

Update of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care

Health and Adult Social Care Committee 14th July 2026

1. Purpose of the Cabinet Member update

- 1.1. This paper provides a short round of updates from across the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care. It presents an opportunity for the cabinet member to speak directly to the Health and Adult Social Care (HASC) Scrutiny Committee and highlight key pieces of work, both to share successes and identify challenges and opportunities in the coming months. The Committee are invited to consider the information below and ask questions of clarification at the meeting subject to the Chair's discretion. Requests for additional information can be addressed to the relevant director/s outside of the meeting. The Committee may also use the cabinet member updates to inform their scrutiny work planning for the coming year.

2. Adult Social Care (ASC)

2.1. Service Pressures

- 2.2. Adult Social Care continues to experience sustained demand across the service, particularly for new assessments, reviews and occupational therapy. The most significant pressure remains at the front of the system, where increasing numbers of people are waiting for work to be allocated. Once allocated, services are generally able to progress assessments, reviews and support in a timely way, but rising demand means that some people are waiting longer than we would want. Demand is not evenly distributed across the borough, with neighbourhood teams experiencing different levels of pressure. In particular, South Neighbourhood has seen a notable increase in demand during the year, adding to the pressures on assessment and allocation. Mental health services are also experiencing increasing demand and growing waiting times, reflecting both rising need and the ongoing embedding of new systems and ways of working following the transfer from the NHS Trust.

- 2.3. Despite these pressures, Adult Social Care continues to prioritise people according to need, with teams maintaining oversight of risk while people are waiting for support. Alongside managing current demand, work is continuing to strengthen the front door model, improve flow through the system and reduce waiting times where possible. Additional improvements are also underway to strengthen data quality and oversight in areas such as housing adaptations, equipment services and Community Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

2.4. Safeguarding

- 2.5. Adult safeguarding remains a significant area of activity and demand for Adult Social Care. Referral rates into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) have increased substantially, including following changes to mental health

social work arrangements since June 2025, with more concerns requiring screening, risk assessment and timely decisions about the most appropriate response. The nature of concerns also remains complex, with themes including mental health, self-neglect, domestic abuse, homelessness, exploitation, modern slavery and provider related concerns. The service continues to focus on early identification of risk, timely decision making, and ensuring that people are listened to and involved wherever possible in decisions about their safety and wellbeing.

- 2.6. A review of MASH and safeguarding arrangements is underway to ensure the front door safeguarding response remains effective, proportionate and sustainable. This includes work to strengthen pathways, improve consistency in decision making and recording, and clarify how safeguarding concerns are managed across Adult Social Care and with key partners. Camden is also contributing to the development of the Safeguarding Adults Board priorities, with a continued emphasis on prevention, partnership working, learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews, Making Safeguarding Personal and improving responses to emerging risks such as exploitation and modern slavery.
- 2.7. The Camden Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) has continued to strengthen multi agency safeguarding governance across the borough. The Board has recently approved the Colleen Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR), which investigates the death of a 31-year-old woman who died within two days of being released from prison while residing in interim hotel accommodation. The review aims to enhance adult safeguarding practices by identifying factors that enable or hinder effective protection, with the goal of removing barriers and preventing harm. The review has now been published, and learning is being taken forward by partners and frontline services on themes identified such as mental health, complex needs, self-neglect and the right to entry.
- 2.8. Work is underway to finalize the SAB Priorities for the upcoming year, focusing on improving frontline practice, enhancing prevention and engagement, strengthening quality assurance, and learning from experience. Additionally, work has commenced on the statutory SAB annual report for 2025-26, which will be completed later this summer.
- 2.9. **Safe and Secure Transitions**
- 2.10. This work is co-led by Adult Social Care and Integrated Youth Services and is about strengthening the cross-service response for young people supported by Children's Services who require ongoing support into adulthood. Camden's broad offer of support currently includes well-established pathways that work well but access to these has historically been restricted to certain cohorts. Since mid-2025 the focus of the work has been on bringing professionals together regularly to surface issues and develop a response to the challenge, through a monthly online space and periodic retrospective deep dives. The future of the work will be about taking learning forward, joining up with related work and finding the opportunities for testing a new approach where appropriate.

2.11. Recommissioning Reach Out Mental Health Alliance

- 2.12. Officers have engaged extensively with residents and key partners on a new commissioning strategy for Camden's prevention and early intervention mental health offer, Reach Out Camden. The current model is an 'alliance' contract that creates more incentives for collaboration between the council, partners and the commissioned providers, and has included the involvement of people with living experience of mental ill health in making decisions about the design and delivery of the services provided.
- 2.13. The new strategy seeks to expand the reach of the alliance, to build on the existing relationships and trust the voluntary and community sector partners have with Camden communities and enable more people to get help early. Good mental health and wellbeing for our residents is essential to realising many of the ambitions in We Make Camden and Reach Out will focus on Estates and Neighbourhoods Missions in particular to ensure the work it does is embedded deeply in our communities.

