that Camden has taken a leading and visible position on for some time, voluntarily reporting the Council's gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap since 2015, one of only a few organisations to go beyond the statutory requirements, both then and now.
- 7.8. In 2023, Camden became the first local authority to publish its gender pension gap, and in 2025, we published our second report. The report shows that a gender gap persists in the Council's staff pension fund (the Local Government Pension Scheme). The findings show that the gender pensions gap has not changed much over the past two years and suggest this gap is mainly due to historic gender inequalities in the workplace and broader society.
- 7.9. At present, for every £1 of pension received by male pensioners, female pensioners receive around 75p. This is consistent with the previous report. The report also looked at staff currently saving for their pensions. It found that women are still building up lower pension savings than men. One of the main reasons is that, around the age of 30, more women start working part-time, and men's earnings begin to rise more quickly than women's.
- 7.10. To support the reduction of the gender pension gap and promote a fairer long-term outcome for all staff, the Council has committed to increasing awareness of the gender pension gap and its key drivers among both employees and managers. Enabling colleagues to build sustainable retirement savings requires a coordinated approach, including reviewing and enhancing pay and pension policies to address disparities in pension accrual; promoting flexible and inclusive career pathways, particularly for women and carers; and providing targeted guidance and education to support informed pension decision-making.
- 7.11. Pensions regulations require employers to re-enrol all eligible employees in a pension scheme every three years. The People and Payroll team completed the Council's re-enrolment process in May 2025. This was a significant exercise involving direct communication with all staff. Of the total workforce of 7,731 employees (including school staff), 85% were already participating in a workplace pension scheme. A further 1,177 employees were assessed during the enrolment process. Of these, 54% were not eligible to join a pension scheme. In total, 548 employees were automatically enrolled. Analysis indicates that 63% of those enrolled opted out within the three-month opt-out window.
- 7.12. The Council is pleased to report continuing progress towards closing pay gaps where they exist. Overall, most gaps remain below the 5% threshold with representation patterns, particularly for ethnicity, continuing to shape headline results. The headline ethnicity pay gap within Camden is driven by more White staff being employed in senior roles and more Black, Asian, and Other Ethnicity staff being employed at lower levels, and addressing this requires progressive change. The proportion of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicity staff employed at Level 4 Zone 2 and above has increased year on year since 2021 to 33.9% – a total increase of 6.5% (see figure at 5.11), illustrating the positive impact of the Council's work over several years.

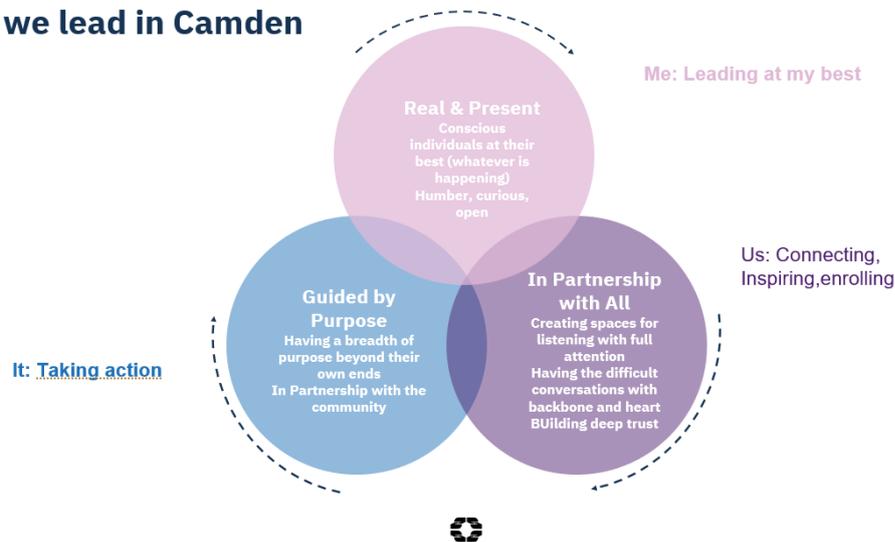
- 7.13. The 2024/2025 pay gap analysis showed reductions in Performance-Related Pay (PRP) Gaps for Gender, Ethnicity, and Disability. However, the ethnicity pay gap remains relatively high at 20.6% (mean) and 16.7% (median) in favour of White staff. The PRP analysis includes payments made to staff through the Council's My Reward Scheme, which currently allows managers to make recognition payments of 1% or 2% of an employee's salary.
- 7.14. In November 2025, the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee approved changes to the My Reward Scheme, effective from April 2026, that will withdraw the 1% payment option and retain a single 2% award level. This change was proposed following a detailed analysis of the scheme's usage and is intended to 'design out' the potential for inconsistency, which will support a more equitable approach, reducing variations in outcomes across grades, directorates, and demographic groups, and aligning with the Council's commitment to fair and transparent pay and rewards. The People & Inclusion service will oversee implementation, provide updated guidance to managers, and conduct an evaluation six months post-implementation to assess impact.
- 7.15. Shortly after the new People and Inclusion Service was launched in January 2025, PwC undertook an audit of the Council's payroll services. The auditors noted clear improvements since the previous review, with no concerns identified in the areas of payroll processing, starters, movers and amendments, deductions, payroll performance and management information, or payroll data protection, all of which received green ratings. The areas of Governance and Benefit Realisation received medium assurance, and changes to address the one governance concern were immediately implemented. The Benefit Realisation finding focused on the benefits achieved from implementing Oracle, the Council's integrated HR, finance, and procurement system, and on how these are being evidenced. The service continues to work closely with finance colleagues responsible for Oracle maintenance and development, and benefits realisation.
- 7.16. Benefits offer employees non-monetary awards that are not linked to performance and can be used to enhance and support other key activities. Benefit packages can determine whether candidates are attracted to organisations, and whether employees remain with them. Camden's staff benefits cover a range of support offers, and details of these are set out in Appendix 2. Staff take-up of the current benefit offer has continued to increase over the past year.
- 7.17. The Council regularly reviews the overall benefit package to ensure it remains valuable and relevant to staff, aligning with Camden's organisational vision and values. Current work aims to implement a benefits platform in Spring 2026 that will make existing benefits more accessible, support further increases in uptake and provide a solid foundation for further expansion of the offer.
- 7.18. During 2025, considering ongoing cost-of-living pressures, the Council continued to raise staff awareness of the benefits and support available through Camden to promote financial wellbeing, and to signpost to other sources of advice. Being clear that support is available for everyone, not just those in extreme economic hardship.

