

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Funding 2025-6 (SC/2025/18)	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People and Culture	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Cabinet	<b>DATE</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> April
<b>STRATEGIC CONTEXT</b>  <p>We Make Camden is our joint vision for the borough, developed in partnership with our community. This proposal supports the delivery of the Youth Mission : By 2025 every young person has access to economic opportunity which enables them to be safe and secure. Through the Youth Mission the Council and its partners have identified four priority cohorts for targeted interventions, one of which is care experienced young people. This proposal sets out plans for a Central London Youth Guarantee Trailblazer focused on care experienced young people, responding to the recommendations and provisions of the Government’s Getting Britain Working White paper</p> <p>The Way We Work is the Council’s response to We Make Camden. These proposals contribute to the commitments and ambitions relating to the way Camden works to support its citizens: working creatively and beyond service silos in the provision of innovative and integrated provision. The central ambition of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer is that it adopts a test and learn approach to enable the development of new approaches to pathways to employment for young people.</p>	
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>  <p>This report outlines proposals to deliver a Youth Guarantee Trailblazer focused on pathways to employment, education and training for care experienced young people aged 18-24, across the central London sub-region. The paper seeks approval for the Council to act as the lead administration authority for the programme, entering into a grant funding agreement with the Greater London Authority for £4.9million and into corresponding grant agreements with the other Central London boroughs.</p> <p>The report is coming to the Cabinet because the award of grants totalling more than £100,000 in any one year is a matter reserved for the collective decision of Cabinet.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</li> </ul> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b></p>	

Kate Gibbs, Head of Inclusive Economy [kate.gibbs@camden.gov.uk](mailto:kate.gibbs@camden.gov.uk), 020 7974 8549, Camden Council, 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- Approve the Grant Administration Strategy set out at 2.3 to 2.9 for the Central London Forward Youth Guarantee Trailblazer programme, this to include
  - the Council acting as the lead administration authority for the CLF Youth Guarantee Trailblazer, entering into a grant funding agreement with the Greater London Authority for this specific purpose
  - entering into grant funding agreements with the other CLF boroughs to administer the grant
  - any necessary changes to CLF Memorandum of Understanding to reflect the Grant Administration Strategy
- Delegate authority to the Director for Economy, Regeneration and Investment to approve all implementation details of Grant Administration Strategy including settling the terms of any extension to this programme after 2025/2026.
- Note the details of the developing plans for the delivery of the Trailblazer in Camden.

Signed:



David Burns, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## 1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Council is one of the constituent boroughs of Central London Forward. Central London Forward (CLF) is one of London's 4 strategic sub-regional partnerships (SRPs), covering 12 local authorities in Central London, including Camden, the City of London, Hackney, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, and Westminster, with Haringey and Lewisham as associate members for employment and skills work. London's SRPs bring together local authorities to work on shared goals and challenges, leveraging their collective resources and expertise. CLF's primary goal is to improve the lives of residents by driving inclusive growth. This involves ensuring access to skills, jobs, homes, and support needed to benefit from Central London's dynamic economy.
- 1.2. This report requests cabinet approval for the Council to act as the lead authority in the administration of a multi borough programme delivering Central London's Youth Guarantee Trailblazer for 2025/26 as part of CLF and focused on care experienced young people. This will require the Council to undertake a co-ordinating role, entering into an agreement with the Greater London Authority to hold the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Fund amounting to a total of £4.8million. Approximately £0.38million of that funding will be applied to the Council to implement the programme in Camden and the remainder will be allocated to 11 other Central London Boroughs delivering the Trailblazer in their own boroughs. The Council will enter into agreements with each of these boroughs incorporating the terms imposed by the GLA and with CLF which will deliver overview monitoring and compliance functions on behalf of the boroughs and the programme overall.
- 1.3. Camden has a long history of valuing and supporting our young people. Our Youth Mission is that every young person will have access to economic opportunity. Through the mission we have established a universal offer alongside targeted support for 'priority cohorts' for whom we want to increase our ambition, reflecting the fact that they face particular disadvantage. One of these cohorts is the young people with experience of care for whom the Council is corporate parent. The Camden STEAM programme leverages the Council's partnerships with our anchor institutions, businesses and other employers to deliver meaningful employer encounters across our schools and brokers an inspiring year 12 work experience offer. The Good Work Camden service provides one to one advice to support young people to find work experience, apprenticeships and jobs and links people to the wider support they might need around housing and health, amongst other things. For our care experienced young people, the Council has established an innovative internship programme where by 18 month, paid internships are offered to our care leavers, across Camden teams, without the eligibility criteria or competition which we have learned can be a barrier to apprenticeship and other entry-level jobs. The internship programme includes a wrap-around support offer and employability training delivered by a range of partners and including professionalism and work ethic, money management, self and stress management, communication, team work, public speaking and conflict resolution. Supervising managers also

undertake training so that they are best able to support their intern. We have established a protocol whereby apprenticeship roles which are suitable are ring-fenced for our graduating interns following their internship.

