

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Healthy and Ready for School: Family Hubs, Family Help & Child Health Equity	
REPORT OF Director of Health and Wellbeing & Executive Director, Children and Learning	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Health and Wellbeing Board	DATE 12 th March 2025
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>Healthy and Ready for School is a key short-term priority of our local borough partnership's joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-30. The Health and Wellbeing Board works to ensure that partners from across the system understand their unique roles in this work.</p> <p>This item considers three key work programmes which serve the strategic ambition of reducing health and educational inequalities so that every child has the best possible start in life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Hubs – Building local networks and bringing services closer to our resident community • Family Help – Developing a local, integrated approach to support for families across the continuum of need • RAISE Camden - Camden's child health equity programme, aimed at improving projected worsening health trends for children and young people <p>The Board is asked to consider progress on these programmes of work across the past 12 months in relation to the named strategic priority, plus opportunities for future impact and what the local borough partnership can do to enable change.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officers:</p> <p>Debbie Adams Head of Early Years, Camden Council 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG Debbie.adams@camden.gov.uk</p> <p>Becca Dove Head of Children and Learning Transformation 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG</p>	

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RECOMMENDATION

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the contents of the report.

Signed:



Tim Aldridge
Executive Director, Children and Learning
Date: 28th February 2025

Signed:



Kirsten Watters
Director, Health and Wellbeing
Date: 3rd March 2025

1. Purpose of Report (and Reason for Urgency)

- 1.1. Healthy and Ready for School is a key short-term priority of our local borough partnership's joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-30. Recognising the significant impacts that early experiences have on children's long-term health and wellbeing, the partnership is committed to reducing health and educational inequalities so that every child has the best possible start in life. This is understood within a population health context, encompassing the wider social determinants of health beyond people's experience of health and care services.
- 1.2. The Health and Wellbeing Board works to ensure that partners from across the system understand their unique roles in this work. This ranges from directly addressing early drivers of health to removing barriers that hinder our schools and early years settings from working together to achieve the best possible results for our children.
- 1.3. Healthy and Ready for School was last discussed by the Board in March 2024. This item introduced Camden's child health equity strategic programme and provided updates on programmes of work with key links into its ambitions, including Family Hubs. Members were asked to consider their role in this work and discussed possibilities for its future, including how to widen engagement and enhance cooperation between services.
- 1.4. The Board will now return to the key work programmes of child health equity and Family Hubs, considering these alongside work that is underway to provide more integrated support for families across the full continuum of need via the development of locally based multi-disciplinary Family Help services. The Board is asked to consider progress on these programmes of work across the past 12 months, plus opportunities for future impact and what the local borough partnership can do to enable change.

2. Context and overview

- 2.1. In Camden, almost two in five children live in poverty after housing costs, and 39% of households have no access to private green spaces. The challenges facing Camden's children and families are entrenched and interconnected. A shared commitment to giving every child and young person the best possible start in life is a vital foundation for building a healthier, more equitable future for our community.
- 2.2. This report focuses on three interconnected areas of work which are key to achieving our local borough partnership's ambition of meaningfully shifting the dial on health inequities in Camden.
 - Family Hubs – Camden has five Department for Education (DfE) designated Family Hubs across the Borough, building on existing Children's Centres that families know and trust. This aligns with the Council's wider ambition for neighbourhood working and will create a 'one stop shop' for mental, physical and emotional health. The Family Hub programme is not just about the 5 designated sites but rather about

developing a network of provision for families including Youth Hubs, Voluntary and Community sector organisations, schools and primary care.

- Family Help – Camden is reviewing current early help and children’s social work with the intention of developing a more integrated approach to support for families across the continuum of need based on communities close to where families live. This is aligned with national reform, to develop locally based multi-disciplinary family help services.
- RAISE Camden is Camden’s child health equity programme, aimed at improving projected worsening health trends for children and young people. It crosses three core themes: child poverty (associated with cognitive development); whole family mental health (associated with social and emotional development); and tackling racism and inequality (which magnify the impact of both).

