

Camden Local Area SEND Strategy

Year 1 Progress Report



To read a summary of the Local Area SEND Strategy
and for an easy-read version, please visit
camden.gov.uk/sendstrategy



Introduction	3
Priorities	4
Make life easier for children and young people with SEND	5
Support children and young people with SEND to thrive in learning, health and wellbeing	11
Enable young adults with SEND to build a good life locally	16

SEND Strategy Development

The SEND Strategy 2022-27 was approved by Cabinet and published in November 2022, with the SEND Inclusion Board taking oversight of delivery. This report provides an update on progress that has been made in the first full year of implementation of the strategy. We will separately publish an implementation plan for year 2 and beyond.

While we have made progress against a number of key commitments in the strategy, we are still at the beginning of our journey to realise the vision that we set out. We are proud of the progress that we have made and the building blocks that are now in place for improvements, but recognise that there is still work to be done to achieve our ambitions for children and young people with SEND and their families. Over the last six months, we have completed a self evaluation which has given us further clarity on our strengths, but also the areas where we need to focus work on improvements going forward.

In the time since the publication of the strategy, there has been significant change in leadership at the council, but we now have permanent, stable leadership, across the partnership including a new leadership team at the council, with Tim Aldridge as Executive Director of Children & Learning, Vikram Hansrani as Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion and Di Osbourne as Head of SEND and Inclusion. This permanent leadership team in the council will help us to push forward strategic improvements.

Since the publication of the strategy, we have also become part of the London Change Programme Partnership. This is commissioned by the Department for Education to test the reforms set out in the [SEND and AP Improvement Plan](#). This role provides us with the opportunity to adopt changes early and influence national policy making.

This progress report is published alongside our implementation plan for year two of the five year strategy, setting out the actions we will complete in 2024. Our implementation plan will be refreshed every 6 months to include activities for another 6 month period, responding to emerging evidence and priorities.

The Camden Local Areas SEND Strategy 2022 – 2027 set out three key priorities and workstreams under each of these priorities. This report sets out progress and next steps against each of these priorities and workstreams.

Priorities

Our overall ambition:

Children and young people with SEND lead happy, fulfilled and rewarding lives

Our priorities:

Make life easier for families of children or young people with SEND

- Families feel that they are listened to, supported and included
- Clearer communication and information sharing
- Developing a more inclusive borough
- Increased support for home-life and parenting



Support children and young people with SEND to thrive in learning, health and wellbeing

- Outstanding practice in supporting learning
- Good mental health and wellbeing
- Keeping children and young people with SEND safe
- More joined up support for children and young people moving between phases of education and between services
- Enabling better access to health and therapeutic support
- Local provision for local children

Enable young adults with SEND to build a good life locally

- Continuing to learn and routes into employment
- Creating opportunities for independent living
- Starting the preparation for adulthood earlier

1

Make life easier for children and young people with SEND

Area	Progress-to-date	Next steps
Quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)	We have started work to improve our policies and processes for EHCPs which will help continue to improve the quality of EHCPs. This has included setting up a quality assurance framework and board as well as buying into a tool called Invision 360 which allows system wide quality assurance of EHCPs.	Continue work to improve quality of EHCPs through embedding performance monitoring and quality assurance framework. Develop a workforce development plan to improve the quality of the advices in EHCPs.
Information and communication	Additional capacity within SENDIASS has meant that they have been able to work with more families and communities. An additional three posts has allowed for SENDIASS staff to do more outreach work.	Publish a high quality refreshed Local Offer and embed this as a hub for all SEND information. Use consistent language and phrases across the partnership to make the support offer easier to understand.
Inclusive mainstream services	Inclusion is at the heart of the Family Hubs programme in Camden, with services made accessible for all, alongside the Best Start for Babies offer supporting early identification of additional needs. Camden topped up central government funding by £100k for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme to create additional places for children with SEND, providing positive activities during school holidays.	Develop a shared continued professional development plan across the partnership including ensuring disability awareness training for a wide range of services.
Coproduction	Increased role for coproduction including for MOSAIC website and running bimonthly thematic engagement sessions between the Camden Special Parent Forum and Camden Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion.	Camden Council to develop and implement an engagement strategy. Improve how we hear and respond to the voice of children and young people so that their views help to shape services.