- 1.4. Published in late November 2024, the Government's Get Britain Working White Paper set out their proposals to reform employment, health and skills support to tackle economic inactivity and support people into good work. The white paper announced ambitions to reduce NHS waiting lists, reforms to Job Centre Plus to increase the focus on careers and work rather than on administering benefits, the creation of a new national jobs and careers service, a greater focus on digital services in the employment and skills support system and a goal to create an inclusive labour market where everyone can participate and progress in work, aiming for an 80% employment rate within a decade.
- 1.5. The White Paper also set out plans for a 'Youth Guarantee' and outlined a £240 million investment to support these reforms, including funding for Trailblazer areas to **bring together services and test new approaches** relating to either Economic Activity or the Youth Guarantee. The Youth Guarantee provides that
  - All young people aged 18-21 have access to training or employment support, and are prevented from becoming economically inactive before their careers have even begun and
  - Support for 16-17 year olds who are at risk of or who have disengaged from sustained participation in education and learning is strengthened
- 1.6. It has been confirmed that four Trailblazers will be delivered in London with the Greater London Authority acting as accountable body. Two will focus broadly on economic inactivity, and the GLA has developed plans to deliver two Youth Guarantee Trailblazers:
  - One pan-London Trailblazer providing systems leadership and change in the youth employment, education and training (EET) and wraparound support space. This Trailblazer will also deliver discrete transitions, mental health, and youth participation focused pilots with the geographic specifics of delivery identified through mapping and data analysis conducted through set-up grant funding. Finally, resource within this Trailblazer will deliver a pan-London convening and coordination function for all four sub-regional Trailblazers across both youth and economic inactivity. London government partners want to ensure that all Trailblazer activity is coordinated to maximise the capital's allocation.
  - One Trailblazer focusing on care leavers aged 17-25 years old, delivered by the Central London Forward (CLF) Sub-Regional Partnership (SRP). This Trailblazer is the subject of this report.
- 1.7. It is worth noting that the ambition of the trailblazers to test, learn and grow new approaches to employment support for priority groups aligns with the Government's developing approach to public sector reform which focuses on a commitment to system change through innovation and experimentation. Unlike previous employment and skills programmes which have been designed centrally and then delegated to sub regions to deliver, the approach to delivering

Trailblazer outcomes has not been prescribed by government and will be designed locally. This devolved approach is one that Camden has been advocating for.

## **2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS**

- 2.1. In February the Central London Forward Partnership Board, of which Camden is a member, agreed a proposal to deliver a Youth Guarantee Trailblazer focused on pathways to employment for Care Experienced Young People. The Board's view was that a focus on young people rather economic inactivity and health & work was pragmatic, given the mismatch between NHS Health geographies and the sub-regional partnership geography (the CLF area covers 4 different Integrated Care System areas). Furthermore, young people generally, and care leavers in particular are a priority for all the Central London boroughs.
- 2.2. There are 19,000 Care Experienced young people in London aged 17-25 and 313 in Camden. Of the Camden cohort around 100 are considered Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). Care leavers face significant social and economic disadvantage, and experience substantially worse outcomes than other young people:
  - Care leavers aged 19-21 are over three times more likely to be NEET.<sup>1</sup>
  - Care leavers are around four times more likely to have a mental health disorder.<sup>2</sup>
  - Care leavers are more likely to lack of formal qualifications, and to have unstable housing, which acts as a barrier to education and employment.<sup>3</sup>

### **Grant Administration Strategy**

- 2.3. The Central London Forward Trailblazer project will involve all 12 of the authorities in the partnership and is still in development. A high level proposal has been submitted to the GLA and shared with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who were broadly supportive of the approach.
- 2.4. The CLF Trailblazer will
  - Support care leavers in central London to progress toward and move into employment, education and training;
  - Build capacity through helping boroughs and other stakeholders to innovate, to work together, and to learn from each-other;
  - Build the evidence base about what works in supporting care leavers into employment, education and training.
- 2.5. The project will provide intensive support from a personal advisor with a low caseload and work closely with employers to identify employment opportunities and provide pastoral support on the transition into work. There will be an

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<sup>1</sup> [The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, Final Report](#), May 2022

<sup>2</sup> National Children's Bureau, [Achieving emotional wellbeing for looked-after children](#), July 2015

<sup>3</sup> Education Development Trust, [Entry and retention in the labour market: narratives and solutions for NEET and care leave employment support](#), 2023

intermediate labour market element, providing subsidised temporary roles, paid at least the London Living Wage, to give care leavers real-world experience.