8. Workforce Culture and Environment

8.1. To complement Camden's organisational journey transitioning from a bureaucratic, process-focused organisation to a relational, people-focused one, the Council developed Camden's Model of Leadership, anchored in deep learning and reflections about how the Council has adapted since the pandemic, how Camden mobilises to deliver its missions and challenges, and how to put relationships at the heart of what the Council does. The model is based on three core components illustrated in the diagram below:

- How we lead at our best - by being real and present, humble, curious, and self-aware
- How we work in Partnership with all - being able to work relationally and inspire others
- Taking action and being conscious of what needs to change - working with a breadth or purpose beyond our own ends.

How we lead in Camden



8.2. Since January 2024, the Council has developed twenty Camden Leadership Facilitators to deliver and embed the programme, with more being trained. The Leadership programme has been rolled out to over 250 Heads of Service, Senior Leaders, and service managers across all directorates.

8.3. During 2025, the team began working in-depth with several services within the organisation to enhance their relational presence and practice. The next area of focus will be to embed the models, tools, and practices so that the learning is transferred and visibly utilised in everyday interactions. The Peer Review team highly commended the work to date in bringing real visibility to our relational leadership practice. This is positive validation of the potential the Council believes this work has, and of how much more can be achieved as the existing knowledge, skills and expertise are built on and harnessed.

8.4. In 2024, Camden appointed its first Director of Relational Practice. The Centre was officially launched in 2025. The purpose of The Centre is to ensure the Council embeds relational work into its approach to working with citizens, each other, and its leadership model, and builds on the positive, sector-leading work the Council has

developed in social work. Working in partnership, a shared Relational Practice Facilitator Team is being developed to ensure the Council's approach is joined-up and complementary, and to share learning and insights to inform ongoing organisational development.

- 8.5. Insight will increasingly drive the relational, restorative and wellbeing work. Combining both qualitative and quantitative data to pivot our resources and energy to where they are best deployed to meet the organisation's purpose and service needs.
- 8.6. The learning and practices the Council implemented during the pandemic have informed its approach, enabling staff to develop a greater connection to their purpose, each other, and residents. The key themes continue to be:
 - Promoting and sustaining a healthy workplace, creating a healthy, inclusive, and compassionate culture
 - Reducing stress levels and looking after our colleagues to maintain good mental health
 - Connecting with our communities and each other by promoting social wellbeing activities
 - Celebrating our colleagues and recognising the hard work and achievements across the organisation.
- 8.7. With the increased attention on climate change, race equality and broader societal issues in recent years, the expectation of staff for their employers to take a more active role in creating social value both internally and externally has grown. The Council's continued focus on social value helps support the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly younger workers who are more values-focused than ever before.
- 8.8. Camden has been an accredited Borough of Sanctuary since June 2024, celebrating its long and proud history of welcoming and supporting refugees, building refugee-facing services with partners, and speaking with one voice on the issues that make a difference for refugee communities.
- 8.9. Camden continues to take a leading role in championing diversity and inclusion internally and externally and is committed to leading by example. The Peer Review Explicitly noted that: *"Camden's approach to performance is strongly underpinned by its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. The council systematically uses EDI data and insights to understand variations in outcomes, shape targeted interventions, and monitor progress across different communities. This focus is visible across service areas, where analysis of disproportionality informs decision-making and drives improvements in access, experience and impact. The emphasis on relational practice, inclusive engagement and co-production further strengthens the council's ability to respond to the diverse needs of its residents. As a result, EDI is not treated as a standalone consideration but is embedded within performance management, service design, and strategic priorities"*
- 8.10. Key actions to support the Council's aim of being a truly inclusive organisation and to make sure that every member of the workforce feels supported, able and safe to bring their best selves to work include:

