

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>   | <b>WARDS:</b> All               |
| <b>REPORT TITLE</b><br>Themed Debate – Child Poverty  |                                 |
| <b>REPORT OF</b><br>Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families<br>Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living  |                                 |
| <b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b><br>Council   | <b>DATE</b><br>17 November 2025 |
| <b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b><br>This report provides background information to Full Council for a themed debate on child poverty in Camden to be held on 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2025. The report covers a background to child poverty, and the existing challenges at a national and local level for this important issue. The report also include action currently underway in Camden to address child poverty and future plans.<br><br><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b><br>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.<br><br><b>Contact Officer:</b><br>Abigail Knight<br>Public Health Consultant for Child Health Equity, Strategy and Partnerships<br>Abigail.knight@camden.gov.uk |                                 |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b><br><br>The Council is asked to consider the report.  |                                 |

Signed: 

Kirsten Watters, Director of Public Health

Date: 06/11/2025

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Poverty means not having enough money or resources to meet basic needs to live and participate in society. In the UK, the most widely used measurement to define child poverty is a child living in a household with income below 60 per cent of the national median (average) income. This can be average income for the current year (relative) or average income from a reference year adjusted for inflation (absolute), details below.

1.2 Different measures include<sup>1234</sup>:

- Relative poverty (relative low income) – households which have less than 60% of current median income
- Absolute poverty (absolute low income) – households which have less than 60% of the median income in 2010/11 (reference year) held constant in real terms
- Both relative and absolute poverty can be measured before or after housing costs (see 3.6)
- Material deprivation is a measure defined by lack of resources necessary for an acceptable standard of living, for example having to use a food bank
- Persistent poverty is a measure for being in poverty for a prolonged period, defined as living in relative poverty for at least three of the previous four years.

1.3 Child poverty is more than a lack of money, it is a barrier to a decent standard of living, participation, health, education, and opportunity. It comes with it social stigma and systemic discrimination, further impacting wellbeing and chronic trauma.

1.4 Following the pandemic, the Camden Renewal Commission developed missions based on the experiences of the community, informed by data and evidence to identify challenges for our population. The aim of this was to build a more equal and sustainable borough, not just recover from the pandemic. Our missions are therefore intimately related to poverty: diversity, young people, food, and estates.

1.5 Camden Council have also embedded tackling inequality and improving opportunities for children within its vision for the borough [“We Make Camden.”](#) Through this vision the Council has outlined its ambition to ensure every child has the best start in life. A key action to achieve this ambition is to reduce the number of children and young people living in poverty.

1.6 This report provides an overview of the impact of child poverty, the national context, child poverty in Camden and the work underway to address poverty for Camden families.

---

<sup>1</sup> [A definition of poverty | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Poverty: facts and figures | CPAG](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Summary: Review of the UK Material Deprivation Measures - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The trouble with measuring poverty – Office for Statistics Regulation](#)

## **2. Impact of child poverty**

- 1.2 Child poverty negatively affects not only childhood outcomes but opportunities and outcomes throughout life. These include lower birth weight, poorer child development, educational attainment and employment opportunities, income, mental and physical health. Poverty and deprivation have also been identified as contributory factors within child death reporting<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.2 Children growing up in poverty can miss out on childhood experiences, for example having less opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities, school trips, parties and other leisure activities, and clothing<sup>6</sup>. Children report this leads to feeling left out, being bullied<sup>7</sup> and they miss out on benefits attributed to extracurricular activities such as sense of belonging, social skills, and increased confidence,<sup>8</sup> which can lead to loneliness.
- 3.2 The duration and depth of poverty matters, as children who experience poverty persistently over years suffer more serious and enduring disadvantage than those who experience short-term poverty.