3. Family Hubs

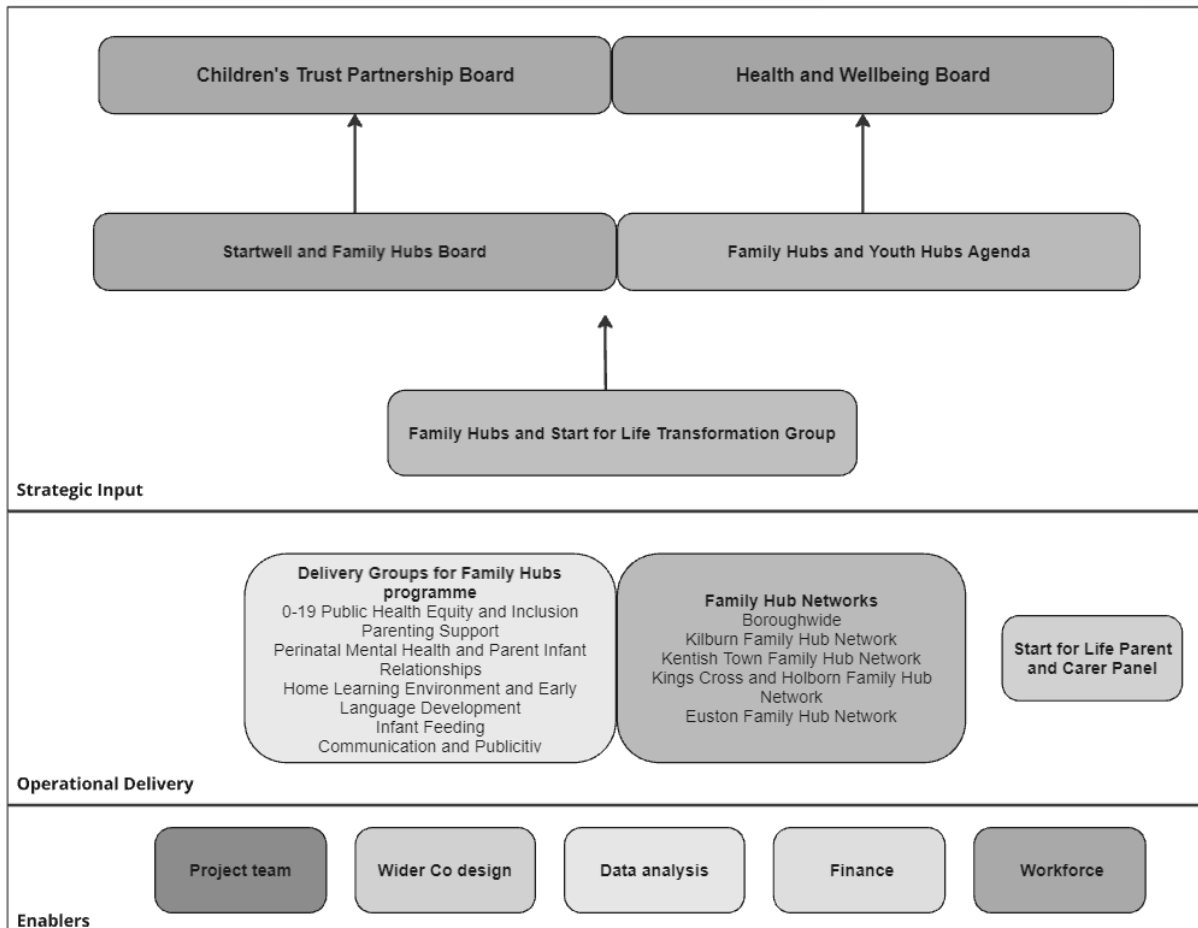
Background and Vision

- 3.1. A Family Hub is a system-wide model providing high-quality, joined-up, whole-family support services from conception through a child’s early years, until they reach the age of 19, or 25 for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 3.2. The ambition of the Family Hubs programme is to develop and maintain a strong Start for Life offer, recognising the importance of the first 1001 days in influencing long term outcomes, to join up services for families, whatever the age of their child, and importantly responds to what we have heard from families about the difficulties they experience in navigating the system to find the services that may help them. Better co-ordination and communication are central to success, as is ensuring that we successfully engage the families who could benefit most from the support that’s available. Alignment work with Start Well Priorities and RAISE Camden will be key in helping the Family Hubs to realise this potential, as will effective collaboration with North Central London Integrated Care Board and our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners.
- 3.3. *We Make Camden* sets out four missions that are central to our approach and ambition. The Estates and Neighbourhood Mission commits Council services to being “accessible to people where they live and wants everyone to be empowered to live a good life. We want our services to be local, connected and built on relationships, enabling people to find solutions”. Family Hubs are central to the delivery of the children and families neighbourhood approach and builds on Camden’s thriving Children’s Centre service. Organised through a locality model, consistent with Camden’s Estates and Neighbourhoods Mission, the Family Hub programme grounds more services in communities close to the residents they serve.

Governance

3.4. A developed Family Hub model is expected to have a Board that oversees or connects with strategic early help functions and engages effectively with Integrated Care Systems and other partnerships to influence and inform service decisions. The Start Well and Family Hub Board, launched in late 2023, fulfils these requirements. It is proving to be an effective mechanism for joining up services and creating ambitious expectations for the Family Hub system. The Board sits within a broader Children and Learning governance structure as shown below.

