

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Addressing health and wellbeing inequalities among the Bangladeshi Community in Camden: update on the work of the 2015 “Improving Outcomes for the Bangladeshi Community in Camden” Scrutiny Group, and current initiatives	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Director of Health and Wellbeing, London Borough of Camden; Director of Integrated Care, North Central London Integrated Care Board; Director of Equalities and Disproportionality, Camden Council	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>  An update report was requested at the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee in December 2023 on the work of the Scrutiny Panel set up to address health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by Camden’s Bangladeshi community. The Committee asked that the update report identify if there are any outstanding recommendations not sufficiently progressed yet and consider further opportunities for collective action.  The Panel was set up by this Committee in 2015, working with Healthwatch Camden. There have been several published updates, with the most recent received by this Committee in 2017. This report focuses on progress against actions identified within four key workstreams for this work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy weight and healthy lives – obesity and physical activity;</li> <li>• Adult community learning, training, and routes into employment;</li> <li>• Accessibility and quality of primary care;</li> <li>• Building resilience and mental wellbeing</li> </ul> This report updates the Committee on the status of actions identified in 2016, describes inequalities in the Bangladeshi community from the 2021 Census, and summarises current activities tackling inequalities in the Bangladeshi community.  This review found that there were no outstanding recommendations that have not been sufficiently progressed, however both the issues contributing to inequalities and the Council’s and partners’ response have evolved considerably in recent years.	

A combination of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent Cost of Living crisis have impacted on the inequalities experienced by the Bangladeshi community as well as other ethnic communities. This review identified a range of activity building on that underway in 2017 and incorporating a focus on tackling further inequalities identified during Covid and the Cost of Living crisis, from key overarching strategies such as We Make Camden and Building Equal Foundations to individual services.

Conversations with voluntary and community sector organisations supporting the Bangladeshi community show that inequalities are persistent and enduring and that a focus on tackling inequalities needs to be maintained.

#### **Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information**

No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the key findings of this report relating to the focus of the Scrutiny Panel on meeting the needs of the Bangladeshi Community, and key progress that was made;
- b) Consider the range of initiatives currently in place that help meet the health and wellbeing needs of the Bangladeshi Community in Camden;
- c) Endorse an ongoing focus on addressing health and wellbeing inequalities within this community through tailored initiatives by the Council and a range of local organisations responding to key local intel/information on the needs of the Bangladeshi Community, and by ensuring that initiatives supporting all communities are fully accessible and well promoted.

Signed:



Kirsten Watters, Director of Health and Wellbeing

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. In its first report in 2016, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee identified four themes, under which recommended actions to reduce inequalities experienced by Camden's Bangladeshi community were agreed:
  - Healthy weight and healthy lives – obesity and physical activity;
  - Adult community learning, training, and routes into employment;
  - Accessibility and quality of primary care;
  - Building resilience.
- 1.2. The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted this programme of work and contributed to further inequalities, worsened by the Cost of Living crisis. Camden's Building Equal Foundations report and action plan was an immediate response to tackle racial inequalities and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on people of Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.3. The Bangladeshi population in Camden increased by 15% between 2011 and 2021, and now comprises 6.8% of the population, up from 5.7%. St Pancras & Somers Town, Regent's Park, Holborn & Covent Garden, King's Cross, and Haverstock wards have the largest populations of people identifying from the Bangladeshi ethnic group. Despite the Bangladeshi population being on average younger than the whole Camden population, a greater proportion stated that their health was bad or very bad, and a greater proportion identified as being disabled in the 2021 Census.
- 1.4. A review of the actions identified in 2016 and current known services has been undertaken to update the Committee. As would be expected, seven years after the most recent report to Committee there have been many changes in service provision. Whilst some time limited actions ended naturally (with learning carried forward), others are still in place, some have evolved, and new opportunities have emerged.
- 1.5. At the time of the last report to Scrutiny in 2017 there was a range of activity in place aimed at reducing inequalities in the Bangladeshi community, including:
  - Targeted outreach including NHS Health Checks, diabetes prevention and smoking cessation
  - Increasing opportunities for culturally appropriate physical activity
  - A focus on reducing inequalities in education, employment and training including adult community learning aimed at speakers of other languages, a new Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths (STEAM) strategy, and employability and skills support in the community.
  - Improving access to health services through extended hours, health advocates and later social prescribing
  - Increasing resilience through strategic partner funding, Making Every Contact Count (MECC) and tackling hate crimes.
- 1.6. The Covid pandemic brought inequalities into even sharper focus, with over

140 actions identified in the Building Equal Foundations report. The Cost of Living crisis further highlights the inequality and disproportionality experienced by many of our Black, Asian and other ethnic residents. As a result, the Council's Cost of Living Community Response Fund was established to support local organisations to provide services such as access to food, warm spaces, clothing, and activities for children, young people and older residents.