- **Staff networks and inclusion groups:** A new staff network, the Parents network, has been created with the purpose of having a dedicated space for every stage of the parenting journey. We have been bringing the groups working closely together to encourage collaboration and togetherness, and to identify intersectional themes that can bring them together.
- **Discrimination support hub:** the Council is a committed anti-racist organisation with a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination in all its forms. In June 2024, the Council launched a Discrimination support hub to give people the opportunity to discuss discrimination on their own terms. Following a review of the pilot, the Council now operates this service regularly, providing support to individuals and sharing trends with the organisation.
- **Race Inclusion:** work around race equality is very much linked to the Council's Diversity mission which looks at making sure that by 2030 those holding position reflect the diversity of our Borough. The approach is driven by evidence, whether it is from the data coming from the Employee Experience survey, various programmes of work, or the insights shared by trade unions, staff networks, and staff inclusion groups. This past year, efforts have been focussed on reviewing the offer around progression opportunities for underrepresented groups. Working closely with Camden Black Workers Group, the Men and Women of Colour Progression Networks and Race Catalyst groups to gather their insights on this topic.

As part of this work, we have reviewed and launched our mentoring programme to respond to some of the gaps raised by the groups, reviewed our inclusion recruitment training programme and gathered a new cohort of volunteers for our diverse panels, and embedded throughout our services our 'No all-white shortlist' approach to recruitment processes to take a positive action to address imbalance in opportunity that underrepresented groups may face.

Finally, the Council has raised awareness on race equality throughout the year through staff events, communication, and activities: Black on Board award ceremony, celebrating Black History Season, Pride and Power award and the re-launch of new Men of Colour Progression Network

- **LGBTIQ+ Inclusion:** During 2025, the Council focused on reaffirming its commitment to LGBTQ+ equality, sharing solidarity and support with staff and colleagues. Wellbeing support for LGBTQ+ colleagues was also enhanced, ensuring that information on mental health, wellbeing advice, and support was available to our colleagues. The Council continues to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ identities and inclusion through Inclusion recruitment training, mandatory eLearning and learning resources. The Council continues to work closely with Camden's Rainbow Network to celebrate identities and raise awareness through staff events (including marching at Pride), internal communication, and activities around LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- **Disability:** Camden has always collaborated closely with the Staff Disability Network. In recent years, they have been instrumental in developing the Council's disability awareness offer, focusing on the social model of disability. The close working has also led to a greater focus on neurodiversity than ever before. In 2026,

further awareness-raising and activities are planned. These include work underway to develop our Camden Model Leadership content to make it more neuro-inclusive.

In 2025, Chris Lehmann, Camden's Director of Adult Social Care Strategy and Commissioning, took on the role of senior sponsor, which has already borne impressive results, such as a series of events during disability awareness month with staff network members and staff from across the organisation. Disabled staff face many hidden and visible challenges, and work continues to review the support available, and the learning and development offer, which is being redesigned and developed, ready for the next mandatory learning cycle.

- **Violence against Women and girls:** In March 2022, Camden became the first London Borough to sign up to the Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC), pledging to support women affected by abuse to enter or re-enter the workplace. The Council's Domestic Violence Policy was updated in 2023, and since then, work has been undertaken to increase awareness across the council. Everyone at Camden now receives basic training on how to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and support someone in making a disclosure. The Council wants to build a culture where stigma and secrecy no longer further isolate survivors from their families, friends, and society. As part of the Council's Violence against Women and Girls strategy, work is underway to review existing training across the Council and identify any gaps, so the understanding and skills to support residents and employees can be improved further.
- **Care Conscious Council:** In 2024, the Council made care experience a locally protected characteristic, and, in May 2025, launched the Corporate Parenting Strategy. This means that Camden considers those in care, care leavers, or those with a previous experience of being in care to have the same protection from discrimination as other protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

As part of our drive to become a care-conscious workplace, in December 2025, Camden introduced a Care Conscious Commitment that outlines the challenges care-experienced colleagues face and the support the Council can offer. As an inclusive employer, the Council is committed to creating as many opportunities as possible for young people in the borough and ensuring that employees with care experience can thrive within the organisation. One key initiative supporting this commitment is the Camden Internship Scheme, first piloted in 2021 and officially launched in September 2023. Following the completion of their 18-month contracts, four interns from the first cohort successfully progressed into employment within the Council. The second cohort began in April 2025 with eight interns, and their contracts were extended to 21 months to provide enough time to undertake apprenticeships as part of their placement - an opportunity taken up by four participants. Having now completed a series of employability sessions, interns will be offered workshops to help them explore and prepare for their next steps.