## **3. National and local context**

### **National**

- 1.2 In the UK child poverty has increased by 700,000 over the last 13 years, with over four million children now living in poverty, with three million living in material deprivation – lacking resources for an acceptable standard of living.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.2 The UK has among the lowest rates of social mobility in Europe and child poverty is persisting for longer and at greater depth. The younger generation are predicted to have poorer quality of life than their parents' generation.
- 3.2 Some families are more likely to be affected by poverty than others. In the UK some ethnic minorities have higher rates of poverty. Data from 2020-2023 shows Bangladeshi (67%), Pakistani (61%) and Black African (40%) families are more likely to be in poverty compared with 24 per cent of families headed by someone of white ethnicity.<sup>10</sup> Child poverty is higher in households where there is a lone parent, where someone is

---

<sup>5</sup> [Contributory-factors-guidance.pdf](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Effects of poverty | CPAG](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Child poverty – RCPCH – State of Child Health](#)

<sup>8</sup> [An unequal playing field: extra-curricular activities, soft skills and social mobility - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Tackling Child Poverty: Developing Our Strategy \(HTML\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>10</sup> [UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

disabled, there are younger children in the household, or larger families (3 or more children).<sup>11</sup>

- 4.2 The UK government has set up a national taskforce to develop and publish a cross-government child poverty strategy aiming to improve children's lives and address the root causes of child poverty. The publication of this is expected imminently.

### **Camden context**

- 5.2 Camden has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country, when housing costs are factored in. An estimated 15,700 children, almost 4 in 10 (39%), are living in poverty after housing costs, making Camden the borough with the fourth-highest rate in London.<sup>12</sup> This is concerning and tackling child poverty is a priority for the council.

- 6.2 Child poverty in Camden varies across the borough. In the south of the borough, the rates of relative poverty (before housing costs) are significantly higher, with Holborn and Covent Garden (43.4%) and St Pancras and Somers Town (38.2%) seeing some of the highest levels. In contrast, northern wards such as Hampstead Town (3.3%) and Frognal (4.3%)<sup>13</sup> have lower levels of child poverty.

- 7.2 There are many drivers behind these difficult financial circumstances. House prices in Camden are amongst the highest in the UK, averaging £797,520 in 2024, with median rent £2,102 per month meaning housing affordability is low. An increased number of families (968 in 2024, compared with 663 in 2023) are in temporary accommodation.<sup>12</sup> 6,940 children in Camden are living in overcrowded conditions, which are linked to negative outcomes such as increased incidence of respiratory disease, poor educational outcomes, and domestic abuse.<sup>14</sup> Temporary accommodation brings its own set of challenges and costs, including repeated removal and storage costs; higher travel expenses to reach schools, health services and workplaces; delays in benefit administration leading to rent arrears; and increased food costs, especially where cooking facilities are limited or unavailable.

- 8.2 A key factor for low-income families with children is welfare benefits levels, specifically the two-child limit and the benefits cap which impose constraints on family incomes. Families in Camden, especially those in private rented accommodation, can be affected by both policies, due to the borough's extremely high housing costs. These policies disconnect the level of need from the support provided, meaning many families receive far less than is required to cover essentials like food, clothing and energy. In Camden, we know at least 3,500 children live in households affected by the two-child limit,

---

<sup>11</sup> [Poverty: facts and figures | CPAG](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Deprivation – JSNA Hub](#)

<sup>13</sup> [4512-8-state-of-the-borough-report-2025-v9-july-amends-1](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Raise Camden Child Health Equity Data Audit](#)

meaning household incomes are likely to be far below what is needed to cover the families' essential costs.

- 9.2 In Camden, a school-based survey suggests 24% of pupils report worrying about their own mental health “quite a lot” or “a lot” and the prevalence of mental health disorders are 33% higher than the national average.<sup>15</sup> Living in low-income households is a risk factor for poor mental health. Research suggests that tackling poverty and preventing long periods of time spent living in poverty are key factors to tackling poor mental health in parents and children.<sup>16</sup>
- 10.2 In Camden, there is significant difference between the percentage of children who require Special Educational Needs (SEN) support or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in the most socioeconomic deprived quintile (21.5%) and the least deprived (12.2%). The majority of children (71%) requiring SEN support or on a EHCP are living in the two most deprived quintiles. While pupils from low-income families are more likely to be identified as having SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), they are less likely to receive support or effective interventions to help to address their needs.<sup>17</sup> Health needs, especially those of children with disabilities, often place further financial strain on families. The Council frequently supports families whose children have undiagnosed needs or are waiting for assessments and services, including EHCPs for appropriate school placements. These health needs often come with extra costs, such as specialist aids, resources, increased energy use or transport expenses.
- 11.2 When health or education services are unable to provide timely support due to long assessment processes or limited capacity, the financial burden grows. Families may face rising costs linked to challenging behaviours or situations where children are not attending school and are instead being cared for at home. In these cases, families can also be subject to punitive measures aimed at improving school attendance, including financial penalties, that create further emotional and financial strain. Children from low-income families with SEND face multiple disadvantages from the very start of their lives.
- 12.2 Whilst employment might represent a way for families to improve their incomes, in many cases entering the workplace or increasing working hours is extremely difficult. We often hear that the lowest income families spend disproportionate amounts of time travelling to school and essential appointments (choosing lower cost, longer travel options) and carrying out time-consuming administration to support their lives, often dealing with multiple local and central government agencies. Additionally, the cost of