1

Make life easier for children and young people with SEND

1.1 Families feel that they are listened to, supported and included

The process of coproducing the SEND Strategy has pushed forward a culture change around embedding coproduction in the development of services. The partnership now actively works with parents, carers and young people to understand how best to meet their needs and build strengths. Camden's Integrated Children's Service has worked with families to develop "I" and "we" statements that set out how they will provide services and work with families. These statements set out an agreement of how services and families work together to improve outcomes for children, with professionals committing to meet families' priorities.

We have a new format for how we run annual surveys with parents and carers that will enable us to track progress over time in how well the partnership is meeting families' needs. There is still work to do to make sure that these surveys hear from a wide range of families in the borough representing the broad variety of families that we work with, but the new format enables us to hear from families about whether the partnership is providing children and families with the right support at the right time. We have also set up bimonthly thematic engagement sessions with the Camden Special Parent Forum where senior staff from the council can share progress and hear feedback from parents. In year 2, we plan to develop a full engagement strategy to maximise opportunities to hear and share feedback and progress. This will include improving how we engage with children and young people so that their voice is shaping our work.

We have made significant progress around putting in place the structures needed to improve the quality of services that we provide, particularly around Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The council have led a robust audit process of EHCPs involving a wide range of multidisciplinary professionals, using newly commissioned Invision 360. This work has shown that there is significant work to do to push up the quality of plans. We are using the learning to inform the workforce development that is needed in the team, and SENDIASS have been providing training on EHCPs across the partnership. We have also put in place new processes to check every plan to make sure that they are high quality and to ensure that the voice of the family is stronger in the planning and review process.

1.2 Clearer communication and information sharing

We have audited all the information on the Local Offer website and are working with families to finalise the design of the new website, to be launched in the autumn. This refreshed Local Offer website will act as a hub for all information for families with SEND. It will also include news and updates so that families can find out about what changes and improvements are taking place. The refreshed Local Offer will provide the platform for a range of guides and service maps. It will also provide greater insight for families into how the partnership is working to improve families' experiences, for example, by holding our performance reports and improvement plans.

1

Make life easier for children and young people with SEND

The MOSAIC website has been redesigned to make information more accessible for families so that they can get useful information and advice either without specialist support, alongside specialist support or while waiting for specialist support. This self service approach gives families better options on how to access information. The Local Offer, MOSAIC and Family Hubs websites all link to each other so that families can move between them to find the information they are looking for.

The SEND Partnership have increased their visibility within the community and increased the outreach that they do to families with children with SEND. Notably, funding for SENDIASS has increased so that they are able to do more outreach particularly with under-heard families such as within the Somali community. This has enabled more families to understand the support that is on offer to them and helped the SEND partnership to hear from a wider range of families.

The partnership is committed to sharing information as effectively as possible to prevent families from having to retell their stories. They continue to use shared records systems where possible and there is a shared ambition to push what is possible around information sharing.

Parent feedback has also told us that working consistently with the same professionals is important, particularly around not having to retell their story and supporting person centred care. Social care have redesigned their service model so that all children in need and short breaks cases are allocated a named worker who will work consistently with that family, rather than having duty caseworkers. They are recruiting for case workers who will each be responsible for 20-25 families who they will be able to get to know on a more personal level, so that they can effectively feed into annual reviews and support planning. The Camden Model of Social Work is a 'systemic' model of social work, based on strong relationships between social workers and families and informed by their experiences. Camden has recruited a Director of Relational Practice to support the development of a common practice model to which the whole Children and Learning Directorate can subscribe.