- 8.11. As a Timewise Fair, Flexible Council, Camden is committed to enabling flexible working across the organisation and ensuring our residents have access to fair, good-quality flexible work in the borough. We know the value flexible working has when attracting and retaining a diverse range of talented, loyal employees and creating fair workplaces

- 8.12. The Council's workforce is large and diverse - flexibility looks and feels different for everyone and may change through the course of someone's time at Camden. The Council's flexible working commitment supports staff and managers in having joint conversations about what support might be needed and exploring what flexibility might look like. Through these open conversations and compromise, staff and their managers can find flexible working options that balance the needs of individual staff members, the service, and the residents we serve.
- 8.13. In 2022, Camden began its journey to become a certified Bloody Good Employer and, in December 2023, became accredited. 'Bloody Good Employers' was an initiative from Bloody Good Period, encouraging employers to create long-term positive change to normalise menstruation in the workplace and support everyone who menstruates at work. In May 2025, the Council began the reaccreditation process with Bloody Good Employers; however, the organisation closed in December 2025. In response, Camden has committed to continuing to review our policies on menstruation and maintaining its menopause commitment, and delivering related activities, which include:
- providing free access to menstrual and bladder leak products in all the Council's main buildings, as well as USB fans
 - providing e-learning for all colleagues to complete, hosting workshops focused on challenging myths and stigma, developing a better understanding of menstruation and inclusive leadership on menstruation.
 - delivering manager training sessions on Menopause in the workplace, the Council's expectations of managers and how to support team members.
- 8.14. The work outlined above, which supports employees in thriving at work through our inclusive culture, relational working approach, and hybrid work environment, is wide-ranging but crucial to ensuring a positive employee experience and supporting the recruitment and retention of staff.
- 8.15. Mandatory Learning modules serve as foundational training that every staff member must complete. They are designed to assist staff in working safely, improving interpersonal relationships, and safeguarding information and resources. Additionally, they enable Camden to adhere to the regulations governing these areas. The core compliance eLearning modules consist of:
- Anti-Racism
 - Conscious Inclusion
 - Fire and Resident Safety
 - Fraud Awareness
 - Health and Safety
 - Information Handling
 - Introduction to Domestic Violence and Abuse
 - Introduction to Safeguarding
 - Suicide Awareness
- 8.16. All new starters are required to complete the learning during their induction period, and all staff are required to undertake refresher learning every two years. These courses are regularly updated to ensure they remain relevant, meet the latest legal requirements, and align with strategic objectives. All courses were reviewed before the previous Mandatory Learning Refresher window, which ran between December 2024

and February 2025. The next Mandatory Learning Refresher window is scheduled to open in December 2026 and run until February 2027, where all staff will be required to complete the courses.

8.17. The onboarding process includes a monthly in-person Corporate Induction for all newly hired staff and managers, in accordance with Camden's employment terms and conditions. This comprehensive induction spans 1.5 days and offers participants an introduction to various aspects of the Council:

- The Council's aspirations and priorities as outlined in We Make Camden and The Way We Work
- The organisational and political structure, inclusive of governance practices
- Employee expectations, encompassing the code of conduct
- Internal employee benefits, covering learning and development, the My Performance framework, staff benefits, networks, and well-being
- Fundamental IT platforms and applications

8.18. The Corporate Induction features a guided walking tour of the vicinity surrounding King's Cross and 5 Pancras Square, along with a leadership breakfast. During this breakfast session, participants engage in a question-and-answer exchange with three senior leaders from the Council.

8.19. In addition to Corporate Induction, newly appointed or internally promoted people managers are invited to a quarterly New Managers Induction (delivered virtually). The purpose of these sessions is to support and guide new managers and to help everyone leave with an understanding of the core values and skills of being a people manager in Camden. New Managers Induction cover practical guidance, tools, and tips that managers can use in their day-to-day roles and highlights relational working - putting colleagues at the centre of what we do, building trust, having empathy, and focusing on relationships.

8.20. Analysis of Absence Management, Grievance, Underperformance, and Disciplinary cases continues to allow Camden to monitor staff wellbeing effectively and to identify and resolve issues as they arise. There were 245 cases in 2024-25, an increase of twelve from last year. Absence Management cases continue to make up the majority (69.8%) of all cases, as shown in the table below.

Directorate	Absence Management		Disciplinary		Grievance		Managing Under-performance		Total Cases	
	No. cases	% of cases	No. cases	% of cases	No. cases	% of cases	No. cases	% of cases	No. cases	% of cases
Adults and Health	16	9%	4	11%	6	40%	5	22%	31	12.7%
Children and Learning	19	11%	12	33%	5	33%	1	4%	37	15.1%
Corporate Services	65	38%	10	28%	1	7%	16	70%	92	37.6%
Supporting Communities	71	42%	10	28%	3	20%	1	4%	85	34.7%
Overall	171		36		15		23		245	

9. Employee Experience

- 9.1. In November 2024, the Council launched a new Employee Experience Survey. This pulse survey asked more questions than previous ones, digging deeper to get a clearer picture of what it feels like to work in Camden and to understand the impact of the Council's inclusion work. 2,135 staff completed the survey, which is 44% of the organisation and 50% more than in 2023.
- 9.2. The results tell a powerful story about the progress the Council is making around fairness, inclusion and belonging, with 86% of staff feeling they belong in Camden. Staff feel heard and empowered, with 88% feeling their jobs make good use of their skills and abilities. Staff feel connected and enjoy working collaboratively, and 92% believe their team/service aligns with a shared purpose.
- 9.3. The survey outcomes also highlighted some areas where the Council could improve the experience of colleagues working at Camden, specifically the needs of disabled colleagues, mental health and wellbeing, and career progression. Acting on these survey points is crucial. In addition to work completed during 2025, the Council has set out key areas of focus for the 2026/27 period, and discussions with staff are planned to develop action plans to strengthen our performance in these areas.