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/camden-children-and-young-people-health-needs-assessment-24-25>

<sup>16</sup> [The impacts of poverty on children's social, emotional and behavioural outcomes. - UK Data Service](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Special educational needs and their links to poverty | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

childcare is often prohibitive – families commonly aren't aware of childcare support offered via Universal Credit (UC) and, when they are, the full amount of childcare costs is often not covered. These factors combined mean that many low-income families and, particularly lone parent families, face considerable barriers to accessing employment as a means of improving their income.

- 13.2 To understand the differences and unfairness in child health for children in Camden, University College London (UCL) Institute of Health Equity (IHE) was commissioned to look at our existing data. Their [independent report](#) was published in May 2025, setting out recommendations for the Council, our partners and national government to reduce child poverty and improve the health of children living in the most deprived circumstances in Camden.
- 14.2 The report showed that Camden is one of the most unequal places for young people to grow up in the country. It highlights the structural barriers that children, young people, and their families face including housing, access to services, education, and racism<sup>18</sup>.
- 15.2 Early findings from the Kailo Study (2025) suggest that cost of living pressures on families are felt directly and indirectly in the mental health of children and young people. The Camden [SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) found clear evidence of an intersectionality between identified additional needs in children and material deprivation, and a self-perpetuating cycle of driving further inequalities in educational attendance and attainment.
- 16.2 The long-term impact of child poverty will affect Camden services as failing to address child poverty risks increases the demand for child and adult social services, health care, special educational support, mental health services.

#### 4. Actions we are taking in Camden to combat child poverty

- 1.2 While a national strategy for child poverty is expected imminently, Camden has been playing a leadership role in supporting the development of the strategy, as well as taking early local action and ensuring readiness to respond when it is published.
- 2.2 In recent years, **Camden has made a significant investment in supporting residents, including families, who are being adversely affected by cost-of-living pressures**. Most notably, this has included a £2 million investment in a local Cost of Living Fund to supplement the government-funded Household Support Fund. In 2024/25, 2761 Camden households with children received a grant, averaging 1.7 grants per household and £387 per grant given. This represents £1,850,204 in crisis financial support provided to low-income families in the borough. Additionally, a substantial

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/raise-camden---child-health-equity-data-audit/raise-camden-child-health-equity-data-audit.pdf>

portion of Household Support Funding is directed towards low-income families through Camden's holiday food voucher scheme. Currently, 9,000 households and 16,000 children receive support worth £150 per child, per year, to help cover the additional costs of feeding children during school holidays. The scheme includes all children receiving free school meals, as well as families claiming housing benefit or council tax reduction, and is delivered proactively, without the need for an application.