- 1.7. A review of current activity demonstrates that work is still in place to reduce inequalities, including:
- Support for healthy weight and promoting physical activity through the MoreLife programme, the Council's leisure offer and support for culturally appropriate community based physical activity.
  - Social value requirements in the stop smoking contract for delivering sessions in the community.
  - A range of outreach tackling physical health conditions with the Camden Mobile Health Bus partnering with organisations including the Surma Centre and Henna Asian Women's Group
  - Renewed strategic partner funding and cost of living funding to support a vibrant voluntary and community sector reach communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage.
  - A strong partnership between the Council, Police and communities to tackle hate crime.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. In July 2015 the Camden Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee established the "Learning from Camden's Bangladesh Community" panel. The aims of this panel were:
- To listen and learn from Camden's Bangladeshi community about how to encourage and sustain improvements in health and wellbeing and how to address inequalities;
  - To listen to and learn from and to scrutinise the work of local commissioners and providers;
  - To ensure recommendations are focused on sustainable improvements and are fit for purpose;
  - To ensure that all the work of the panel is focused and robust.
- 2.2. In February 2016, the Committee received the Panel's findings and recommendations for action.
- 2.3. The Committee received its most recent update report in September 2017.
- 2.4. Considerable time has passed since the Committee last received an update in 2017. During this period, major challenges arose from the Covid Pandemic, including new and deeper inequalities. Camden's updated corporate plan "We Make Camden" has been developed to help steer the response across the borough.

- 2.5. In line with the request made at the committee meeting in December 2023, this report updates the Committee on the status of actions identified in 2016 to ensure there has been meaningful progress, describes inequalities in the Bangladeshi community from the 2021 Census, summarises current activities tackling inequalities in the Bangladeshi community, and identifies opportunities to further reduce inequalities.
- 2.6. Voluntary and community sector partners also report that demand for some services can outstrip supply, and that securing external funding in a borough that is often perceived as wealthy from outside can be challenging. Key programmes such as We Make Camden, Building Equal Foundations and the Community Partner Fund, along with a focus on inequalities in all programmes and strategies, will maintain focus on reducing inequalities across Camden's ethnic communities.

### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1. This report provides an update on progress in addressing the actions identified in the strategic response in September 2016. Four priority areas for action had been identified in which there was clear strategic alignment between the Panel's recommendations and key Council and partner priorities and programmes, and where a clear voice for Bangladeshi community within these programmes could galvanise action and change:
  - Healthy weight and healthy lives – obesity and physical activity;
  - Adult community learning, training, and routes into employment;
  - Accessibility and quality of primary care;
  - Building resilience
- 3.2. Considerable time has passed since the Committee last received an update in 2017. During this period, major challenges arose from the Covid Pandemic, including new and deeper inequalities. Camden's updated corporate plan "We Make Camden" has been developed to help steer the response across the borough.
- 3.3. Current inequalities identified by the 2021 census are described, and current actions tackling inequalities in the Bangladeshi community are summarised.
- 3.4. More recently, there is a range of work happening that contributes to tackling inequalities in Camden. The Building Equal Foundations report identified over 140 actions that were implemented. We Make Camden recognises that actively tackling injustice and inequality sits at the heart of a shared vision for Camden.
- 3.5. Camden identifies proudly as a diverse community that is an open and welcoming borough. The pandemic and ensuing Cost of Living Crisis has revealed the depth of injustice and inequality that has been created by systemic racism, discrimination, and structural injustice. It has also shown how Covid-19 and the ensuing Cost of Living crisis continues to

disproportionately affect residents from Black, Asian, and other ethnic communities.

#### **4. Actions identified in the 2016 Strategic Response – progress review**

##### **4.1. Review Theme 1: Healthy weight and healthy lives – obesity and physical activity.**

4.2. This theme identified 10 activities:

- An Innovation Fund;
- The Camden Pledge;
- Improving our communications;
- Smoking Cessation;
- NHS Health Checks;
- Diabetes Prevention Programme;
- St Pancras and Somers Town Partnership;
- Active All Areas;
- Physical Activity Needs Analysis (PANA);
- Adult Weight Management.

4.3. The Innovation Fund was a time-limited fund to be used to galvanise and provide seed funding to community activity to address unhealthy weight locally. The fund is now closed. One grant from this time limited fund was relevant to talking inequalities in the Bangladeshi community. This was a grant to the Somers Town Community Association to work with students from Central Saint Martins College and the local community to create and launch a people's fruit and vegetable stall. This operated as a cooperative to give local people access to affordable fresh food. However, following the pilot the stall proved to be economically unviable without ongoing subsidy and lacked facilities for storage.

4.4. The Camden Pledge developed a series of key actions which businesses, community organisations and other public sector organisations could undertake to contribute to creating a healthy environment in Camden. There was low uptake of the pledge, and it was therefore discontinued.

4.5. As part of the scoping work for creating an identifiable Camden brand for communicating health-related messages to residents, employees, and visitors, a specific focus group was undertaken with Bangladeshi Residents. This resulted in the "Camden Can" brand which has now been superseded by the "Families for Life" programme.

4.6. A new contract for the Smoking Cessation service had started in 2017 and employed a Bengali speaking smoking cessation worker as well as having the ability to sub-contract to community orgs to provide the service themselves with training and on-going support from the smoking cessation service. A new contract with a different provider started in 2023. Numbers of Bangladeshi residents setting a quit date and successfully quitting between 2017/18 and

2022/23 are shown below:

**Table 1: Smoking cessation in the Bangladeshi community 2017/18 to 2022/23**

Year	Bangladeshi residents setting a quit date	Successful quits	Number of quits delivered by the community service*
17/18	74	52	14
18/19	102	63	38
19/20	72	46	15
20/21	69	43	20
21/22	Quarter (Q)1 data only: 15	13 (Q1 only)	Not available
22/23	68	49	Not available
Total	400	266 (66.5% quit rate)	

\* Excludes locally commissioned services at GPs and pharmacies.