We understand that families want to be able to see a clearer map or pathway of the services that are on offer. The cross partnership Neurodiversity Taskforce are working on a visual roadmap to make it easier to understand and access the support that is available for neurodivergent children and young people. Learning from this will inform future mapping for other conditions.

1.3 Developing a more inclusive borough

Central to an inclusive borough is a workforce who can meet a range of needs. Autism awareness training has been provided to a wide range of professionals so that they are better equipped to work with children and young people with additional needs. This includes training across a wide range of health professionals, including non specialist services and support staff, such as receptionists. Mainstream services such as youth clubs and family hubs have been working to make sure that their services are inclusive through workforce development and designing spaces and activities in a way that is suitable for a wider range of children.

1

Make life easier for children and young people with SEND

Camden Council invested an additional £100,000 in the Holiday Activities and Food programme to double the number of specialist SEND places in the summer holidays 2023 and increase the number of places available in Easter 2024. This funding has allowed us to provide an additional 176 place on the programme. Families told us that the school holidays can be particularly difficult and that they may struggle to find childcare and positive activities that their child is able to access. The Young Camden Foundation sent a feedback survey to all parents whose children participated in the programme. Feedback from parents with children who have SEND was very positive, with the majority stating that they were very satisfied with the overall programme, including its accessibility. The feedback is insightful and encouraging, but more can be done to ensure that the programme is accessible for all children with SEND. Camden also commission nine local mainstream play centres to offer 100 holiday and 20 after school club places for per week for children referred for Short Breaks. These support children to spend time with friends outside of school as well as develop new friendships with children who live locally.

The two Camden school-based Opportunity Centres have made a steady start with respect to their provision for students who have SEND in this 'test and learn' year. Two Opportunity Centres have been established at Acland Burghley School and La Sainte Union School and both are working with a higher proportion of children with SEND than across the rest of their school population. These numbers have steadily increased as the Opportunity Centres have embedded and developed.

The Acland Burghley School (ABS) Opportunity Centre is ensuring accessibility for pupils with special educational needs. With 16% of pupils in the Summer term (2023), regularly attending after school sessions with special educational needs, Once better established with these students, by the autumn term 2023 this percentage had doubled. The ABS summer school ran as part of the Opportunity Centre for students moving from year 6 to year 7 and attracted 32 SEND students, 30% of those attending. The year 11 revision courses ran at ABS over October half term were also well attended by SEND students and 16% of those taking part had SEND. The La Sainte Union School run 1-2-1 tutoring in English, Mathematics and Science every week in after school sessions as part of its Opportunity Centre. A quarter of those attending these tutoring sessions have an EHCP, which is well above the school's average.

Camden's Youth Services have made significant steps in making all their provision more accessible to young people with a wide range of additional needs. The workforce has received training to be able to meet a wider range of needs, and changed how sessions run to make them more accessible, including supporting all young people attending to create a welcoming space. Rather than offering separate provision for young people with SEND, they are reorientating services to bringing together all young people.

There is a timetable of positive, inclusive activities for children and young people to take part in during term time and school holidays. Camden commission 9 local 'mainstream' play centres to offer approximately 100 holiday and 20 after school club spaces p/w (with additional support) to children referred for Short Breaks. These support children to spend time with school friends outside of school as well as developing new friendships with other children who live locally.

1.4 Increased support for home life and parenting

Delivery of the Rebuilding Bridges work is continuing successfully. This intensive engagement programme centres around the child and family, tailoring support to meet individual needs. This work is currently funded until March 2025 and work is ongoing to secure funding to enable it to continue after this point. Work is also ongoing to embed learning into our ongoing work around supporting children and families with complex needs, particularly considering the benefits that have come from working with a voluntary and community partner who have been able to engage with families in a different way to statutory services. The programme had a high level of engagement, with 85% of referred families engaging with services. Despite very entrenched issues for many of the young people involved, 25% increased their attendance by 10% or more and overall, 46% had improved attendance. 83% achieved positive outcomes in relation to personalised goals and 80% had reduced behaviours of concern.