- 3.2 **Camden's Council Tax Support Scheme** is one of the most generous in the country. Over 16,000 Camden residents on the lowest incomes do not have to pay any Council Tax, as their full liability is met through Council Tax Support. Additionally, there are more than 6,000 further residents that have reduced council tax bills as their income is low.
- 4.2 Although Camden's crisis grants programme is substantial, this support often alleviates immediate needs but does not always achieve longer term financial stability for families.
- 5.2 Modelling from Policy in Practice estimates that £124million of benefits income goes unclaimed by Camden residents every year, due to complexity and stigma of the benefits system. To respond, Camden has developed our own Money Advice Camden service, combining cash grants with access to specialist welfare rights and debt advice to support residents to maximise incomes and increase their financial resilience.
- 6.2 Money Advice Camden staff deliver regular outreach in schools and family hubs across the borough, widening accessing to Camden's financial support and specialist money advice. The service also uses data-driven insights to identify cohorts most at risk of financial hardship and delivers proactive campaigns combining crisis cash grants with welfare benefits and debt advice. In its first year of delivery, Money Advice Camden has found that many families seeking emergency financial support are not claiming all the benefits they're entitled to such as Child Disability Living Allowance, the Universal Credit Disabled Child Element, and the Childcare Costs Element of Universal Credit.
- 7.2 Camden's voluntary and community sector advice agencies also play a key role in maximising family incomes. The Camden Advice Network is central to tackling poverty and supporting family wellbeing through coordinated, community-based advice. Since launching in April 2020, the network has helped over 50,000 residents, securing £50 million in benefits, writing off £1.6 million in debt. Each year, over 10,000 residents receive support, more than half women, many mothers, and around 50% from the Global Majority. Operating across 36 outreach sites including libraries, hospitals, and food banks the network ensures residents can access trusted advice where they already seek help. Over the coming year we will expand partnerships with Family Hubs, deepening early intervention and family-focused support. By linking financial wellbeing, food dignity, and inclusion, Camden's Money First approach creates a more resilient,

fair borough reducing reliance on crisis services and helping families move from survival to security.

8.2 These schemes represent Camden's continued commitment to supporting low-income families through a substantial local welfare assistance offer.

9.2 **Raise Camden** is Camden's strategic child health equity programme, which considers the root causes of widening inequalities for the next generation: child poverty, intergenerational mental health and structural racism and discrimination. In response to the IHE report, the Council has convened a Raise Camden Taskforce of local and national active partners alongside subject matter experts and Camden residents with lived experience to guide the programme's work. The Taskforce will conduct a deep dive into four topics that were raised as challenges in the Raise Camden report: families in temporary accommodation, poverty and school engagement, overcrowded accommodation, and whole family mental health. The challenges being faced cannot be solved by the Council alone. The Taskforce will not only provide expertise but also will enable collective and supportive action as a shared endeavour. The Council has worked with the Young Camden Foundation to ensure that young people's voice and influence is centred in our programme of work [Raise Camden X Young Camden Foundation - Child Health Equity Film](#).

10.2 Raise Camden supports innovation across the Council through partnership with key innovators within and beyond our borough's borders, as a series of innovation hubs or themes. Crucially, this work builds on Camden's strong track record of innovation and positive practice in addressing child poverty, as outlined below.

11.2 Combating child poverty starts before birth and the Council, in partnership with Nesta, has built evidence suggesting child benefit needs to be paid before birth. Camden's **Family Hubs Pregnancy grants** pilot is a clear example of this, designed to address financial strain during pregnancy, which is known to increase maternal stress and negatively affect child outcomes, especially in low-income households. Evidence shows that unconditional financial support during this period can help reduce these risks, and combining financial support with advice and service offers may further strengthen its impact. Using this evidence our pilot provides a £500 unconditional cash transfer offered proactively to low-income Camden parents during the third trimester of pregnancy. The Council utilises an innovative approach using linked NHS and benefits data, removing the need for an application, and reaching out directly to let them know they can receive the grant. Alongside the grant, the pilot is testing the impact of offering parents a personalised introduction to Family Hub services, including financial advice and early years support. It is hoped that the evaluation of this pilot will inform future investment in early intervention for families at risk of hardship and destitution. More broadly, it aims to offer a design blueprint for proactive, preventative support that can



be used to address identified needs across the borough. Since the launch in April 2025, over 200 grants have been delivered to date and early feedback from recipients has been very positive with one parent saying:

*“Your kindness, empathy, and the warm way you approached everything really made a difference to me...I think the Family Hubs project is absolutely brilliant.”*