- 4.7. The community outreach provider for NHS Health Checks worked closely with local voluntary and community sector organisations and faith groups to increase access to NHS Health Checks among the Bangladeshi community. Community outreach no longer offers NHS Health Checks; however, the Camden Mobile Health Bus is a community outreach programme designed to detect risk factors for type 2 diabetes in those aged 30 to 70 years old. It is targeted towards Asian, Black and other ethnic populations and areas of deprivation, and provides education, signposting, and referrals to services to help prevent progression to diabetes. An evaluation of the Camden Mobile Health Bus in 2023 shows that the bus effectively reached residents from Black, Asian and other ethnicities, and has been successful at identifying those at risk, with 90% assessed as having an increased, moderate, or high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.
- 4.8. The NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (NDPP) is a face-to-face and tailored behavioural change programme available to people who are clinically at risk of developing diabetes. In 2017 the outreach provider had recruited a Bengali speaking trainer to deliver targeted DPP sessions in the community including the Somers Town Healthy Living Centre. The programme trialled different methods of outreach to engage with the community, such as using

- invite letters written in Bengali and community-based promotion of DPP, working with local organisations. Outreach is now conducted by the Camden Mobile Health Bus with clinician support.
- 4.9. The St Pancras and Somers Town Partnership was a time limited partnership to galvanise partners in the area. With strong active Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) interorganisational work in Somers Town in place irrespective of the formal partnership, the partnership was discontinued.
- 4.10. The Active All Areas initiative ended following the end of funding, with legacies built into the new Leisure Management Contract and the Community Sport and Physical Activity service. Several of the sessions, activities, and relationships started and enhanced through Active All Areas are maintained but the Council is not actively monitoring this.
- 4.11. The Physical Activity Needs Analysis (PANA) was launched in 2018, an updated needs assessment is due to be finalised imminently.
- 4.12. **Review Theme 2: Adult community learning, training, and routes into employment**
- 4.13. Although a universal offer, Somers Town Job Hub is in an area with a high proportion of Bangladeshi residents. According to the Somers Town Community Association website the Job Hub continues to operate.
- 4.14. The Camden STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Commission launched a new strategy to scale up its successful STEAM programme and create more opportunities for young people to access the borough's leading tech, scientific, and creative industries in March 2023. It includes:
- Designing programmes to encourage participation from underrepresented young people (e.g., females, young people from Black, Asian, and other ethnic communities, young people eligible for free school meals);
  - Embedding ambitious targets in all programmes (e.g., work experience) for numbers of underrepresented young people participating;
  - Working with stakeholders across the borough to challenge stereotypes in our programming and communications;
  - Using expertise and influence to shape employer activities and programmes that embed good practice.
- 4.15. The STEAM programme links with Building Back Stronger, Camden's Education Strategy to 2030.
- 4.16. Camden was one of the London boroughs that delivered the Adult Community Learning (ACL) Talk English Project (TEP) in local community settings. Although TEP was not specifically targeted at the Bangladeshi community, the majority of the Camden TEP learners were from the Bangladeshi community.
- 4.17. Hopscotch successfully applied for Building Better Opportunities funding from the Big Lottery and the European Social Fund (ESF) to develop a project that



sought to provide individualised employability and skills support to women aged between 16 and 65 from Black, Asian and other ethnic communities. Whilst the Big Lottery and the European Social Fund (ESF) funding ceased in 2023, Hopscotch's web site continues to advertise the Better Employment Opportunities service.

**4.18. Review Theme 3: Accessibility and Quality of Primary Care**

- 4.19. Under the Extended Hours scheme, Somers Town Medical Centre continues to provide GP appointments each weekday from 6.30pm to 8.00pm and on weekends from 8.00am to 8.00pm.
- 4.20. In 2017 there were four Bangladeshi health advocates out of the 22 who were engaged by Camden CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group). The Health Advocates were in GP practices. The Health Advocates were part of a programme that Voluntary Action Camden (VAC) ran with the then Clinical Commissioning Group that eventually became a collaboration within the Care Navigation and Social Prescribing Service with Age UK Camden (from 2018).
- 4.21. Mental health – the Team around the Practice (TAP) in place in 2017 has been discontinued as the contract came to an end. The psychology resource was put into the core teams as part of the community transformation developments in Camden.
- 4.22. Camden iCope NHS Talking therapies service continues to work with the different communities in Camden, including the Bangladeshi community, which accounted for 5.0% of referrals between 2021 and 2023. Whilst the service had Bengal-speaking staff, Step 2 'staying well' groups in Bengali (psychoeducational groups aimed at helping people with common mental health problems) were provided. There was a slow-down in community and outreach groups during the pandemic and as referrals increase the service has developed an outreach strategy to focus work on developing partnerships with local community organisations to target specific populations. A number of workshops around mental health for people from the Bangladeshi population who had diabetes were held.
- 4.23. Somers Town GP Practice was reprocured and a new provider appointed following consultation with the community

**4.24. Review Theme 4: Building Resilience**

- 4.25. In December 2015, Camden Council approved its Voluntary and Community Sector Investment Programme 2017-2024 (Strategic Partner Funding), and in 2017 the following organisations with interests in the Bangladeshi community were awarded funding:
- Somers Town Community Centre (£85,000 per annum);
  - St Pancras Community Association (£49,000 per annum);
  - Bengali Workers Association (£30,000 per annum as part of project funding for the Beyond Boundaries project);