Camden Family Hub Programme Governance Structure



3.5. The DfE oversees Family Hub delivery through monthly meetings with a Regional Delivery Lead, statistical monitoring submissions, regular progress reports, and grant usage statements, ensuring rigorous scrutiny.

Successes, Opportunities and Challenges

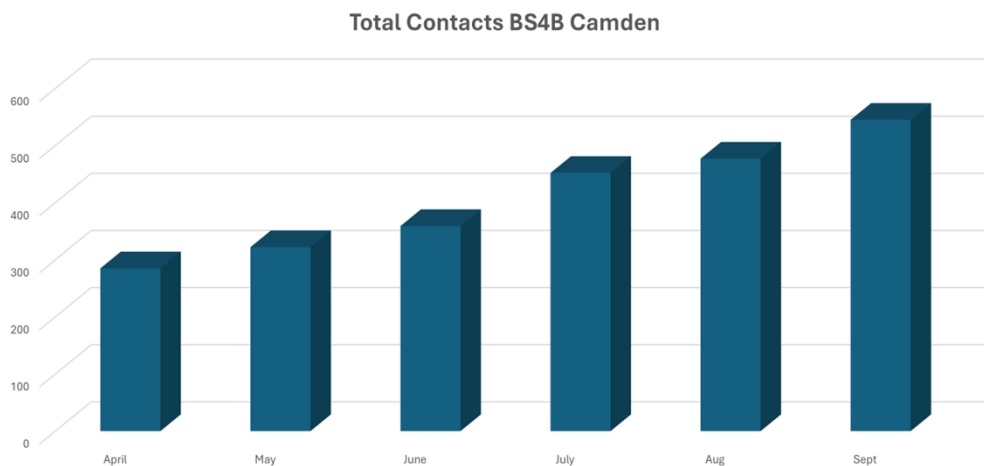
3.6. Camden consistently meets expectations and is frequently called upon to support other Local Authority teams, with three areas of innovative practice gaining national attention: Best Start for Baby; Camden Kids Talk; and Father Inclusive Practice.

3.7. Best Start for Baby: The first 1,001 days are crucial for shaping lifelong outcomes. Studies show that if a child has fallen behind by the time they are

2, they are more likely to fall further behind than they are to catch up. Supporting the transition to parenthood is critical and midwives, health visitors and Start for Life services delivered through Family Hubs support healthy pregnancy, a strong parent child relationship and the promotion of good health and development. The national Healthy Child Programme sets out minimum standards for health visiting services and includes 5 mandated contacts that should be made with every family. These contacts should happen in the anti-natal period, within 14 days of birth, and 6-8 weeks, one year and between 2 and 2 1/2 years. The gap between the 6-8 week and one year review is a time of dynamic change for families and a time when needs and vulnerabilities emerge. Supporting children to have the best start in life means preventing needs escalating and intervening early when necessary. To achieve this Camden has launched the Best Start for Baby programme.

3.8. Best Start for Baby introduces additional universal contacts at 3, 6 and 9 months. These contacts focus on the parent-child relationship and attuned parenting, offering key opportunities to identify developmental delays and the need for extra support. Delivered collaboratively by the Council and NHS, it benefits from strong Integrated Early Years Service partnerships. The programme rolled out across Camden in April 2024 and is offered in 7 venues to enable families to access as close to home as possible. Detailed monitoring of family's engagement with the service is a priority so that we can ensure that those families with the greatest potential to benefit attend. Attendance in the first 6 months is shown below.