10. Workforce Resourcing

- 10.1. Turnover and recruitment data indicate that Camden Council remains a desirable place to work. During 2024/25, 403 staff left the Council, and the overall staff turnover rate decreased again to 8.5%, a further 0.7% decrease from last year. Children and Learning had the highest turnover rate at 10.1%.
- 10.2. Despite the reduction in turnover, recruitment activity remained high - a combination of replacement posts and new posts in growth areas - with Camden advertising 1,027 vacancies during 2024/25. A total of 20,814 completed applications were submitted in response to these vacancies. Of these applications, 2,438 were shortlisted (11.7%), and 709 (3.4%) received a formal job offer - a vacancy fulfilment rate of 69%.
- 10.3. In line with Camden's commitment to inclusion and fairness, the Council has continued to embed and strengthen inclusive recruitment practices introduced over recent years. This includes taking Positive Action (in line with the Equality Act 2010) at Level 5 and above recruitment through a "no all-white shortlists" approach (with the aim of achieving diverse shortlists to increase representation at our senior levels). Progressive, inclusive recruitment guidance and support for hiring managers, the Inclusive Recruitment Volunteer Programme are now well established.
- 10.4. These initiatives help to ensure each stage of the recruitment cycle is accessible, fair, and relevant to people from a wide range of backgrounds, reducing the risk of bias and supporting improved workforce diversity. The Council's Inclusive Recruitment Working Group continues to provide oversight and advice, with an increased focus on embedding consistent practice, strengthening capability through training and practical tools, and using management information to target support where it is most needed.

- 10.5. The Council continues to evolve its approach to talent attraction, recognising the shift away from traditional job boards and towards social media platforms such as LinkedIn (and other channels). The Council has increased its use of social media to strengthen Camden’s employer brand and employee value proposition, and hiring managers are encouraged to engage through their professional networks to reach talent more effectively. Campaign-led recruitment continues to be developed, building on learning from previous activity (including children’s social work), using digital content such as short videos and targeted messaging that can be refreshed and reused for future campaigns and events.
- 10.6. Over the past 12 months, the Council has transitioned to Experian as its digital onboarding and pre-employment checking platform, strengthening safe staffing through a faster, more consistent, and transparent approach. This has improved the candidate and hiring manager experience, reduced manual administration, and increased oversight by making progress easier to track and evidence, supporting stronger compliance and auditability. Additionally, the Council’s visa enquiry process has been streamlined to be more transparent and easier to follow, enabling quicker, more consistent responses.
- 10.7. Alongside this, agency workers continued to play a solid role in meeting temporary resource needs, with 467 Agency Placements filled across 2024/25 by the Council’s Neutral Vendor, Matrix-SCM. Agency workers are primarily used for short-term cover of absences/whilst vacant posts are recruited to, or as a source of specialist skills required for a fixed period. In areas facing skills shortages, agency use can be higher for more extended periods. For example, in the Legal Service, agency workers made up 60% of the workforce in 2024; following a successful recruitment campaign in early 2025, this reduced to 14%, with further recruitment activity ongoing.
- 10.8. As the table below shows, during the previous six years, agency workers have on average made up around 10% of Camden’s total workforce headcount. Agency use and costs have increased year-over-year since the decrease seen during the pandemic in 2020/21 until 2024/25. This reflects the tight recruitment market we have been operating in, with cover required for more extended periods, where the Council has faced challenges in recruiting to specific roles. This increase was also attributable, in part, to the greater use of specialist interims to support key improvement projects that required specialist skills.

Fiscal year	Average agency headcount	Agency as % of total workforce headcount (average)	Agency cost total (excluding)	Agency as % of total workforce spend (average)
2019/20	460	9.9%	£28,724,195	13.0%
2020/21	381	8.1%	£23,141,050	10.2%
2021/22	438	9.1%	£23,673,850	11.0%
2022/23	476	9.9%	£28,278,200	11.1%
2023/24	585	11.6%	£31,456,942	11.7%
2024/25	632	11.7%	£34,983,793	11%
2025/26 to date	497	9.12%	£21,329,358	8.4%

- 10.9. Since March 2025, additional agency and recruitment controls have been implemented, resulting in a consistent reduction in usage and spend. Spend has fallen in each quarter of 2025/26 to date, with the average proportion of total workforce spend dropping below 10% for the first time in over seven years. The Council continues to see successes with the Camden Talent Pool, which has been integrated into the agency supply framework. This creates opportunities for temporary roles to be filled by Camden residents, aligning with the Council's goal of facilitating stable, well-paid work, which is recognised as pivotal to broader outcomes such as health, well-being, and secure housing.
- 10.10. The Council aims to meet temporary staffing needs wherever possible through the resident talent pool. Over the past year, 26 residents have been successfully recruited into temporary positions, bringing the total number of talent pool workers in placements to 39. Some residents who commenced employment through the talent pool have also transitioned into permanent roles at the council. There are currently 417 active users in the Talent Pool, which continues to grow month by month.
- 10.11. The current contract with Matrix-SCM is due to end on 23 February 2026. Following a procurement process through the ESPO MStar4 framework, Matrix-SCM has been awarded the new contract. The new arrangement will be for up to 4 years, comprising an initial 3 years, with an optional 12-month extension.