- Hopscotch (£75,000 per year).
- 4.26. Strategic Partner Funding has recently been renewed and decisions on funding are pending.
- 4.27. Making Every Contact Count (MECC). In 2017, local organisations representing the Bangladeshi community had good engagement with MECC:
- Hopscotch had 12 outreach/case workers complete MECC face to-face training and encouraged all staff to do the same.
  - Bengali Workers' Association, Henna Asian Women's Group and three local Mosques had staff trained, giving excellent feedback on the course.
  - Seven people of Bangladeshi origin volunteered to become MECC champions who can take up additional specialist training in areas including smoking cessation, mental health first aid, fuel poverty, safeguarding and more.
- 4.28. Addressing Hate Crime: a No Place for Hate working group (which sat underneath the Community Safety Partnership) published a leaflet highlighting sites for reporting hate crime in the Borough, which include Hopscotch, the Queens Crescent Community Association and Tell MAMA (an online hate-crime reporting site which is national and specific to Islamophobic hate crime). The leaflet also promotes the True Vision app which allows people to report hate crime incidents directly to the Police using their phone. Camden Council frontline staff were trained to be aware of and be able to effectively signpost residents to sources of support regarding hate crime.

## **5. Current data and intel on health needs and health inequalities affecting the Bangladeshi Community**

### **5.1. Camden's Bangladeshi population in the 2021 Census.**

- 5.2. In the 2021 Census, 14,356 people (6.8% of the total population) living in Camden self-identified as belonging to the Bangladeshi ethnic group (London - 3.7%; England - 1.1%). The Bangladeshi population has increased since the previous Census in 2011, when 12,503 people (5.7% of the total population) living in Camden self-identified as belonging to the Bangladeshi ethnic group (London - 2.7%; England - 0.8%).
- 5.3. St Pancras & Somers Town (17.3%), Regent's Park (13.8%), Holborn & Covent Garden (13.5%), King's Cross (13.0%) and Haverstock (10.1%) wards have the largest populations of people identifying from the Bangladeshi ethnic group. (The percentages within brackets indicate the total Bangladeshi population as a percentage of the total ward population).
- 5.4. Camden's Bangladeshi population is younger than the total Camden population, with 45.4% of Bangladeshi residents being under 25 years old at the time of the 2021 Census, compared to 30.6% of the total Camden population who were under 25.

- 5.5. The Census 2021 asked for people's self-assessment of the general state of their health on a five-point scale: very good, good, fair, bad and very bad. At the time of the Census, 5.1% of the total population of Camden assessed their health as bad or very bad compared to 8.8% of the Bangladeshi population.
- 5.6. People who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the harmonised standard for measuring disability and is in line with the Equality Act (2010). In the Census 2021, 15.2% of Camden's total population identified as being disabled compared to 18.0% of the Bangladeshi population.
- 5.7. Long term conditions: compared with the white group or national average, the Bangladeshi population, along with other South Asian groups, have a higher prevalence of cardiovascular conditions including heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, are more likely to develop these conditions at a younger age, and are more likely to have multiple long-term conditions.
- 5.8. **Community observations of needs**
- 5.9. Initial conversations with VCS organisations supporting the Bangladeshi community flagged persistent inequalities in mental health, money/cost of living related issues (including issues with universal credit), housing, options for healthy lifestyle choices including healthy eating (linked to the cost of living), access to culturally appropriate physical activity, smoking, and gambling. Health literacy and communication issues were also identified, including language barriers and the digital divide, which can limit or prevent people from benefiting from services and initiatives.
- 5.10. VCS organisations spoke of the need for financial support in order to meet the needs of the Bangladeshi community, with demand outstripping capacity in many services. They reported that securing funding was competitive, particularly from outside the borough as Camden is often perceived as a wealthy borough with less disadvantage compared to other areas.
- 5.11. VCS organisations also said that some groups within the Bangladeshi community lack provision, for example yoga sessions at the Surma Centre are for over 50s and there is no provision for younger age groups who would benefit. The need for men only exercise in the Bangladeshi community was also mentioned.
6. **Examples of key initiatives currently in place or planned that are directly relevant to supporting the Bangladeshi Community to improve their health and wellbeing.**
- 6.1. **Community Cohesion and moving forward on Building Equal Foundations.**
- 6.2. During the pandemic, there was a spotlight on the inequality and disproportionality experienced by many of our Black, Asian and other ethnic

residents, which when viewed in combination with other protected characteristics such as disability were further compounded. As a result, Camden Council launched the Building Equal Foundations report and action plan in August 2020 to tackle this deep-rooted issue. The action plan identified 143 calls to action from across all the Council's services, on what could be done differently to reduce inequalities. These included:

- A partnership with the Black Curriculum and anti-racism hub supports schools to make strategic, long-term changes to ensure that anti-racism is embedded into every area of their school, focusing on curriculum, conduct, outcomes, and culture.
- Council investment of almost £1m of support to VCS partners to provide crisis emergency support to residents most impacted by the pandemic, including contributions to Camden Giving's Covid-19 Charity Fund, a 3-month rent waiver for VCS partners and additional investment in Advice Services.
- The We Make Camden website which is aimed at co-building Camden's renewal after the pandemic, where community organisations and residents can access funding advice and support, contributing to our objective of achieving diversity in positions of power.