Best Start for Baby Contacts: April-September 2024

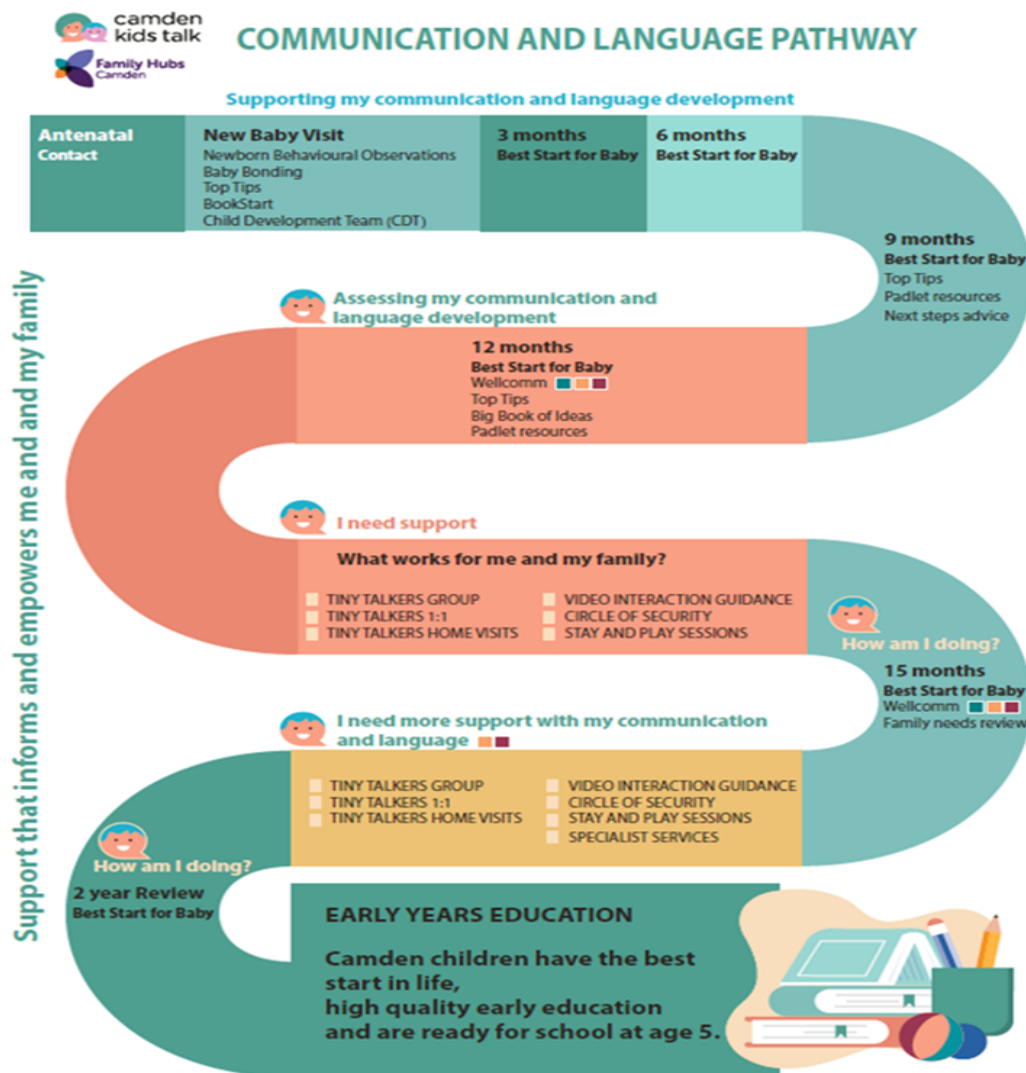


3.9. Outcome measures that demonstrate the impact of the service in supporting the development of strong parent / child relationships and in the early identification of need are in development.

3.10. Camden Kids Talk is a boroughwide initiative to address inequalities in communication and language development through a whole-system approach. It recognises the vital role that parents play in the development of their child's communication and that language and communication are the cornerstone of early learning and closely linked to emotional regulation. The

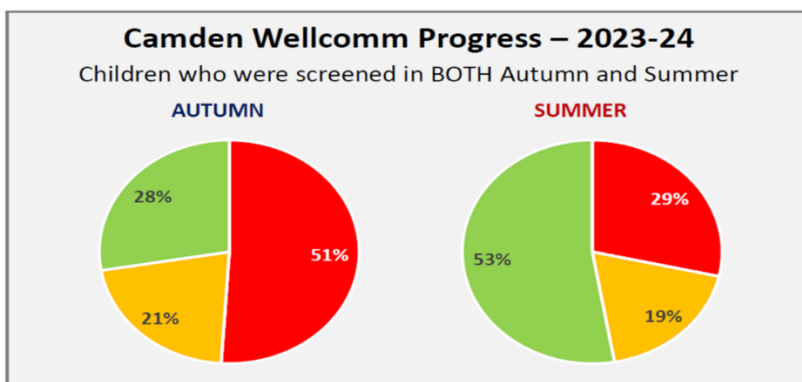
programme focuses on workforce development, parental engagement, and a shared assessment and intervention framework and has developed a communication and language pathway as shown below.

Camden Kids Talk: Communication and Language Pathway



- 3.11. The goal is to create a standardized, evidence-based method for early identification and support of speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) and provide enhanced universal and targeted support for children. The programme has matured and now demonstrates clear outcomes. Screening in the first nine primary schools to implement the strategy shows a reduction in children who are over a year behind their expected development level, from 51% to 29%.