11. Workforce Development

- 11.1. Camden is passionate about always wanting to improve. This means that, as an organisation, the Council needs to learn and adapt continuously, learning from both successes and failures, and responding quickly when things go wrong. The Council needs staff to learn and develop to deliver the ambitions set out in We Make Camden. As the pace of change increases through technological advances and innovations, this focus on continuous development is a win-win for the organisation and for individuals and their careers.
- 11.2. Camden continues to expand the avenues for learning beyond formal classroom training. The offer now encompasses online resources in the Learning & Development Hub and the Just-in-Time toolkit to make learning available at the point of need, enabling the development of in-role skills and knowledge, with an increasing focus on facilitating in-role learning transfer.
- 11.3. Following the accelerated transformation in how the Council supports staff learning inspired by the pandemic, about half of facilitated learning remains online. The new ways the Council has found to support staff in developing their knowledge and skills continue to deliver positive outcomes.
- 11.4. In 2025, the Council restructured the Learning and Development team and shifted to a 'federated' model, where learning specialists are more closely aligned with the teams and services they support. This enables learning experiences to be better aligned with the needs of individual teams. The new model allows the corporate Learning and Development team to focus more on collaborating with colleagues across Camden to develop the organisational learning culture, support organisational-wide learning

needs and maintain the Learning & Development platform, which provides the organisation with access to development opportunities where needed.

- 11.5. In Spring 2026, the Council will be moving to a new Learning Experience Platform, which will enable better reporting functionality, integration with Oracle, and enhance user experience for colleagues who will be able to access collaborative learning opportunities across the organisation. The Corporate Learning Team will collaborate closely with the provider during the transition period and focus on migrating learning records, resources, courses, and upcoming events to the new system. In preparation for the launch, colleagues will be updated on the upcoming changes and have the opportunity to learn more about the new functionality through online sessions, Essentials' news articles, drop-in sessions, and message cascades from people managers.
- 11.6. Work continues to develop a shared understanding and approach to 'progression in Camden – moving away from 'traditional' definitions of progression (career development, learning, and training) to understanding what progress looks like for individuals, managers, and the Council. Progression is a shared responsibility between the individual, the manager, and the Council, and this work aims to empower staff with the right tools and conditions and to support managers in unlocking their team's potential.
- 11.7. Through insights gained from significant staff engagement around equality and inclusion, the Council has made key commitments in relation to development and progression opportunities.
- 11.8. Camden's mentoring scheme, launched in April 2024, is designed to create a more networked organisation that is focused on sharing skills, expertise, and knowledge to help develop and retain staff, where people have the autonomy to make decisions. The programme ensures greater equity and diversity, targeting a wider audience and using a tech-style profile matching solution.
- 11.9. As the Council moved forward with its work on progression, it worked closely with staff groups to understand what staff need and where the gaps are. Together, this shaped an offer that is open to everyone, gives people more choice and flexibility in who they connect with, and creates more opportunities to learn from one another. The introduction of reverse mentoring also encourages more people to take part as mentors, regardless of role or seniority. So far, 311 have registered on the programme from across directorates. The programme is now open indefinitely, with participants using the platform as needed. Following participants' feedback, networking events are also organised throughout the year as opportunities for colleagues to connect in person and identify their mentor/mentee.
- 11.10. The Council continues to provide opportunities for Black, Asian, and Other ethnicity staff at the Directorate Management Team (DMT) and Senior Management Team (SMT) level, through creating a rotation of up to 3 months for staff members to take part in DMT and SMT conversations and decision-making.
- 11.11. To support the development of Camden's future leaders, the Council offers an Emerging Leaders Programme, delivered through Solace's 'Pan-London Emerging

Leaders Apprenticeship Programme². This programme aims to develop talented individuals into leadership roles across the organisation. The current cohort of eleven Camden staff are due to complete the two-year programme in October 2026, and the Council will continue to evaluate learning outcomes and track participants' career progression.

- 11.12. In addition, in December, the Council's first cohort of staff and residents completed the seven-month Black on Board programme. Delivered in partnership with Olmec³. The programme trained ten staff and residents in board-level leadership, supporting greater diversity and representation in leadership roles.
- 11.13. There are currently 189 apprentices on programme in Camden (excluding schools): 62 are new apprentice recruits, and 127 are existing staff. As of January 2026, 28% of staff undertaking apprenticeships are working towards Level 7 qualifications (master's degree level). Whilst 18% are working towards Level 6 (bachelor's degree-level) 15% are working towards Level 5, 24% are working towards Level 4, and 15% are studying at Levels 3 and 2.
- 11.14. Most staff training apprenticeships in Camden (95 out of 127) fall under seven coordinated programmes targeted at skills-shortage areas: Finance, Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, Town Planners, Project Managers, Adult Social Care, Systems Thinking, and the Camden-wide "Emerging Leader" programme mentioned above.
- 11.15. The Council continues to work with services to promote the advantages of apprenticeships and create opportunities wherever they meet organisational needs. This also ensures that the Council is taking a sustainable approach to apprenticeship creation, which leads to progression and retention within the organisation wherever possible.

12. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

12.1. There are no finance comments arising from this report.

13. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

13.1. The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no legal comments to add.

14. Environmental Implications

14.1. The contents of this report have no environmental impacts.

² <https://solace.org.uk/learning-hub/apprenticeships/emerging-leaders-programme/>

³ <https://www.olmec-ec.org.uk/diversify-london/>

15. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Summary of Camden Pay Scheme Changes
- Appendix 2: Summary of Camden staff benefits and external accreditations

REPORT ENDS

Summary of Camden Pay Scheme Changes

Pay Points	2022	2023	2024	2025
1				
2	Level 1 Zone 1	-		
3				
4		Level 1 Zone 2		
5				
6	Level 1 Zone 3	Level 1 Zone 3	Level 1 Zone 2	
7				
8			Level 1 Zone 3	
9			Level 1 Zone 3	Level 1 Zone 2
10				Level 1 Zone 3
11	Level 2 Zone 1	Level 2 Zone 1	Level 2 Zone 1	
12				
13				
14				
15				
16	Level 2 Zone 2	Level 2 Zone 2	Level 2 Zone 2	
17				
18				
19				
20				

Summary of Camden staff benefits and external accreditations

Quality of life/work-life balance

- Agile working: Flexible work from any location (where role allows)
- Working Abroad Scheme: this enables staff to work from abroad for a period of up to 6 weeks (subject to risk assessment conditions being met) to facilitate staff reconnecting with family living abroad
- Annual leave: 27 days, increasing to 31 days after 5 years of service, with the option to purchase up to an additional 3 days
- Leave Banking Scheme: this enables staff to bank up to ten annual leave days over a 5-year period, which can be used to take an extended holiday.
- Family leave and occupational pay available from day one of employment for:
 - Appointments related to pregnancy/adoption - all at full pay for Birth Parent/Main Adopter and two at full pay for Other Parent/Adopter
 - Staff taking Paternity leave - 4 weeks at full pay
 - Staff taking Maternity, Adoption, or Shared Parental leave - 6 months at full pay
 - Staff experiencing Pregnancy Loss - 10 days at full pay
 - Parents of premature babies - additional leave and pay between actual birth date and due date
 - Parents of full-term but hospitalised babies - up to 4 weeks of additional leave at full pay
 - Staff who are Foster Carers, prospective Foster Carers and 'Special Guardians' - up to 5 days of additional leave at full pay
 - Staff who are Parents or Carers – up to 5 days of paid Dependency leave
 - Bereavement Leave – up to 10 days of paid leave
- Public Duties – up to 10 days' paid leave per year in total to undertake public duties
- Jury Service – paid time off for the duration (there is no statutory entitlement to continue being paid whilst on Jury Service)
- Volunteering – one day of paid leave to volunteer with an organisation based in Camden
- Other types of paid and unpaid leave are also available, such as sabbatical/employment break, and special leave to cover other exceptional circumstances.

Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Disability Leave - up to ten additional days of leave at full pay for our staff who have declared a disability, or care for someone with a disability, to attend planned appointments related to their disability
- 10 days of additional leave at full pay for victims of domestic violence and abuse - to allow employees time to make practical arrangements, take a break from work commitments and facilitate leaving an abusive partner or family member.
- 1:2:1 counselling, support, and guidance on a wide range of areas through our Employee Assistance Programme
- Free eye tests and seasonal flu jabs
- Advice and support for healthier living, including stop smoking support, Workshops on nutrition and healthy eating, Back care awareness, breathwork, yoga and mindfulness sessions, and exercise groups
- On-site massage clinic, Osteopathy - 25% discount, Discounted Hypnotherapy

- Life stage workshops, e.g. perimenopause, menopause, pre-retirement planning, etc.
- Wellbeing, mindfulness & resilience training, and workshops
- Mental health awareness training
- Give as You Earn – payroll giving scheme

Financial Advice and Guidance

- One-to-one financial advice and guidance through our external independent financial advisers. Staff can access one free financial advice session with a financial expert.
- Regular face-to-face workshops for staff on 'planning your financial future into retirement and beyond'.
- Ongoing programme of financial wellbeing webinars giving practical advice on a range of topics, including making the most of your money, managing debt, coping with the rising cost of living, etc.
- Financial well-being support and guidance accessed through our partner My Money Matters. This includes a series of webinars designed for staff to take charge of their finances, tools, and resources to help with budgeting and building healthy financial habits.
- Support through our Employee Assistance Programme with a range of articles, checklists, and resource sections available via their website, as well as access to counselling if required.