6.3. The Council is now drafting its Equalities and Disproportionality Strategy, incorporating ambitious measures for success around the Equalities agenda, including areas such as a focus on improving social mobility, the Council's refugee response and strengthening community cohesion.

6.4. In February 2023 Cabinet agreed a five year 'Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm' which includes plans to make cultural opportunities, green space and nature fully accessible and inclusive to everyone. Communities are empowered to create the public realm and develop new initiatives and projects through the Camden Future High Streets Crowdfund and the We Make Camden Kit.

#### 6.5. **Supporting residents through the Cost of Living crisis**

6.6. The Council's Cost of Living Community Response Fund supports local organisations to provide services such as access to food, warm spaces, clothing, and activities for children, young people and older residents. The current year's fund closed on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024, with 145 applications received by the beginning of February. Examples of community responses by organisations working with the Bangladeshi community or in areas with a high proportion of Bangladeshi residents include:

- Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association, which received funding to run an older persons' warm space and provide advice, free refreshments and a subsidised hot lunch at the Marchmont Centre and Chadswell Healthy Living Centre.
- Queens Crescent Community Association, which received funding to run a 'Get Up & Warm Up' exercise class, Monday to Friday, for older people and adults to help them stay fit and active followed by a tea/coffee club so

people can socialise and access vital information and advice organised by their older people services.

- Henna Asian Women's Group, which received funding to set up an 'Art Hub' and were able to provide people who attended with food and essential items such as a hot meal on the day, non-perishable food packs and hygiene products to take home.
- In Regent's Park ward, the Old Diorama Arts Centre (ODAC), Fitzrovia Youth in Action (FYA), Bengali Workers' Association (Surma Centre), The Euston Partnership, Camden's Detached Youth Team, and local residents as Community Champions Regent's Park came together to produce Regent's Park Together with the funding. A Community Kitchen provides up to 400 hot, freshly cooked meals to residents on a weekly basis to take away or eat together, with social space and creative entertainment, and specialist advice and signposting to support
- Somers Town Community Association received funding to set up a Breakfast Club targeted at Job Club clients, older people and single parents, to help reduce isolation and remove the need to choose between eating or heating their home.

**6.7. Addressing hate crime is a priority for the Community Safety Partnership Board, and is progressed through:**

- 6.8. A Tension Monitoring Group (TMG) has been established which includes representatives from various services within the organisation and the police. By meeting regularly, the TMG proactively identifies potential sources of tension arising from local, national, or international events. The horizon scanning approach ensures that the authorities are well-prepared for upcoming events that might impact community cohesion.
- 6.9. A dip sampling process involving collaboration between the Council, the Police, and voluntary community organisations demonstrates a commitment to thoroughly addressing reported hate crimes. By regularly reviewing cases, the authorities can assess the effectiveness of existing processes, outcomes, and victim satisfaction. This continuous evaluation allows for adjustments in policies and procedures to enhance their efficiency.
- 6.10. The Council's engagement with faith communities through the Faith Leaders Forum is an important aspect of community involvement. This forum provides a platform for open communication, allowing communities to voice concerns and enabling authorities to address issues promptly. Keeping faith leaders informed about developments ensures a more informed and connected community.

**7. Supportive healthcare that addresses inequalities in health**

- 7.1. In April 2023, North Central London Integrated Care System (NCL ICS) published its Population Health and Integrated Care Strategy. This document sets out how the integrated care system will approach improving the physical and mental health of local people and reducing health inequalities. It describes an overarching approach to improving the health of all population groups, including by matching focus, attention and resources proportionately

to need, and to deliver national ambitions (including those set out in NHS England's Core20PLUS5).

- 7.2. In Camden, the ICS collective health and care transformation ambitions recognise the different needs and experiences of Camden communities. The ICS facilitates a monthly Camden health inequalities group that is led by a Camden clinician, has broad and inclusive input from a wide range of community partners, and takes a data-led approach to identifying and targeting areas of need in the delivery of improved care. This group evolved from a more narrowly-focused Covid-19 vaccination partnership that directed action to promote and improve vaccine uptake in under-represented groups, including the Bangladeshi community.
- 7.3. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has worked on a number of initiatives to address identified inequalities within the Bangladeshi community linked to primary care. This includes promotion of motivational interviewing to increase uptake of cervical and other cancer screening, and using new routes, tools and materials to engage with the community to promote the uptake of vaccines (including Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) and the wider childhood vaccinations schedule as well as Covid19). This builds on coordinated community action research focused on the experiences of Black, Asian and other communities (including Bangladeshi) in St Pancras and Somers Town, with a focus on perceptions of access to general practice.
- 7.4. The Camden borough partnership (comprising local health and care organisations) continues to oversee a programme of local initiatives targeting inequalities, supported through the NCL inequalities fund, established in 2021. Several of these schemes are directly focussed on better supporting the Bangladeshi community, including:
  - Outreach from the St Pancras and Somers Town Living Centre. This community asset is based in the heart of the two most deprived wards in Camden. The central Camden primary care network is hosting a physical activity programme, nutritional therapy programme and severe mental illness clinics from The Living Centre to promote access that is convenient to the local Bangladeshi community. Working with partners, the team also offers a broader programme of health and wellbeing services including cooking classes, yoga, signposting and advice, a job hub and Healthwatch Camden.
  - Bridges to memory services: Camden and Islington Mental Health Foundation Trust is working with Hopscotch to place workers in community resources as a bridge for local people to access the Camden Memory Service for diagnosis, without the need for a GP referral, as well as by providing training and upskilling around recognising and responding to the early signs of dementia. This is intended to promote access by South Asian women to appropriate statutory support, as well as reducing stigma about engaging this help.
  - Complete care communities in Kentish Town: general practice is working with third sector partners to engage and educate champions to share knowledge across, as well as to engage and support change around

mental wellbeing and support, in the Bangladesh and Somali community in East Camden. In 2024/25, this programme is working to re-engage with key Bangladeshi voluntary and community sector organisations to widen and deepen impact.