### **Supporting families in low income and complex social circumstances within early years settings and schools**

- 12.2 **Family hubs** offer a warm welcome to Camden families and are open throughout the year offering advice, guidance and support but also a fun place to drop-in. Through a universal front door, the service actively promotes the engagement of parents and children who have the greatest potential to benefit from services. Family Hubs broaden their reach by meeting the multiple needs of families. UCL Hospital runs follow-up clinics for families with repeat A&E attendances for non-medical reasons, ensuring wider social support needs can be more adequately met. Family hubs host a range of interventions such as parenting courses, stay and play sessions, Camden Kids Talk, support with housing, financial problems by our benefits advice service and our online offer at [families.camden.gov.uk](https://families.camden.gov.uk) are making a positive impact on children's outcomes.
- 13.2 **Health Visiting Immunisation Pathfinder** - Camden has received national funding to recruit and train a health visitor to immunise children who are not being reached through our mainstream vaccination offer in general practice, as well as those residents who may not be registered or engaging at all with universal services. Our data shows that some of these families live in the most deprived areas of the borough, have high levels of distrust with these services. Through this one-year pilot we hope to leverage the trusted, well-established role of health visitors to reach families in their homes, through community events, family hubs and additional assertive outreach to re-engage families, and catch children up on their overdue vaccinations.
- 14.2 **Healthy Start** is a national scheme that provides pre-paid cards to help low-income families access healthy food, milk, infant formula, and vitamins. Camden has continued to promote the scheme with targeted training for Parent and Community Champions, early years staff, health professionals and frontline workers, alongside borough-wide engagement with schools, libraries, children's centres and cost-of-living services, flyers and posters.
- 15.2 **Oral Health** - In collaboration with DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care) and DfE (Department for Education), this year Camden distributed over 5,000 free dental packs to children in early years settings in our most deprived wards, as part of our broader commitment to reducing tooth decay and health inequalities. In November, Camden will use national funding to introduce an oral health supervised toothbrushing

programme to at least 20 additional early years settings in areas of deprivation, substantially increasing the number of children we can reach via local and North Central London funding.

16.2 **School** can be a positive part of life for families experiencing poverty, offering valuable social networks and sources of support. However, some of the specific costs associated with attending school can be difficult to manage for families on the lowest incomes. **Camden schools** work to alleviate the impact of poverty through a combination of academic, pastoral, and material support. They reduce financial barriers by offering free school meals and subsidised activities such as musical instrument tuition funded through Camden Music, subsidised trips, residential journeys and after school and holiday clubs that target pupils who are disadvantaged. Borough wide events such as the Art Biennale, the Schools Music Festival at the Albert Hall, and Camden STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) work experience events ensure Camden students have opportunities to develop cultural capital in meaningful ways. Some Camden schools also provide a base for essential services like food banks and pastoral care including through engagement with our Family Hubs programme, also providing school supplies like stationery and equipment to remove financial burdens. Schools are allocated Pupil Premium Funding specifically to target support at pupils who are financially disadvantaged and use data to track student progress and provide targeted academic support to close achievement gaps. As a result, there are smaller gaps between the academic achievement of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Camden than those seen nationally. Another important focus has been addressing hunger, including the Council funded **Magic Breakfast** scheme enabling more than 3,000 pupils in our more deprived schools to have free breakfast at school every day.

17.2 To enable **Sustainable school clothing swaps** in Camden, we have been providing small grants to encourage schools to set up pre-loved clothing or uniform swap schemes. Primary schools can access up to £2,000 and secondary schools up to £3,000 to set up a scheme or support delivery of an existing scheme. There is a dedicated Sustainable School Clothing Officer to support this work, currently in post until the end of March 2026, with the post and grants funded through the North London Waste Authority windfall. So far, 9 primary and 4 secondary schools have taken up the grants.

18.2 **Closing the Gap on School Attainment** [Camden Learning](#) (a not-for-profit company set up as a joint venture between all Camden state schools and the Council) has been tasked by the Council to implement strategies in collaboration with schools to address the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils.