Support to reduce costs

- Cycle to Work and City Bike salary sacrifice schemes save staff 32-42% on hire and purchase of a bike and accessories or the cost of City Bike hire membership with payments spread equally across 12 months. Savings arise from this scheme, attracting both tax and National Insurance relief.
- Staff noticeboard – where local discounts and other offers are found and advertised by staff. Also offers a forum for staff wanting to buy or sell goods, give items away, or find somewhere to live.
- Beyond card – a prepaid shopping card that gives employees up to 15% cashback every time they shop at over seventy popular retailers, in-store and online.
- Extras discounts – offer staff savings of up to 10% on gift cards, eGifts, and gift card top-ups for over one hundred brands and sixty different retailers that can be used to save money on everything from the weekly food shop and eating out, to travel and entertainment.
- Lifestyle Discounts – many discounts are accessible to staff through Kaarp and CSSC, from savings on everyday shopping to entertainment and family days out. We also promote a range of individual discounts/offers to Camden staff from companies such as Microsoft, EE, Dell, and Warren Beds. EE Perk (20% discount)
- Health Plan – option to join at discounted local government rates that provides access to face-to-face check-ups or appointments, video GP services and 24/7 access to a counsellor, as well as cash back on medical expenses, e.g. dental, chiropody, physiotherapy, hospital admission, etc.
- Childcare vouchers – a salary sacrifice scheme closed to new applicants since government changes in 2018, but for those still eligible, vouchers may be obtained and used to pay for childcare for children up to the age of fifteen, or sixteen for children with disabilities. The savings come as the scheme attracts both tax relief and National Insurance relief.

Saving for the future

- Pension Scheme – The Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) provides valuable benefits and protections for staff and their family. Staff can pay lower contributions and build up their pension more slowly when times are financially tough. This is called the 50/50 section of the LGPS - staff retain full life and ill-health cover if they join the 50/50 section.
- Shared Cost AVC scheme – cost-effective saving to increase the value of the pension as this scheme attracts both tax relief and National Insurance relief because the cost is 'shared' through a salary sacrifice agreement. Guidance and advice on LGPS and saving for the future is accessible from the Knowledge Centre and helpline. A regular programme of webinars is also available.
- London Capital Credit Union (and Camden Mutual Credit Union) – these not-for-profit organisations offer savings accounts, and we have arrangements in place for deductions to be made via payroll. Saving with a credit union can increase the chances of a loan application being approved by them and give access to lower interest rates.

Loans

- Tenancy deposit loan – an interest-free loan of up to £3,000 repayable over up to 10 months to support staff with paying tenancy deposit costs.
- Childcare deposit loan – an interest-free loan of up to £2,000 repayable over up to 10 months to support staff with the upfront payment of registration deposit/fees and first month of childcare fees.
- Season travel ticket loan – an interest-free loan enabling staff to benefit from reduced travel costs by purchasing an annual season ticket but spreading the cost over 10 months.
- Immigration loan – an interest-free loan of up to £5,000 repayable over up to 36 months that staff can use towards payment, for them and their dependents, of British Citizenship or Indefinite Leave to Remain application fees or the payment of the Healthcare surcharge to the UK Visas & Immigration Service.
- Corporate Gym membership – an interest-free loan enabling staff to benefit from a reduced price by paying the annual membership fee upfront but spreading the cost over 10 months.
- London Capital Credit Union (and Camden Mutual Credit Union) – these not-for-profit organisations offer loans, and we have arrangements in place for deductions to be made via payroll. Staff who otherwise find it difficult to access credit can obtain loans at lower interest rates than those offered by standard high-street or other lenders.

External Accreditations

- Accredited employer with **The Living Wage Foundation**⁴ since 2012.
- Accredited **Timewise Employer**⁵ For over six years, the Council has demonstrated our commitment to flexible working to help balance work and other life demands, and has been recognised as a role model employer.
- Early adopter of the **Mayor's Good Work Standard**⁶ and rated as excellent upon receiving accreditation. This reflects the many ways the Council strives for the best

⁴ <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>

⁵ <https://timewise.co.uk/consultancy-services/accreditation/>

⁶ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/business-and-economy/supporting-business/good-work-standard-gws-0>

possible working conditions for colleagues and commitment to a healthy, fair, and inclusive workplace.

- In 2020, accredited as a **Fostering Friendly Employer** by the Fostering Network⁷ for the additional support provided for staff who are prospective or approved foster carers
- The support the Council provides to the parents of premature babies and full-term but hospitalised babies is accredited by the **Employer with a Heart Chartermark**⁸
- In March 2022, Camden became the first London Borough to sign up to the **Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant**⁹ (EDAC) pledging to support women affected by abuse to enter or re-enter the workplace
- In December 2023, accredited by **Bloody Good Employers**¹⁰ This was an initiative from Bloody Good Period for employers who want to create long-term positive change to normalise menstruation in the workplace and support everyone who menstruates at work.
- In February 2025, signed up to the **Muslim Employment Charter**¹¹, an inclusion initiative designed to support employers in creating inclusive working environments where everyone can thrive, specifically addressing some of the challenges Muslim colleagues can experience in balancing their religious obligations in the workplace.

⁷ <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/championing-fostering/fostering-friendly>

⁸ <https://www.thesmallestthings.org/employer-with-heart>

⁹ <https://edacuk.org/>

¹⁰ <https://www.bloodygoodemployers.com/>

¹¹ <https://www.muslimec.co.uk/>