- 7.5. Alongside borough partnership and ICB activities, NHS providers in Camden continue to drive quality and innovate in local services. This includes bespoke work across general practice, adult community service, mental health and secondary care services to ensure information is accessible and available in a range of languages and formats, and that service user groups (including general practice patient participation groups) are broad, inclusive, and representative of the communities they support.
- 7.6. The Care Navigators and Social Prescribing service has Bengali speaking staff, including VAC's Community Links team, on the freephone line and the single access point for the service. This enables self-referrals from the Bangladeshi community as an accessible way into health support. The original health advocates service did highlight the value of staff and volunteers with community languages in encouraging take up of healthy activities, which is still embedded in the service. The current service has been operating since 2018.
- 7.7. A Cultural Advocacy service continues to be run by Mind and Voluntary Action Camden, and partners with organisations including the Bengali Workers' Association, Henna Asian Women's Group, and the King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association. This delivers culturally specific training in mental health to create mental health champions and workers to promote and deliver weekly peer support groups, individual support, workshops and wellbeing events to support people's individual mental wellbeing journeys, find mentors and receive practical help and support. Groups focus on connectedness, aiming to reduce isolation and build skills, resources and resilience across individuals, families and communities.

## **8. Preventative initiatives and opportunities to better meet the needs of the Bangladeshi Community in Camden**

### **8.1. Support for a healthy weight**

- 8.2. The population health impact of overweight and obesity is profound and anticipated to worsen, with major impact on residents, communities and services. A Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan is being developed which will build on the range of support already available in Camden, including progress in early years settings and in schools. Key workstreams will include action in: early years; schools; support for people with learning disabilities; setting up NHS specialist weight management support; and addressing an environment that makes maintaining a healthy weight more challenging. These workstreams will underpin a whole systems approach across communities.

- 8.3. One part of this approach is to improve access to effective interventions. The Council's MoreLife adult weight management service includes a key

performance indicator on engaging Black, Asian and other ethnic groups. To date, almost half of referrals (48%) into the service since January 2023 are for people from Black, Asian and other ethnic groups, and 40% of those that have completed the service are from these groups (monitoring is not tailored specifically to the Bangladeshi community). MoreLife provides sessions in community locations, currently at Abbey Community Centre, Kentish Town Community Centre, and Castlehaven Community Association. The service can provide sessions in other community venues, especially where they are supported to ensure full recruitment.

**8.4. Promoting Physical Activity.**

8.5. Adults from South Asian communities are more likely to be inactive, or not meet the nationally recommended guidelines.

8.6. The evidence around the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing is clear and compelling. Supporting these communities with tailored initiatives to promote physical activity, as well as ensuring easy access and use of Camden's range of physical activity assets is important. In 2023 the Sport and Physical Activity team updated the physical activity needs assessment, with a focus on less active Asian/British Asian residents in Camden. Initial findings include:

- 43% of British Muslim Women said that current sports facilities are not appropriate for them, and that there is a lack of female only physical activity sessions/classes with a female instructor.
- One in three British Muslim women said that past experiences have negatively impacted their participation in sports and physical activity.
- People need the freedom to wear culturally appropriate clothing to participate in sessions.
- Two thirds (65%) of surveyed British Muslim women were unaware of any women's only events or sports associations who run appropriate activities. However, 80% of these respondents said they would be likely to attend women's only sports sessions if they were available to them.

8.7. The assessment will now move towards deeper engagement with the community to test findings and identify new sessions/initiatives with them to meet their needs.

8.8. Camden's six leisure centres offer a range of universal and targeted opportunities for residents to be physically active. Almost half of total membership (45%) accesses the leisure centres at more affordable concessionary rates, available for example for those on certain benefits, for people with disabilities, for carers, and for people aged over 60. A deep dive into Camden's leisure centre membership in July 2022 found that 78% of Bangladeshi members were on concessionary rates.

8.9. In addition to the main leisure centre programme, current targeted offers that support this community include a free swimming offer for residents over 60



years and 12 women only gym, swim, sauna and steam sessions at varying times during the week and at weekends. The women only sessions are led by female lifeguards and female gym instructors. Three of the swimming pools can be made completely private to create welcoming and safe environments for participation by our Bangladeshi community. Camden's 'kids swim for £1' before 10am at weekends initiative supports increased participation by young people. A programme is also being developed to reach out into the community to those who may be unsure about visiting leisure centres.