Camden Wellcomm Progress 2023-24



- 3.12. **Father Inclusive Practice:** There is compelling evidence that shows when fathers/male carers have a positive, active role in their children’s lives, there are fewer behavioural problems, improved social skills and better educational outcomes. Father inclusive practice supports and values men in their role as fathers and male carers, actively encouraging and supporting their parenting. Camden’s programme aims to ensure that fathers and male carers are considered equally in all aspects of service delivery and has been welcomed for its ambition to change culture.
- 3.13. **Providing services for families with children of all ages:** Family Hub grant funding focuses on early years and 'Start for Life' services, but there is an expectation to also support families with older children through Family Hubs, linked venues, or virtually as part of the network. Hubs currently act as gateways for families to access services for children of any age and the evolving families.camden.gov.uk website provides a valuable resource for parents and professionals. Designated Family Hubs primarily serve early years during the school day, but some teams supporting older children will co-locate there, with services for older children offered after school.

Next steps

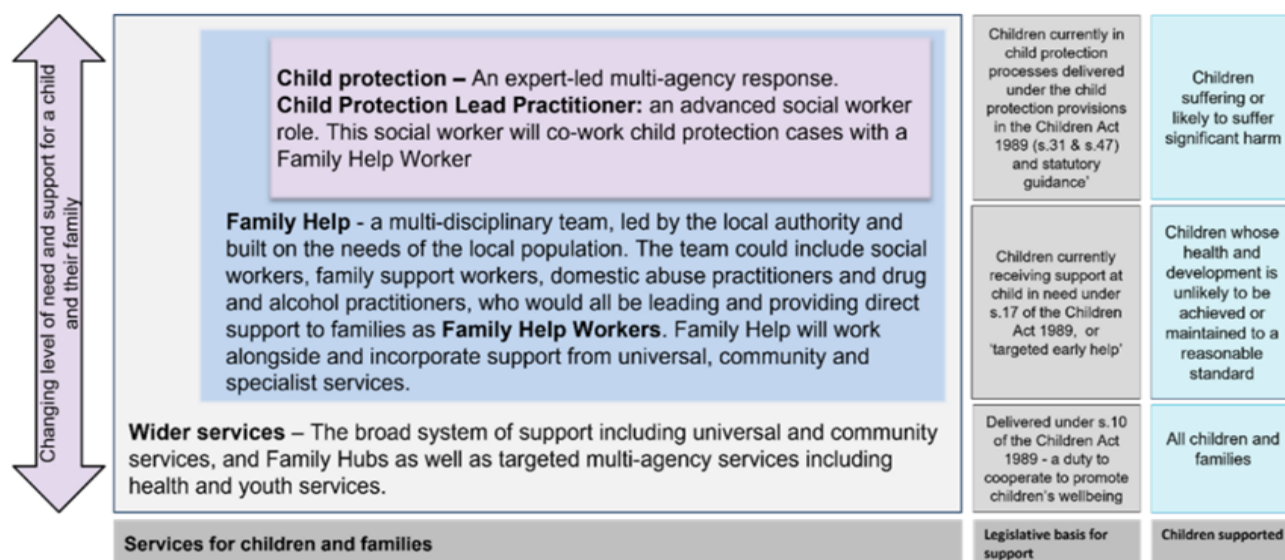
- 3.14. Developing the Family Hub model further, to meet diverse needs for families with children of all ages, is the next significant step, requiring effective data use and further active co-production with parents and children to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for Camden families.
- 3.15. Work to further embed the Family Hub network is ongoing, with many organizations collaborating to provide families with access to information, advice, and services—both in-person and virtual—beyond the Council's designated Hub buildings. This partnership and outreach approach is core to ensuring our universal services are universal in their reach. Continued progress is essential to simplify service access and make navigating the system easier.
- 3.16. To deliver a truly inclusive service, a specific focus on providing for families with children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) is needed. The forthcoming transformation programme that will bring services for older children to the Hubs includes a proposal for a new role dedicated to developing and promoting the Family Hub SEND offer.

4. Family Help

Background and vision

- 4.1. Stable Homes, Built on Love was the previous Government's response to the National Review of Children's Social Care. It outlined six pillars of reform, including a new Family Help model. The current Government has pledged to continue with the Family Help reforms in their policy paper Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive. The Government describe family help as a 'non-stigmatising offer of support delivered by multi-disciplinary community-based teams, bringing together targeted early help and child in need social work'. It envisions a system with fewer thresholds, integrating targeted early help and children in need services within a broader framework of universal, community, and specialist support. This is illustrated below:

Family Help's place within the wider service framework (Stable Homes)



Further guidance on the expected shape of family help is expected from Government in spring 2025. This will inform us what is mandated and what can be locally shaped.