19.2 Disadvantaged pupils in Camden have continued to perform above national averages across several key stages, with notable improvements in narrowing attainment gaps:

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 71% of pupils achieved a good level of development, with a disadvantaged gap of –15%. This represents a consistent trend and is significantly narrower than the national Free School Meals gap of –21% in 2024, indicating strong early years provision for disadvantaged learners.
- 84% of Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in phonics, with a disadvantaged gap of –10%, outperforming the national gap of –16%.
- Year 2 pupils retaking the phonics check, 90% met the standard, and the disadvantaged gap narrowed further to –6%, suggesting effective early literacy interventions and sustained support for disadvantaged pupils.
- In Key Stage 2, 73% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing, and mathematics, with a disadvantaged gap of –17% (national average –22%). However, at the higher standard (greater depth), the disadvantaged gap widened to –18% (national average of –7%).
- At Key Stage 4, Camden's provisional Attainment 8 score was 48, with a disadvantaged gap of –10%, an improvement from –14% in 2024 and better than national and London averages.
- In English and maths, 63% of pupils achieved a standard pass (grade 4+), with a disadvantaged gap of –21%. While these gaps remain significant, they are narrower than national comparators.
- Finally, at Key Stage 5, the average point score (APS) for A-level entries among disadvantaged pupils rose to 31.4, above the 2024 national average of 30.1. This improvement suggests that Camden's post-16 provision is increasingly effective in supporting disadvantaged learners to achieve strong academic outcomes and progress to further education or employment.

### **Cross-council initiatives to take preventative action on child poverty and living and social circumstances.**

20.2 Under the Camden Missions, work is underway to tackle the impact of poverty. For example, the **Youth Mission** is focused on ensuring that every young person, regardless of background, can access opportunities that support their safety, security, and long-term success. Recognising that no single approach fits all, this Mission combines a universal offer with targeted support for young people furthest from the labour market. [Youth – We Make Camden](#)

21.2 Food poverty is one of the four main **Food Mission** outcomes focusing on the Money First approach to addressing food insecurity, aiming to reduce financial pressure on households by making healthy, affordable food more accessible. One example is the work of Cooperation Town, who are running 12 co-ops for around 240 low-income households (840 people), and will be setting up more. Households save over £1,500

per year through collective purchasing and food surplus, rather than paying retail prices. There is also an ongoing food support offer provided by the voluntary and community sector across Camden, accessible at [“Find Food Support in Camden”](#).

- 22.2 Support to address family poverty will clearly have a direct impact on food poverty. **Camden’s Money First approach** prioritises financial and debt advice as a first line of intervention recognising that improving economic wellbeing requires more than emergency food support.
- 23.2 Through this approach, Camden funds the **Financial Wellbeing Project**, delivered by **Citizens Advice Camden**. The project is in trusted, community-based settings such as food banks, schools, and community centres, ensuring residents can access accredited, independent advice where they already seek help. It promotes early intervention and strengthens links to Good Work Camden, supporting residents into decent work and protecting those affected by welfare reform. This work connects universal family offers such as early years support, free school meals, youth provision, and digital inclusion with targeted help for families in poverty.
- 24.2 The **Estates Mission** brings together colleagues across the Council to improve the health and wellbeing of estate residents so it reaches the same level as other residents in the borough by 2030. An example of this is through **Marmot Estates**. Guided by the Marmot principles, this is a hyper-local, estates-based approach to addressing health inequity through the co-design and co-delivery of test and learn interventions to improve health and wellbeing with residents. The first of its kind, this project is being piloted on two estates for two years from October 2025. The project is in partnership with UCL Institute of Health Equity and sits across both Raise Camden and the Estates Mission.
- 25.2 **The Young Guardians** is part of the Community Champions programme in Regents Park. It is a hyper-local, participant-led engagement programme through which young people from the Regents Park Estate work alongside adult residents to address critical issues through social action and co-produced system change, in collaboration with a strong local network of community organisations, businesses, and Camden Council. The Young Guardians Regent’s Park currently has 14 young people between the ages of 15 and 20 who participate in activities that benefit the local community. For example, designing a peer support study and wellbeing session, for any local young people studying GCSE-A level/BTEC to the Euston Community Hub. They aim to include tutors, as many of our families cannot afford to pay for individual tutors, as well as peer to peer learning, peer support for stress, and space for wellbeing such as exercise and creative activities. A Young Guardian said:
- “Being a guardian is a new experience and while it can sometimes be tiring it is evidently fun and achieving. In my opinion I believe the young guardians have accomplished many feats involving managing and volunteering in events and*

*improving our area, making it more safe. I feel the young guardians are a fantastic group, helping to develop the happiness and safety area for the better.”*

**Breaking intergenerational patterns of mental health** - working closely with Camden's multiple university partners to bring research into practice as Camden's model of mental health.