8.10. A new "Active for Life" campaign will be launching in March 2024 to support less active older Camden residents aged over 60 to take advantage of the range of physical activity opportunities, including use of parks and green spaces. The campaign will be drawing on evidence from behavioural science to support residents over 12 weeks to convert an aim to be more active into an active habit. Following call outs for interest, VCS organisations are being funded to work with the Council to help the campaign reach deeper into communities and support those less likely to enrol. These organisations include:

- Hopscotch Women's Centre which engages with women from the Bangladeshi community. They will be providing physical activity sessions targeted at 'global majority older women', and will be running outreach sessions in mosques, markets, GP surgeries, community centres to target these groups.
- Holborn Community Association will be working with King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association (KCBNA) to run outreach sessions with Bangladeshi, Somali, and Chinese communities. They will also be providing physical activity sessions specifically targeting these residents.

#### 8.11. **Stop smoking support**

8.12. The number of Bangladeshi residents who have benefitted from the service since 2017 is set out in Table 1, after section 3.1.5. 400 residents accessed the service, with two thirds of those (66.5%) successfully quitting, representing a major impact on the health and wellbeing of those individuals.

8.13. The new Breathe smoking cessation provider began mobilising in 2023. The contract with Breathe includes social value requirements for sessions to be delivered in community venues. The provider is currently in discussion with the Health & Wellbeing Department and VCS organisations on a partnership approach to delivering smoking cessation in the community, with the aim of reaching deeper into our communities and reaching those less likely to access the stop smoking service. This presents the opportunity to train community volunteers, provide culturally sensitive services close to where communities live, and further drive up the numbers of residents benefitting from the service.

#### 8.14. **Mental health and wellbeing**

8.15. iCope has focused on skilling up staff to be more culturally aware, with diversity training for the whole team, training on working with interpreters,

developing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) reflective spaces for the team and training up the facilitators of these spaces. In Camden part of this outreach work focuses on Bangladeshi and Somali groups and the service is currently in the planning stages of delivering a Bangladeshi women's group.

- 8.16. iCope continues with its partnership with Nafsiyat Intercultural Therapy Centre and refers people for culturally specific counselling in their first language – about one hundred people per year.
- 8.17. The Bangladeshi population made up 6.0% of referrals to iCope between April 2023 and January 2024, which is similar to Camden's Bangladeshi population aged 18 and over (5.7%).
- 8.18. iCope has also focused on increasing the diversity of our workforce and ensuring that staff from all backgrounds get access to training and professional development opportunities. This work is led by our anti-racism action group which has representatives from all parts of the service
- 8.19. The Making Every Contact Count (MECC) provider has been recruiting MECC Champions where possible, although over the pandemic it became difficult to recruit. Recently the Council has been having conversations with the provider around how we could best get the process going properly again, with greater focus on engaging Black, Asian and other communities when the contract is renewed.
- 8.20. As a recommendation from the Covid-19 Mental Health Needs Assessment 2020, a new innovative way of reaching out to local communities was identified in the form of Wellbeing Voice Messages for WhatsApp groups. Camden Public Health created these targeted interventions for 4 community groups- Arabic, Bengali, Somali and Turkish; working with voluntary and community partners to develop the messages to raise awareness on the five ways to wellbeing and support residents' mental wellbeing.
- 8.21. Camden's wellbeing leaflet is translated into Bengali as well as Somali, Arabic and Turkish. The leaflet has information and advice and includes a range of practical things that can be done to look after yourself and to help others. It also includes information on how to access local support services.
- 8.22. The Health and Wellbeing Department will be working on a mental health needs assessment over the next few months, and part of this work will include looking at inequalities in mental health including by ethnicity.
- 8.23. **Physical health**
- 8.24. The Camden Mobile Health Bus (CMHB) targets areas of health deprivation, and a substantial part is to engage local communities within these areas, including Bangladeshi communities. The main community partners for this are the Surma Centre and Henna as they are specifically working with Bangladeshi people. However, many places the CMHB visits have large Bangladeshi populations, although they are not specifically targeted (all

backgrounds are welcomed by the service). Locations where larger Bangladeshi populations live include Somers Town, Camden Town, Kilburn and King's Cross Area. Next to the health and vaccine buses, work with the digital inclusion team was piloted, visiting the Surma Centre and Euston Foodbank with mainly Bangladeshi clients. The Health Bus has plans to extend the health services offered to the Bangladeshi community, including health day sessions specifically addressing some health issues like:

- General cancer information and screening info (North Central London Cancer Alliance);
- Breast cancer - screening info and training (Royal Free);
- Bowel cancer - screening info and training (Royal Free);
- Pulmonary rehabilitation (Whittington);
- Diabetes and Endocrinology research (UCLH);
- Sexual health - screening and info (Central London Action on Sexual Health).

8.25. It should be noted that this depends on the NHS clinical services' availability as well as funding for outreach.

8.26. An evaluation of the service in 2023 found that 30% of Health Bus users were Asian or Asian British (population 18%) and 22% Black or Black British (population 9%).

8.27. **Adult community learning, training, and routes into employment**

8.28. Adult Community Learning (ACL) teams have been developing courses and engaging specifically with the Bangladeshi community in Camden to advertise and enrol students. In the 2022/23 academic year Bangladeshi learners made up 11.7% of adult community learners which is higher than the borough Bangladeshi community population aged 24 and over (5.4%)

8.29. Recently ACL has worked on a project with the Bangladeshi community in partnership with libraries. Over the past 12 months a group of Bangladeshi women have volunteered on the co-curation of a new temporary display exploring new ways of working and presenting collections and stories that will launch in the British Library's Treasures Gallery. The display will showcase British-Bangladeshi women's stories of identity, migration and diaspora. The display opened to the public on 15 December 2023 and will run until 9 June 2024. A Community Launch event will be held at the end of spring/early summer term of 2024.