Successes, Opportunities and Challenges

- 4.2. This reform reflects a significant change to the way local authorities have organised help and support across early help and children's social care for the past 30 years since the introduction of the Children Act in 1989. A key aspect is the removal of a 'division' between early help casework and casework at 'child in need' stage of the support continuum. A second important aspect is the shift to community-based teams. A new neighbourhood-based approach to Family Help offers significant opportunities. Many of Camden's early help teams are already based in localities; Family Help's emphasis on community-based approaches will allow for greater integration of a range of children's services teams at neighbourhood level and will help to fulfil the Family Hub programme's goal of a one-stop shop for families with children of all ages. Embedding Family

Help services in neighbourhoods aligns with the Council's Estates and Neighbourhoods Mission and advances the creation of multidisciplinary teams to support schools in meeting the needs of children and families, as outlined in Building Back Stronger, Camden's Education Strategy.

- 4.3. Implementing change is challenging and needs to be handled sensitively to uphold Camden principles of doing with and not to. A comprehensive codesign exercise is underway in which a group of staff and a group of parents with lived experience of children's service are collaborating in a local family help design programme. This is also being guided by the work undertaken by Camden parents in 2021 which produced a 'Good Help for Families' vision for local services and support. Sequencing the transformation process so that the changes are iterative will enable reflection and learning to continue to influence our model as it develops.
- 4.4. A new Relational Practice Framework has been developed that sets out the key beliefs and values for Children and Learning, and principles for relational practice by all council services for children. New family help operating models will reflect this relational way of working. The new family help offer will provide the right conditions on which to map the next step in Children's Services transformation and a new system that delivers services for families, across the continuum of need. These are key elements that families told us were important to them and are front and centre of Camden's Good Help Manifesto.

Evidence of Impact

- 4.5. Camden is still in the discovery and design phase for family help and it is too early to tell what the longer-term impact of these operational and organisational changes will be. The test and learn phase, where prototypes of new ways of working will be tested, will include a robust formative evaluation to assess the difference made by the proposed model for both families and staff. These will form the basis of any further iteration of operating models prior to a full rollout of family help in Camden.

Next Steps

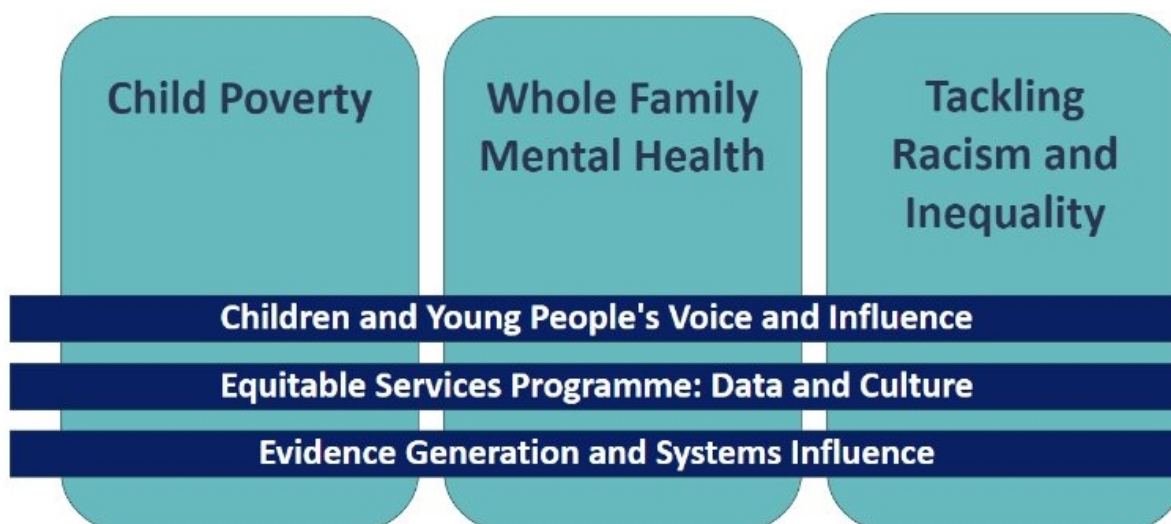
- 4.6. Family Help prototypes developed during the design phase will be presented to the Supporting People Directorate Management Team in March/April 2025. These will undergo additional "test and learn" cycles to refine and validate the model, with full implementation planned for late 2025/early 2026. Governance for this work is provided by the Children's Social Care Reform Strategic Board being coordinated by the Children and Learning Directorate. Prototypes will also be presented to said Board.