26.2 **The Kailo Study** is a participatory research and intervention project focusing on the proximal drivers of adolescent mental health and delivered in collaboration with UCL Partners and Citizens UK. A literature review and early engagement with professionals and young people across Camden highlighted the impact of unsuitable housing, connection and belonging, a sense of opportunity and possibility, and family stresses on young people's ability to thrive. The Kailo Study will test an equitable involvement methodology, which proactively enables the least-heard and most-impacted young people to take part with the final report due in August 2026.

## **5. Future plans and opportunities**

- 1.2 The Raise Camden Taskforce will continue to develop policy and initiative proposals to address child poverty over the coming year. This will report in Autumn 2026, providing the foundation for Camden's child poverty strategy. Emerging proposals for further consideration include:
- 2.2 Targeted family and financial support for families in temporary accommodation, as those experiencing destitution and its consequences. Wide support already exists in the borough but is not always joined up or as accessible as it should be. We can work more closely with voluntary sector specialist to support their work and consider more automated approaches to cost-of-living support funds. We are also pursuing specific parenting support programmes for families in temporary accommodation, with a focus on SEND support needs.
- 3.2 The Money Advice Camden service model is still in its early stages, with one year of delivery completed. There is considerable potential to develop new, targeted, and proactive ways of supporting families at risk of poverty and destitution such as those in temporary accommodation, unaware of benefits they are eligible for, and those families with children not attending school.
- 4.2 Promoting healthy child development begins in pregnancy. The experience in Camden, as in other parts of the country, is highly inequitable. Camden's Best Start for Baby programme and Family Hubs Pregnancy Grants show positive

improvements but there is more that we can do to develop community-based and culturally responsive support.

- 5.2 The [NHS 10 year health plan](#) sets out the governments mission to halve the gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest regions, while increasing it for everyone, and “to raise the healthiest generation of children ever.” The government has also committed for neighbourhood health centres to be established in every community, beginning with places where healthy life expectancy is lowest, which correlates strongly with areas where poverty is highest. The partnership of the Council with the NHS through neighbourhood reform offers a strong structural lever to address childhood poverty in the longer term through a prevention and equity-based lens. It also provides an opportunity to further strengthen our work with the VCS sector on addressing childhood poverty.
- 6.2 Baby banks offer a crucial form of materials support for young families, dependent on the availability of donations of certain goods. We are in discussion with partners to develop a more reliable supply line of materials goods from Baby Banks to deliver support for ages and stages of development (such as safer sleeping) and social circumstance (such as occupational therapy support tools). We are keen to investigate partners who provide similar services for older children to meet their wider needs.
- 7.2 Funding from North London Waste Authority for existing sustainable school clothing scheme (grants and dedicated post) ends in March 2026. The Council would like to maintain the support offered through this initiative and are investigating the role of school transitions grants which may be more widely used to meet families’ needs.
- 8.2 Poverty proofing school initiatives [developed in the North-East of England](#) are being explored. These have been shown to improve school attendance and engagement and we are considering how this could be applied to Camden’s schools, and potentially other settings.
- 9.2 We look forward to formalising our developing partnerships in each of the four innovation hub themes. These can then become the vehicles for the delivery of these proposals and further recommendations from the national child poverty strategy:
- Alleviating material deprivation
  - Supporting child development with families in complex social circumstances
  - Breaking intergenerational patterns of mental health
  - Place-based interventions.

## 6. Legal Implications

6.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no legal comments.

## **7. Resource Implications**

7.1 The report highlights the response from Camden Council to combat child poverty, and there have been significant financial investments including working with schools, health and the voluntary and community sector.

7.2 The proposals included in the future plans and opportunities section of this report are likely to have financial implications which will need to be developed and managed. Any decisions on further investment will need to be taken in line with the Council's scheme of delegation.

## **8. Environmental Implications**

1.2 There are no specific environmental implications.