8.30. **Community and voluntary sector support**

8.31. Three years on from Building Equal Foundations, all the ambitious actions identified have been delivered by services across the Council, and the team that was set up has become formally recognised as the Equalities Service. The remit of this service has since expanded due to the success and need in the organisation for viewing the Equalities agenda with a more sustainable and long-term approach in order to effectively measure its impact and

delivery.

- 8.32. In 2023 the Council agreed a new seven-year investment programme for the Community Partner Fund of £4m per year, from April 2024 to March 2031. The aim of the programme is to provide long term stability to Camden's voluntary and community sector. This reinforces Camden's commitment to investing in a strong and resilient Voluntary and Community Sector which has been instrumental in supporting our communities during the Covid pandemic and providing individual support to those impacted by the current cost of living crisis. Decisions on the award of funds to organisations are yet to be finalised, but it is noted that one of the core principles of the fund is to tackle inequalities and disproportionality.
- 8.33. The Council's Community Partnership team continues to play an important role in advising and building capacity in voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 8.34. Camden has a vibrant voluntary and community sector working directly with the Bangladeshi community or working in areas of Camden with large Bangladeshi populations. Examples include:
- KCBNA (King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association) has two weekly exercise sessions, one for people aged 18 plus and one for 50 plus with a Bangladeshi tutor, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes at beginners and level 1 for Bangladeshi community members, and supports local Bangladeshi community members to engage with local GPs and health related activities like Diabetes, CHD, and other health awareness sessions. KCBNA also has a Sylheti speaking community worker who provides housing, benefits and other information, advice and guidance to people suffering from the Cost of Living crisis.
  - The Bengali Workers Association provides services including advice & Advocacy, Employment & Training, Healthy Lifestyles, Older People's Service, Women's Development, and a Younger People's Service, and referrals to other services.
  - Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre provides support services for Asian women and other women and their families from different ethnic groups on a wide range of issues including domestic violence, training, employment, housing, and welfare benefits. Advisors speak Bengali, Sylheti, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and French.
  - The Somers Town Bengali Cultural Association provides activities including a mother-tongue supplementary school for children aged 5-16 and cultural activities and information provision for children and adults.
  - Community centres such as the Somers Town Community Association and Queen's Crescent Community Association are in areas with large Bangladeshi populations and their services are accessible to the whole community.
- 8.35. With its remit, Healthwatch Camden promotes and supports the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services, enables residents to monitor the standard of provision of gives

residents a voice on how local care services could and ought to be improved.

- 8.36. In order to be trusted by Camden's communities, Healthwatch Camden has built strong and regular links with organisations that are often attended by residents with protected characteristics including Camden Disability Action, Henna Asian Women's Group, Umoja Health forum, Hopscotch, Bengali Workers Association, Camden Chinese Community Centre, Age UK Islington, Kings Cross Brunswick, Camden YMCA, and Queens Crescent Community Centre to name a few.

## **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1. This report includes a thorough review of learning from Camden's Bangladesh Community panel which ran to 2017. The report to Committee in 2017 found that commissioners, providers and those involved in the organisation of services were aware of the Bangladeshi population in Camden, had a high-level understanding of the inequality of outcomes that they are more likely to experience, and were committed to seeking where possible to tailoring services to address these issues. These findings equally apply today.
- 9.2. Recent data and intelligence from community leaders identifies that although the panel made significant progress, health needs and health inequalities clearly remain for the Bangladeshi Community, including money/Cost of Living, options for healthy lifestyle choices (nutrition, physical activity, smoking and gambling), and physical and mental health. Health literacy and communication present additional barriers in awareness of and accessing services.
- 9.3. There are a range of services and initiatives in place that support this community, but more progress can be made.
- 9.4. This report identifies further opportunities to address health and wellbeing related inequalities experienced by this community, including:
- A greater understanding of the needs among the Bangladeshi community from the Physical Activity Needs Assessment will provide deeper engagement with the community and the ability to test findings and identify new sessions/initiatives to meet those needs, working alongside voluntary and community sector partners. The Active for Life campaign for less active people aged over 60 will launch in March 2024 as a great opportunity for people to start an active habit.
  - The new Breathe stop smoking contract has robust social value requirements that can enable engagement with and outcomes in the Bangladeshi community can be maximised.
  - Funding, including the Community Partners Fund and Cost of Living Funs presents opportunities for building on current work with the Bangladeshi-facing VCS
  - Ongoing partnership with Healthwatch and North Central London Integrated Care Organisation to improve access to physical and mental

health primary care services whilst continuing to engage with the Bangladeshi population.

- 9.5. This report recommends a focus on joining up support and resources across organisations in Camden to meet the ongoing needs of these communities. Further consideration of the data and intel that could help further address the health and wellbeing inequalities experienced across and within different Black, Asian and other ethnic communities would also be helpful.

**10. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

- 10.1. The Executive Director of Corporate Services has been consulted on the contents of the report and has no comments to add to the report.

**11. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

- 11.1. The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add to the report.

**12. Environmental Implications**

- 12.1. No environmental implications have been identified.

**REPORT ENDS**