2.14. Update on the accommodation plan

- 2.15. Officers have made strong progress in furthering the aims of the Supporting People Connecting Communities accommodation plan, with a shift to an 'all age' and 'cross council' approach. The 'All-Age Accommodation Plan' is working across departments on the basis that "we all want to live in a place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for one another". There is a shortage of accessible, bespoke and affordable housing for people who draw on care and support. This includes a range of people, from children, for example those with disabilities and additional needs, through to older age, where people want to live connected, independent, healthy lives for as long as possible. Our housing and support models need to address these growing needs alongside complex challenges in children and adult social care, homelessness, housing and development sectors.
- 2.16. Officers have been working on three interconnected priorities as part of the plan:
1. Developing an accommodation pipeline to meet current and future needs
 2. Sustaining and managing our current accommodation assets
 3. Developing new models of care & support to shift from reactive spot purchasing to value-driven commissioning
- 2.17. Progress includes:
- Recruitment and induction of the new strategic lead for the plan, working across children and adult services, and in partnership with housing, development, finance, property and other services
 - Supporting a Specialist Housing bid as part of Camden's approach to the London Social and Affordable Homes Programme 2026-36
 - Developing with finance colleagues a strong 'invest to save' case to ensuring we have the right accommodation and support in place for our residents, to

reduce the need for people to move out of the borough to have their needs met, which can be dislocating for people, harder for officers to quality assure and, typically, costs substantially more to the council.

3. Health and Wellbeing

3.1. Neighbourhood Health Plans

3.2. Neighbourhood Health Plans (NHPs) are a new requirement set out in the national Neighbourhood Health Framework (March 2026), which asks local authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to jointly develop plans for delivering more integrated, community-based health and care. The aim is to support the wider NHS 10 Year Plan ambition of a neighbourhood health service that provides more personalised, preventative care closer to where people live, improves outcomes, and reduces health inequalities through coordinated, multi-agency working.

3.3. The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB Board) has a central role in developing these plans locally, ensuring they are aligned with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and place-based priorities. In July, the Board will receive an introductory item setting out the national requirements, local context, and proposed approach to developing Camden's Neighbourhood Health Plan, ahead of more detailed development work through 2026/27 and adoption of a formal plan in 2027/28.

3.4. Shape Up for men, with Arsenal in the Community

3.5. We know that men are less likely to engage with health improvement initiatives than women, but there is strong evidence that working through sports clubs can support overweight men to significantly reduce their weight. Camden has been working with Arsenal in the Community since 2022 to develop the Shape Up programme and then promote each of the 12 week courses which include learning about good nutrition and circuits based exercise, alongside helpful behaviour change tips.

3.6. 11 Shape Up courses have been run so far in Camden, with more than half of completers losing 5%+ of their starting weight (clinically significant weight loss that will directly improve their health), and three quarters losing 3%+ of their starting weight. Participants report increased physical activity levels, diet and boosts to their self-esteem. Social connections develop in the group-time, and via WhatsApp outside, illustrated well in the feedback from one participant:- "the friendships I've made here have been the heartbeat of the project for me. I've always been a social butterfly, but these connections went deeper than just meeting new faces. We shared our experiences and supported each other through the highs and lows, creating a real feedback loop of advice and growth."

3.7. Pilot of Digital NHS Health Checks, for people aged 40-74

- 3.8. Cardiovascular disease is the biggest cause of death both nationally and in Camden. NHS Health Checks are a 5-yearly 'MOT' for 40-74 year olds, commissioned by public health teams and delivered in general practice, with the aim of detecting and preventing cardiovascular risk factors and disease. Studies have shown the programme is effective at reducing all-cause mortality. Delivery of Health Checks in Camden has been strong, exceeding London and England averages, but inequalities persist, with lower uptake particularly among men and younger eligible age groups.
- 3.9. As a result, we are continually looking to improve and enhance our local offer. Aligning with NHS ambitions to increase use of digital app-based technology, Camden was successfully selected as a test site for a Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) pilot, to offer Health Checks via the NHS App, on a smart phone, tablet or computer (alongside the face-to-face offer). In this way, the pilot provides greater convenience and access for those who are digitally able, with better access to information and empowerment to self-manage health, while freeing up practice-based appointments for those who need it the most. We are currently working with 6 GP practices across the borough on the pilot, and early data showing that app uptake is indeed higher among men and younger age eligible age groups. We know that an app-based solution will not be right for everyone, which is why we continue to explore other ways to improve our health checks programme and detect cardiovascular risk factors earlier, for example via workplace-based health check events for manual workers, and on our Health and Wellbeing Bus.