The SEND strategy recognises the importance of supporting parents and carers in order to make the biggest difference for children's lives. In the early years, Camden takes a strong whole family approach and is increasing the number of times each family sees a health visitor in the first year of a baby's life. This Best Start for Baby offer will mean that all families are offered five health visitor contacts rather than the statutory two contacts in the first year of life. Babies develop rapidly in this first year, and these additional contacts will help to identify any emerging needs, supporting early identification and intervention. This has been started in two out of five locality areas in Camden and be borough-wide by April 2024. As well as picking up any additional needs from the child, these contacts will support parents to access the support they need in their role as parents.

This focus on early intervention is also shown through by the approach on speech and language in the early years. Supporting young children's language development is viewed as everybody's business rather than relying on speech and language therapy. Camden Kids Talk initiative has been rolled out across the early years' workforce so that a wide range of professionals are able to assess and support language development. The WellComm tool is used across the partnership which is a simple tool to RAG rate a child's development. It's use by the Health Visiting Team as part of the 12 month review has shown particularly promising results. It identified that 12% of children were amber or red at their 12-month health visitor check, potentially identifying difficulties 18 months in advance of their ASQ-3 check at the 2-2.5 year health visitor review. Following intervention (activities from The Big Book of Ideas and community-based groups), 8-12-week follow-up saw 30 (83%) of the 'amber' group move to a 'green' result, potentially showing a significant impact from early intervention. 4 out of the 7 'red' results were not seen for follow up.

Health visitor clinics are running in Family Hubs to act as a gateway and bring families into the buildings and find out about the wider support on offer there. Inclusion has been built into the design of the Family Hubs services so that a wide range of families should be able to enjoy the services on offer. Family feedback has informed how to make the settings work for children with additional needs, including making changes such as avoiding bright lights and loud noise.

1

Make life easier for children and young people with SEND

The approach has been to make mainstream groups as accessible as possible, with only some separate, specialist groups where needed. We have worked to understand what makes stay and plays work well for children with additional needs and made the necessary changes. As well as adjusting physical spaces, the workforce has been upskilled to have the confidence and competence to be able to better meet the needs of families with complex needs. This has started with autism as this been the biggest demand on services and will progress from there. Alongside this, there are also specialist drop-in sessions for children with SEND run by the charity Kids in Family Hubs and sensory rooms are being upgraded. Camden are also working to improve how they work with and support fathers, including those with children with SEND. They have a Fathers Inclusion Lead who audits services and works with them to improve their offer. There are fathers' groups running at weekends and a fathers' antenatal group.

Work has taken place to make the universal parenting offer inclusive for parents of children with SEND as well as parents with SEND themselves. Work has also been ongoing to support parents while they are going through diagnosis and assessment. Families have told us that this can be a stressful time, particularly as they often do not yet have a support package in place. Waiting Room and MOSAIC both offer high quality information about universal support on offer and advice on parenting so that parents can get the information and support they need during this time of transition. This is supported by the My Child programme which offers parents, video, online and face to face support to link them in with the support that is available. Work is ongoing to make sure that this reaches as wide a group of parents as possible.

2

Support children and young people with SEND to thrive in learning, health and wellbeing

Area	Progress-to-date	Next steps
Autism awareness training	Autism Education Trust (AET) training has been widely rolled out for schools and other services across the borough.	Develop a shared CPD plan for the SEND Partnership, including coordinating neurodiversity training across the partnership.
Inclusive education at mainstream schools	Camden Council and Camden Learning have invested additional funding into special school outreach and support to mainstream settings. This is being led by Swiss Cottage Special School and supported by Camden learning.	Setting up test and learn pilots between mainstream schools to trial new ways of working to meet SEND needs and aspirations.
Early support, including while waiting for diagnosis	Waiting Room website brings together information for young people and families while waiting for diagnosis and ongoing support.	Use data from our SEND JSNA to inform how services are commissioned to make sure they are meeting need.
School phase transfers	Additional resources have been allocated to allow up to a term of transition support for children with SEND transferring from early years.	Improve phase transfers processes and practice for primary and secondary school, including reviewing the information we provide on choosing schools.