- 2.6. Project delivery will take place primarily through the boroughs, involving officers working across children and young people's services and in employment services, as well as locally commissioned support. CLF will provide programme governance and coordination, and monitoring and compliance functions and will commission a Learning and Evaluation partner to enable shared learning and innovation, support the development of the programme and to identify opportunities to test and evaluate different approaches.
- 2.7. The Trailblazer will focus on the following outcomes
  - Number of care leavers engaged;
  - Care leavers supported into sustainable work;
  - Care leavers supported into education and training;
  - Increased confidence and employability of care leavers
- 2.8. The total budget for the programme is approximately £4.8million. The Government has indicated that all money must be spent in the 12 months from April 2025, with the DWP pitching to the Spending Review for continued funding. Each borough will receive funding for a Senior Officer to deliver the programme, and a flexible borough delivery budget to spend on additional staffing, commissioned support, or other costs. Detailed guidance and grant agreement documentation have not yet been provided by government.
- 2.9. To help ensure a joined-up approach CLF requires a borough partner to act as the lead administration body for the programme, channelling the grant funding from GLA to the participating boroughs and Camden has volunteered to undertake this role. The detail will be established when further information has been received from the GLA. Legal and financial advice to protect the Councils interests will be obtained before any agreements are entered into. The Council will be able to recover the costs of undertaking this role from the overall grant amount. Whilst as noted the detail of the Strategy is still being developed headline components are summarised below :
  - Camden will enter into a funding agreement with the GLA for the whole value of the CLF Youth Guarantee Trailblazer
  - Camden will enter into corresponding grant funding agreements with the other 11 Central London Forward Boroughs. These agreements will pass on the terms and conditions of the GLA funding agreement and will be designed with a view both to mitigating any risk to the Council and to ensure that funding is directed to delivery of outputs
  - Camden's agreement with City of London, who are the host authority for Central London Forward, will include conditions specifying CLF's role in managing the coordination, monitoring, reporting and compliance arrangements for the programme.
  - Camden will distribute funds to the 11 other CLF boroughs in accordance with the terms of the grant having regard to CLF recommendations, CLF officers having carried out the required monitoring and compliance activities.

- 2.10. With regard to the delivery of project activities in Camden, officers have begun discussions across internal teams and with external partners with experience of delivering for this cohort. We are developing a model of intervention which provides in the first instance intensive and relational one to one support, information, advice and guidance. A highly individualised action plan will be developed according to needs and aspirations and young people will be supported to access, for example, pre-employment training, mental health support, functional skills support and financial resilience training. This training will prepare young people for paid work experience opportunities. This programme will build on and integrate with existing support in the borough and be delivered where our care experienced young people are comfortable, for example through the Care Leavers Hub at Vадnie Bish.
- 2.11. Officers consider that this project offers an opportunity to work with partners to try some new approaches to, for example, engagement methodologies, the delivery of functional skills support in practical and innovative ways and the incorporation of mental health and personal resilience support.

### **3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 3.1. The following options were explored

#### *Option 1 - do nothing*

- 3.2. The Council could opt out of taking part in the CLF Youth Guarantee Trailblazer. This would mean losing the opportunity to increase our capacity to enhance the support offered to this cohort who have been identified as a priority through our youth mission. We would also lose the opportunity to take part in a nation-wide test and learn programme which is designed to help inform the development of public service reform.
- 3.3. The Council could withdraw our offer to act as the lead administration authority for this programme. There is a possibility that another borough would come forward to take on the role but this would introduce delay and the timeframes for development and delivery of this programme are already challenging. Given our existing focus on young people and on this cohort in particular, Camden is well placed to undertake this role on behalf of the CLF partnership.

#### *Option 2 – Different models of delivery*

- 3.4. Officers have considered different models of delivering the Camden element of the Trailblazer activity, including commissioning a third party to deliver the project in its entirety. Because Camden already has statutory responsibility for, and established relationships with this cohort, it is considered desirable that the career coaches who provide the one to one support are integrated with both the virtual school team and the Good Work Camden service. Through a combination of in-house and commissioned support we can also work with partners to identify new approaches to engaging young people in thinking about and working towards their futures.

#### 4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

Risk	Mitigations
Funding is withdrawn after 25/26 resulting in the loss of intensive support and developed relationships with career coaches for an often vulnerable cohort.	The Council will work through CLF to advocate for early notice the cessation of funding and in the event that notice is given, will work to deliver a warm handover of young people from the Trailblazer career coaches to advisors employed in the Virtual School and by Good Work Camden.
The timescales for the programme mean that boroughs focus on individual area delivery arrangements and fail to meet the test and learn and coordination objectives of the trailblazers	An external learning and evaluation partner will be appointed at the beginning of the programme to work across CLF, supporting the boroughs to shared learning and innovation, support the development of the programme and to identify opportunities to test and evaluate different approaches.
The programme as a whole is unable to deliver its outcomes and funding is either not released or clawed back	The Council will pass on the terms and conditions of the grant funding agreement with the GLA to the other boroughs, such that our liability will be limited to the budget for Camden's local delivery programme, totalling approximately £380k.