5. Child Health Equity (RAISE Camden)

Background and vision

- 5.1. Raise Camden is our child health equity strategic programme. It focuses on improving the childhood experience of deprived and marginalised residents, with a view to improving lifelong health and wellbeing as a result.
- 5.2. In March 2024, we made the case for why child health equity and why now to Camden's Health and Wellbeing Board. Having agreed its prioritisation, this paper serves as an update on progress and proposed next steps. The purpose of Raise Camden is to take child's eye view on how our health, care and wider social support system is serving children and young people and where innovation, service development and research can provide additional support to achieve greater equity.
- 5.3. Camden's universal offer through Family Hubs and targeted offer through Family Help are the cornerstones of Raise Camden's equitable practice. Our strategic programme builds on the wealth of innovative practice and learning within these services and draws on wider determinants of health to shape young people's social and economic environment. Collectively, we span the networks and infrastructure which are meaningful to children and young people, and at the neighbourhood geographical context which makes sense in their day to day lives. Raise Camden is interested in borough-level inequities as well as the geographical inequities which systems structures can present.
- 5.4. Raise Camden organises its work against three core themes: child poverty (material deprivation is associated with cognitive development); whole family mental health (associated with social and emotional development); and tackling racism and inequality (which magnify the impact of both). This is supported through enabling workstreams of children and young people's voice and influence, our Equitable Services Programme (data and insights infrastructure), and research evidence generation and application.

Raise Camden: Core Themes



- 5.5. In this paper, we update on progress against each of these themes and enablers as well as set out future plans for the programme as a whole. On 20th March 2025, the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) will publish their

commissioned report of a child health equity audit in Camden. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board will be invited to attend a webinar to explore the report's findings. The recommendations of this report will form Raise Camden's priorities for action and advocacy.

Governance

- 5.6. Children and young people's voice and influence is core to the governance of Raise Camden. We are currently collaborating with the Young Camden Foundation's Young Ambassador programme in responding to the IHE report and in codesigning our longer-term approach to governance. Central to the ethos of our programme is in ensuring that all participation is meaningful both to the individuals involved and to ensuring it directly influences decision-making within our programme.
- 5.7. Raise Camden is a place-based programme, working at the intersection between local government, academia and funding. In 2025 we will target grant, research and philanthropic funding to deliver against our aims. For this reason, we need a broad partnership of collaborators if we are to take a missions-based approach to child health equity. The programme is therefore undertaking an options appraisal of partnership and consortium arrangements to bring partners together in a more formalised way. We have established a network of expert advisors to support Raise Camden, which we shall also formalise through our governance structure proposals.
- 5.8. Each workstream is overseen by established governance boards, including the 0-19 Equity and Inclusion Family Hubs Delivery Group, the Children and Young People's Mental Health Board, the Equitable Services Steering Group and the Estates Mission Steering Group. These boards report to the Start Well and Family Hubs Board, the Children's Trust Partnership Board, and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Successes, Opportunities and Challenges

- 5.9. RAISE Camden has established a series of test and learn pilots as well as longer term development programmes over the last 12 months. These collaborative programmes bring together teams from across the Council and our wider partners in their development and delivery. The below sets out the current programme of work and pipeline.

RAISE Camden Work Programme

Initiative	Lead	Status
Test and Learn		
Cash Transfers in Pregnancy	Cost of Living	Mobilisation
Low Acuity A&E Follow up clinics	Family Hubs	Live
Family Help upstream prevention	Family Help	Proposal

Peer Support in antenatal support	CYP HI (Children & Young People's Health Improvement)	Scoping
Marmot Estates	Strategy	Scoping
Service Improvement		
Equitable Services Programme	Health & Wellbeing	Live
0-19 Dataview development	Family Hubs	Scoping
Health and Housing Dataview	Strategy	Scoping
Antenatal support for Bangladeshi women	UCLH (University College London Hospitals)	Research
Sustainable school uniform swaps	CYP HI	Live
Cost of living support offer	Family Hubs	Mobilisation
School Health Offer mapping	Health & Wellbeing	Scoping
Grassroots organisation framework development	Health & Wellbeing	Mobilisation
CYP voice and influence strategy	YCF (Young Camden Foundation)	Scoping
Research		
Kailo	UCL (University College London)	Mobilisation
Global majority families in universal services	YF/CG (Young Foundation / Camden Giving)	Mobilisation
Best Start for Baby NIHR evaluation	Family Hubs	Mobilisation
Birthing Buddies and systems change	UCLH	Scoping
Child Health Equity Audit and Review	IHE (Institute of Health Equity)	Final draft

5.10. Our flagship programme is the Equitable Services Programme. It drives equity within service delivery by using standardised and supported quality improvement methods to improve the consistent recording of equalities data. Disparities in access, completion, experience and outcomes of children and young people's health and wellbeing services are tracked. We approach the disparities with curiosity to understand what is driving them and, where appropriate, applying participatory appraisal techniques with families themselves. This helps us to understand what improvements can be made to services to better reflect the needs of our local communities. The process will be captured and tracked through quarterly contract monitoring meetings. Our ambition is to apply this approach at a systems level, using the Family Hubs database.