2

Support children and young people with SEND to thrive in learning, health and wellbeing

2.1 Outstanding practice in supporting learning

We are proud of our education offer for children and young people with SEND in Camden. In the last year, all schools that had an Ofsted inspection had a positive comment about inclusion in their report, and there were no negative comments. Camden's special schools are rated outstanding and good. Special schools and additionally resourced provision (ARP) are working more closely with mainstream schools to help improve their offer around inclusion, funded by London Borough of Camden and Camden Learning. Swiss Cottage School is funded to provide flexible support to mainstream school settings, on the topic and from staff role that is most useful for the school. The funding provided covers 39 days at principal level, but can be deployed for a range of different staff roles as is most useful for the mainstream school.

We have continued to use the cluster approach to agreeing Exceptional Needs Grants so that funding can be accessed more quickly. We are reviewing the approach to make sure that it is as effective as possible in meeting needs and that learning is being shared between schools on how to use funding to improve ordinarily available provision.

Autism Education Trust training has been rolled out widely across schools and other services in the borough, with almost 100 training sessions delivered to almost 2,500 delegates, including most schools and early years setting. Alongside the training, there has been work to embed the learning and changing practices within education settings. This has led some schools to start to work towards the National Autistic Society Inclusion Award which recognises best practice. This learning is being shared between education settings to help the work be fully embedded more widely. Training has also been rolled out to a wide range of partners, for example, libraries, stay and plays and London Zoo, to help create more inclusive spaces right across the borough. One training delegate said, "There was a lot of food for thought in this session for me to think more about the sensory environment and its impact on anxiety levels, also about creating more continuous inclusive interactions/play."

Work to support peer to peer learning for schools is progressing, with cluster inclusion forums and the Camden Learning role being particularly important in supporting this. Camden Learning are developing a SEND peer to peer review framework to support sharing of best practice. Every Camden Learning school visit is recorded to identify trends and needs to inform how school led improvement is best supported and what is needed. This approach is based on the Ofsted framework which includes looking at support for children's happiness and wellbeing at school.

While there is still work to do to improve educational outcomes for children with SEND in Camden, we are pleased that outcomes are above national averages. Thirty-eight per cent of children receiving SEN support and 14% of children with an EHCP in Camden in 2023 achieved the expected standard in reading against national figures of 30% and 12%.

2

Support children and young people with SEND to thrive in learning, health and wellbeing

2.2 Good mental health and wellbeing

The Educational Psychology team and schools are working together to embed trauma informed practice across education in Camden. There are different aspects to this work, including Emotional Literacy Support Assistants and guidance on identifying and supporting children who have experienced domestic violence. The team have revised their guidance on emotionally based school avoidance and are working with schools to embed the guidance in their practice, including through additional time from the Educational Psychology team. They are supporting schools to audit their practice to identify any gaps where they could make improvements.

The young people social prescribing pilot has been extended to improve access to mental health support for young people, targeted to young people with mild to moderate mental health needs. The HIVE offers a wide range of support for young people to help support their wellbeing, and over the last year there has been work to upskill staff here so that they are able to meet a wider range of needs, particularly around autism. Similarly, CAMHS has undertaken significant upskilling of staff so that more children, and particularly autistic children, will be able to work with a wider range of generalist practitioners rather than being reliant on specialist provision. The Autism Education Trust training is available to a wide range of services, and in particular to community mental health services to support a wide range of partners to be able to meet needs. Fitzrovia Youth Action have set up a group of peer mentors for young people with SEND to support with managing their mental health.