#### 5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

5.1. The Council will engage our care experienced young people in the design and delivery of our programme through:

- The **Children in Care Council**. Children and young people with experience of care come together monthly to help us shape our services and advocate for themselves and each other.
- **Camden Young Inspectors**. These are young people who have experience of having a social worker and of getting support from Camden Safeguarding and Social Work service (CSSW). Young Inspectors undertake research into the views of other service users and professionals about the services provided by partner agencies responsible for safeguarding children. The Young Inspectors are young people aged 16-25. They are selected through an interview process and are involved in designing and conducting each inspection. The strength of the Young Inspectors is that they can apply their own experiences and knowledge of the service to the inspection. The Young Inspectors are trained and supported to inspect our work and make recommendations aimed at service improvement. The Young Inspectors undertake research into the views of children, families and professionals - about services provided by social care and partner agencies responsible for safeguarding children.



- **Camden Community Wealth Fund Youth Panel.** This panel has recently been recruited to make investment decisions in the first, pilot year for the CWF – a significant proportion of the young people on the panel have experience of care. We will explore whether and how these young people can be engaged in design and delivery of our trailblazer, and what links can be made to the CWF

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council is empowered to act as lead authority for the Grant Administration Strategy under the General Power of Competence (GPOC ) under Section 1 the Localism Act 2011 (LA 2011). GPOC is a power of first resort and is expressed not to be limited by the existence of any power which to any extent overlaps. It gives Councils the power to do anything “that individuals generally may do” with the breadth of “things that an individual may do” being emphasised by the statement that Section 1(1) applies to things which an individual may do even though they are “in nature, extent or otherwise ... unlike anything” that the authority may do, apart from Section 1(1), or unlike anything that other public bodies may do (Section 1(2)). In broad terms the power to do something is a power to do it “in any way whatever”, including power “to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area, or persons resident or present in its area” (Section 1(4)). The power should be exercised in accordance with all the general administrative law principles that apply to the exercise of any power, including excising it reasonably for a proper public law purpose.
- 6.2 In considering the recommendations the Cabinet must have due regard to the impact those decisions will have upon the Council’s statutory duty with regard to equalities as set out in Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010. In summary these legal obligations require the Council and Cabinet, when exercising its functions, to have ‘due regard’ to the need to: 1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; 2) to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; 3) Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding). Under the Duty the relevant protected characteristics are Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion, Sex, Sexual orientation. In respect of the first aim only - i.e. reducing discrimination, etc. - the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is also relevant. As explained in paragraph 4.5 above, an Equality Impact Assessment of the Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft has been carried out, which meets the general equality duty under the Equalities Act 2010.

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. Camden has volunteered to administer the programme on behalf of the CLF member boroughs. Paragraph 2.9 sets out some details of how this will work in practice. There should be a net nil impact on the Council’s budgets because most of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer grant received by the Council will be passed

on to other boroughs who will incur the expenditure. The Council will retain a portion of the grant for its own programme and the costs of administering the grants to the other boroughs. CLF will be responsible for the majority of the programme administration.

- 7.2. As mentioned in the risks section above, the £4.8m funding is for one year only. Assuming no further funding is allocated by the GLA, at the end of the period any activity handed over to existing services would need to be funded from those existing services' budgets.
- 7.3. The Council will be responsible for making payments to the 11 other boroughs. It is anticipated that the payments will be made in arrears on a monthly or quarterly basis based on actual costs incurred by the boroughs. The Council will in turn need to claim grant from the GLA for these payments and for its own programme. CLF will be responsible for validating boroughs' claims, the Council will simply process the payments. There is a timing risk in that the Council may need to pay grant over to the other boroughs before it has received the grant from the GLA. This risk can be mitigated by agreeing an appropriate process with CLF and GLA and by making and receiving payments on a regular basis rather than in one go.

## 8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This proposal has no environmental impacts.

## 9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Activity	Date
Finalise the delivery plans for the overarching CLF and Camden Trailblazer proposals	February – March 2025
Recruitment of Camden Trailblazer career coaches	March 2025
CLF appointment of Evaluation & Learning Partner	March 2025
Preparation of funding agreement paperwork	February – April 2025  (dependent on receipt of detailed guidance and draft funding agreement from GLA)
Signing of grant funding agreements by Camden and CLF boroughs	April 2025
Commencement of delivery in Camden	April 2025
Initial project delivery period	April 2025 – March 2026

## **10. APPENDICES**

There are no appendices to this report.

REPORT ENDS