5.11. The London Borough of Camden has partnered with Nesta to launch a test-and-learn pilot offering a one-off £500 cash transfer to pregnant people who are eligible for benefits. Research indicates that reducing financial stress during pregnancy can lower the risk of low-birth-weight babies. Camden has

seen a rise in premature and low-birth-weight births, which can have long-term health and wellbeing impacts. The cash payment will be provided in a non-coercive manner, followed by a warm welcome to the Financial Inclusion team and Family Hubs services for expecting and new parents. We will track service uptake and behavioural outcomes as key measures of success, with the pilot set to launch in April 2025.

- 5.12. University College London Hospital (UCLH), Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) and the London Borough of Camden have partnered to offer follow up clinics for families attending Accident and Emergency (A&E) without urgent clinical needs. These clinics are held in Regent's Park Family Hub to provide time to understand the underlying causes of emergency attendances, to address the families' needs more holistically and to encourage uptake of community services. This clinic was launched in September 2024, and we have applied for National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funding to evaluate its impact during 2025/26.
- 5.13. Camden is further partnering with UCLH and CNWL on a series of programmes supporting adults and infants in the perinatal period. The Best Start for Baby programme has been accepted for NIHR evaluation funding to support its delivery and we are actively working with an evidence community linking multiple sites in this area. UCLH has been developing a Birthing Buddies programme, where local volunteers support people from global majority backgrounds through their antenatal checks and visits, during birth and postnatally. We have supported the programme by linking into community groups for recruitment and engagement. We are also supporting a reflective practice evaluation to identify and encouraging cultural change within practice for maternity services. Furthermore, we are developing antenatal programme supports specifically designed for Bangladeshi people during their pregnancy – delivered by UCLH and supported through a peer support network within Camden.
- 5.14. We have been selected as an additional site for the Kailo study led by UCL and UCL Partners. Kailo works with young people to co-design solutions to the determinants of adolescent mental health. This is a 1–2-year programme, building on existing work in the borough around whole family approaches to mental wellbeing. It will commence in January 2025.
- 5.15. A key finding of the Institute of Health Equity's report into Child Health Equity in Camden is that whilst a third of children living in poverty live in private rented or privately owned housing in Camden, those experiencing the greatest level of deprivation (on 2 or more measures of deprivation) are largely within social housing. The report explores social housing conditions and their implications in some detail: and will directly feed into Camden's Estates Mission. We are currently scoping the potential of a Marmot Estate to deliver against the Marmot 8 principles at a hyper-local level.

Next steps

- 5.16. As set out under governance, we are currently in the process of formalising our children and young people-led approach and partnership arrangements.
- 5.17. The Institute of Health Equity's report into Child Health Equity in Camden will be published on 20th March 2025. In the second year of our partnership with the Institute we shall be developing our evaluation and measurement framework across all activity.
- 5.18. We recognise that a **robust research infrastructure** for child health equity is key to attracting additional innovation and funding to the borough, and this will be our priority moving forward. Camden was not awarded Health Determinants Research Collaboration status due to the timing of the Public Health function moving into the council. However, by focus our research structure efforts on child health equity we will be eligible for future NIHR research grant funding, and this must be a priority for Raise Camden.
- 5.19. In 2025/26, we seek to scope and develop a large-scale dataview programme for 0-19(25) year olds in Camden, incorporating Family Hubs, Family Help and neighbourhood networks. This will allow us to systematically record and monitor inequities in access, completion, experience and outcomes against protected characteristics and further vulnerabilities in childhood. This will enable **the scalable delivery of our Equitable Services Programme** at both a service and systems level. We are also working to engage grassroots organisations, which we will support through the neighbourhood structure, to build trust with families we have yet to reach. It will also ensure we have a longitudinal dataset to evaluate longer-term impact and outcomes of our initiatives. We would like to request the active participation of our Health and Wellbeing Board members in its development.

6. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

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

7. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

The Board's terms of reference require that the Board will agree and oversee delivery of three to five priority areas for integration, based on resident priorities. The priorities will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be expected to change and evolve over time to build on success and reflect the movement towards a mature integrated health and care system. The health and wellbeing strategy covers Health and Ready for School as part of its short-term priorities.

8. Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications to the content of this report.

REPORT ENDS