The learning from the Parent Child Psychological Support Programme (PCPS) has informed how we support whole families' health and wellbeing in the early years. Rather than continuing this programme, we are increasing the number of contacts offered to families' by health visitors in the first year of a baby's life. These contacts will help to support the development of children during this crucial first year, in part through assessing the support that parents want and need. Assessment and support to parents will be a key part of this approach as supporting parents is so important to children's outcomes.

2.3 Keeping children and young people with SEND safe

Our safeguarding system takes account of the exacerbated and the multifaceted risks of abuse to disabled children to ensure the effective implementation of the Equality Act 2010. Camden's Safeguarding Children Partnership refreshed its guidance on [Safeguarding Children with Disabilities](#) in order to better support partnership working to keep children safe.

Youth services and early help's work to upskill staff and create more inclusive and welcoming spaces also plays an important role in keeping children and young people safe. Conversations and planning around safety is a key part of the referral process and ongoing casework, with each young person having a risk assessment and individualised plan to reduce risk where needed. The whole team are able to meet additional needs, and so can support safety rather

2

Support children and young people with SEND to thrive in learning, health and wellbeing

than having to refer to specialist services. This includes building an understanding of a young person's communication needs and being able to meet these and work with them in the most effective way. They have a team based in police custody who offer one to one support.

The Camden Youth Justice Service achieved the SEND Youth Safety quality mark, showing its commitment to and skills in supporting children and young people with SEND.

2.4 More joined-up support for children and young people moving between phases of education and between services

Camden's use of a vulnerability matrix to support phased transfer between primary and secondary school is now embedded and working well. This vulnerability matrix was developed with UCL to capture key information about a child to help make the transfer between schools well planned and as smooth as possible. Part of the benefit of the matrix is that information is being shared in the same format for all children and all schools and so we are now looking at whether it is possible to use the same tool with schools in neighbouring boroughs.

There has also been significant work on improving transitions for children moving from early education into primary school. The Inclusive Intervention Team have been supporting EYSENCOs to communicate effectively with schools about individual children early and then work with schools to support their planning for individual children. This work has increased substantially with funding for an additional two inclusion teachers and two specialist early years educators to work in the Inclusive Intervention Team. Their work helped to improve transitions including through supporting applications for ENG and ECHNA and working with early years settings and schools through the transition period. An evaluation of this work has taken place to identify learning to improve the support through subsequent transitions, including gathering feedback from schools. One said: "The transition was much better than in previous years. We received information about each child with SEN and we were able to plan detailed transition programmes."

We plan to continue to work to improve phased transfers at all stages of education to make sure that children and their families are able to work with professionals to start planning for the transfer. This will include reviewing the annual review process to support phased transitions and increasing early outreach to families applying for primary schools.

Camden tracks educational progress for all early years' children to support early identification of SEN and as a result the average age of identification has reduced from 3-4 years to 2-3 years. This means that more children have had additional needs identified and assessed before starting school which supports transfer to school.

2

Support children and young people with SEND to thrive in learning, health and wellbeing

2.5 Enabling better access to health and therapeutic support

Work has taken place to improve awareness of and access to universal health and therapeutic services, particularly around raising awareness that eligibility for services is based on need rather than diagnosis. This helps children to get the support that they need more quickly rather than having to wait to have a diagnosis. The reworked [MOSAIC website](#) provides clear information about what relevant services are available as well as advice for families.

‘Waiting Room’ continues to provide information and support to families. While the information is well accessed and useful, work is continuing to make it as accessible as possible for a wide range of families. The My Child programme is part of this offer and provides termly online sessions for families. Work is also continuing to align the services between the North Central London teams in Islington, Haringey, Enfield and Barnet so that there is a similar service offer between the boroughs, which is easier to navigate for families.

2.6 Local provision for local children

Significant work is being done to understand demand for services in Camden now and into the future so that we can design and deliver services to meet this need. This includes a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for children and young people with SEND which builds understanding of the local SEND population now and in future years and likely demand for services. This evidence will inform how we commission services to best meet needs and our work on school place planning. Forecasting of demand for school places has now been embedded within wider school place planning mechanisms. There is now a group set up to plan how to meet demand for mainstream and special school places, and to plan how to get the right specialist settings in the right locations.

We continue to work with SENDIASS and Camden Special Parent Forum to hear feedback from parents on local schools and to share information about how schools work with children with SEND. There is still further work to do in this space to better understand and address concerns that parents have, as well as share information on the progress that has been made.

The Short Breaks offer was designed in consultation with families and we are continuing to listen to parent feedback in order to make improvements. We are working with parents to rework our short breaks statement to make the offer clearer for families.

3

Enable young adults with SEND to build a good life locally

Area	Progress-to-date	Next steps
Employment opportunities	<p>Disability Job Hub has been set up and provides tailored support to young people with SEND to help them get ready for work and find a job.</p> <p>Inclusive Business Network set up to work with employers to increase inclusive employment opportunities in the borough.</p>	<p>Increase the number of young people taking up supported internships and/or move into employment.</p>
Opportunities for independent living	<p>12 new flats commissioned for supported living.</p>	<p>Ensure that borough accommodation strategy meets the needs of expected growth in numbers of children and young people with SEND.</p>
Coproduction	<p>Coproduce 'Preparing for Adulthood' booklet with parents and run an annual engagement event on preparing for adulthood.</p>	<p>Improve how we listen and respond to young people through creating new and better channels to hear their views.</p>
Social care pathway to adulthood	<p>We have implemented a named worker model so that families have a consistent point of support from social care.</p>	

3.1 Continuing to Learn and routes into employment

We have set up the Inclusive Business Network to encourage, promote and share learnings around the Good Work standards with a variety of employers in the borough. The network provides quarterly training for the network, including on SEND, to support inclusive work practices. Members have access to MS Teams channel that has a resources section that includes information related recruiting and supporting employees who have SEND/Disability needs.

Work is continuing to improve young people's options around learning and employment after age 16. We have set up the Good Work Camden Disability Job Hub and recruited to two new roles within this, both dedicated to support people with disabilities to move towards employment. The Work Ready Coach supports people to get closer to being ready to work, including building vital skills and knowledge that will be needed in the workplace. They can then work with a Job Coach with the aim of securing employment. They will also work with employers to support them to make reasonable adjustments. The Job Hub funds a programme of paid work experience placements for disabled and neurodiverse people within various employer organisations including the Council. For example, a young person who is a wheelchair user currently working in Camden Council's Communications team and a young person who has several neurodiverse conditions currently placed with a Product Design start up.

Seventeen young people accessed supported internships in 2023/24, including Taylor, who accessed a supported internship at the Whittington Hospital. He now works paid shifts alongside his internship. At an event for young people considering supported internships, he spoke positively about responsibilities he took on in the role and how we had overcome challenges he faced in being able to positively engage. He said that the supported internships had completely changed him as a person and his mother agreed saying, "His confidence has grown tenfold."

LIFT is a partnership between Camden, Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets which aims to support pathways for residents into jobs in the digital, creative and scientific sectors. In partnership with Exceptional Individuals, Lift ran an employability programme for neurodiverse residents, Neuro Pathways, covering topics such as skills development and job-searching, and providing internships with local employers. Following a roundtable involving employers, a toolkit is being developed to support organisations to be better, more inclusive employers, drawing upon existing resources i.e. Ambitious about Autism's Transition to Employment. Future jobs fairs and employer events will ringfence time/space for neurodiverse attendees.

Mencap's Head Start programme has started running in Camden schools, supporting young people in special schools to support them to build their aspirations and skills for work, including high quality work experience in the community.

Work has started to bring together a vocational network between Camden's secondary schools. Currently every school has a slightly different offer for young people, and so this joint work will aim to share experiences and learning to improve the quality of the offer across the board.

3

Enable young adults with SEND to build a good life locally

The Living a Good Life approach is now embedded into practice in Camden. This approach creates a personalised plan to meet the interests and aspirations of each young person. There is an opportunities planning group for each young person attended by a range of services who listen to what a young person wants to achieve and they work together to develop a plan for how these aspirations can be achieved and how they can live a fulfilling life. This includes prioritising how to build and maintain friendships and community connections. This is a resource intensive approach that aims to build sustainable solutions for young adults. This is supported by a high quality offer from the Greenwood Centre's Independent Living Hub.

Camden has set up a SEND employment forum which brings together partners from across the borough to build understanding of SEND employment and how to improve it.

In order to continue to grow our post 16 offer for young people with SEND, we wanted to hear from young people themselves about their priorities. We have recently run a coproduction event attended by around 100 young people who were invited to share their views on their aspirations and the support on offer to help them achieve these goals. Work to better capture and respond to the views and experiences of young people will continue in year 2.

3.2 Creating opportunities for independent living

Work is progressing within adults social care to deliver an accommodation work plan to make sure that there are good housing options for all young people with SEND. The property and needs analysis completed in 2018 to support the development of the 'Learning Disability Accommodation Strategic Framework' identified an acute shortage of in-borough accommodation and support for adults with autism spectrum conditions, complex health needs and behaviours of concern. Consequently, residents are either remaining in the family home for longer than is appropriate (putting severe strain on family carers) or being placed out-of-borough when family placements breakdown. In addition, young people in out-of-borough residential school placements are being denied the opportunity to return to borough and be closer to their family support due to the lack of specialist supported accommodation.

To address this, the Council, through its Community Investment Programme, is funding the development of a high specification supported living service which will provide 6 self-contained flats with communal resident and staff facilities. The design brief for the service is being supported and informed by a panel of professionals and family carers, with an anticipated delivery date of 2027.

The Shared Lives project continues to offer a housing option for adults with disabilities in need of additional support and there has been an increase in the number of carers wanting to take part in the programme.

Schools and colleges continue to work with young people to help them build the skills that they need to live independently.

3

Enable young adults with SEND to build a good life locally

3.3 Starting the preparation for adulthood earlier

There have been significant improvements to the pathway between children's and adult's social care so that it is now much smoother. Children's social care maintain responsibility for care planning after a young person turns 18, but will involve adult's services in their care, so that there is gradual transition to adult's services. Work is still needed to improve the transition from children to adult's health services.

There is ongoing work to map the support available for autistic children and young people throughout their childhood, including as they move into adulthood. The 'Preparing for Adulthood' booklet has been codesigned with families, and continues to be improved using feedback, to help families understand the pathway and the support that they can access at each point. We now hold an annual preparing for adulthood event, bringing together families and professionals to build understanding of how well the transition is working for families and improvements that are needed. This approach has already led to tangible improvements and will continue to be a key part of service planning. The ongoing coproduction of this offer has helped to shape our approach to supporting families through the transition to adulthood in a way that will effectively meet families' needs.

Children and young people receiving social care support will now have a named social worker, following a social care restructure moving away from a duty model of care. This will help to provide consistency of support during what can be an anxiety inducing time.

We continue to promote the adult health checks to young people aged 14 and over, with the result that 80.4% of eligible Camden residents received their health check. This is well above the target and a significant increase on last year. This is done through taking a making every contact count approach so that social workers and other professionals working with young people and adults with SEND are asking about whether they have had their annual health check. Alongside this, we are promoting that parents, carers and young people can ask for reasonable adjustments to enable them to access the health check.



If you have any questions about the strategy, please email
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To read a summary of the Local Area SEND Strategy
and for an easy-read version, please visit
camden.gov.uk/sendstrategy

