



Speaking up for better care

Healthwatch Camden annual report 2025/26

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**Director
Healthwatch Camden
Stephen Heard**



I'd like to say a massive thank you to the team, our board, our partners and, most of all, to the people of Camden, who have entrusted us with their experiences and views over the years.

In these last months before March 2027, we remain, as always, deeply committed to serving Camden and will be running a series of exciting health events starting in September— please check out our website for more information!"

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Heard', written over a dark blue background.

Message from our chair

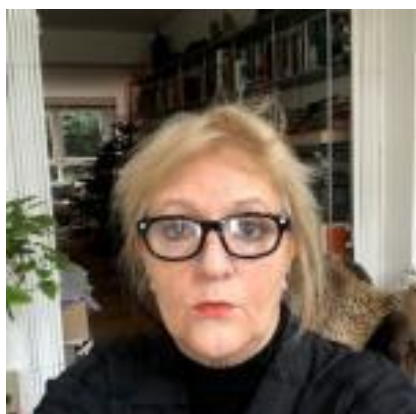
Working to save lives in Camden

This year our work has primarily focused on three large **public health cancer campaigns**, working with the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA).

We have reached thousands of residents, amplifying messaging on the national bowel cancer and lung cancer screening campaigns. We have also worked on the national **Help Us Help You** campaign, the NCLCA stating that *“Healthwatch Camden...have been contributing towards the National Cancer Plan ambition of diagnosing 75% of cancers at Stage I or II by 2035”*.

However, our research has still been ongoing, with positive impact and forward action recorded from our report into Bengali women’s experience of diabetes, as well as our research into seldom heard groups’ experience of local **sexual health** services.

Finally, we have been successful in maintaining an on-going presence in the press in the continuing discussions on **vaping** and **endometriosis**, having produced reports and won significant coverage on both issues last year.



Chair
Philippa Robinson



What we have achieved over this last year is remarkable, including reaching hundreds of thousands of people in our public health campaigns. But there is no room for complacency. Over the next nine months, we remain 100% committed to serving the people of Camden, who are at the heart of all we do.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Philippa Robinson', with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

About us

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone locally gets the care they need.



Our mission

To make sure that people's experiences help make health and care better in Camden.



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve in Camden.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence, locally and wider.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for the people of Camden. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to Power.

What do people say about us?

“ I appreciated the opportunity to share my lived experience of endometriosis and to contribute to research that aims to raise awareness and improve understanding. The team showed genuine interest in the subject, and it was positive to see endometriosis being taken seriously and discussed publicly.”

Emma C, local resident

“ I contacted Healthwatch Camden about 6 months ago for support, and they were absolutely fantastic! Super helpful, empathetic, and they went above and beyond to address my concerns and provided amazing guidance. Highly recommend!”

Ana Marcelino, local resident

“ Healthwatch’s ability to engage local people from all parts of our community in their research meant we were able to hear from people whose voices are not always heard, which directly led to a series of recommendations for system improvement.”

Julia Mills, Head of Children's Commissioning & Health Partnerships,
London Borough of Camden

“ Community-based, face-to-face engagement in trusted local settings was highly effective in building trust and providing space for conversations, to improve awareness and understanding of the national bowel and lung cancer screening programmes. Your strong local partnerships and community knowledge have enabled campaign messages to be shared widely in a culturally relevant and engaging way.”

Claire Cassidy, Senior Project Manager, NHS North Central London
Cancer Alliance

Our year in numbers

The focus this year has been on public health campaigning, and we are proud of the record number of people we were able to reach. We currently employ 4 staff and our work is supported by dozens of volunteers.

Reaching out



- We are proud to have reached over 598,000 people (an increase of 314,000 on last year) through our public health campaigns.
- Less of a focus for us this year, however 209 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.
- We carried out multiple in-person visits to community and other local groups.

Saving lives & championing your voice



We worked on three major public health campaigns for the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA), on the early signs of cancer, bowel cancer and lung cancer, working to raise awareness and ultimately save lives locally.

In addition, we published a report about the impact of diabetes upon Bengali women, which can be found on our website, www.healthwatchcamden.co.uk (in the reports section). We also carried out some research on the experiences of sexual and reproductive health services.

Statutory funding



We are funded by the London Borough of Camden. In 2025/26 we received £187,000, which is the same as last year.

Working together for change

We have worked alongside many organisations over the last year to ensure local people's experiences are heard and key inequalities are put under the spotlight. A few projects are highlighted below.

Reaching seldom heard groups

The North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) chose us to implement three national cancer awareness campaigns in Camden, reaching hard to reach groups, having cited our:



"expertise and trusted community relationships" as well as our "collaborative work with local people".

Impact on services from research into Sexual Health



In 2025, we carried out a research project into how seldom-heard groups', including residents experiencing homelessness and or drug/alcohol addiction, experience Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in Camden.

As a result of this research, Camden Council commissioned a full review into its Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, focusing on inclusivity, citing that "everyone – regardless of age, gender, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, or background can access high quality care".

Impact on services from endometriosis report



"The NHS is about to trial some community-based gynaecology clinics in Camden and this work is being designed with conscious thought given to addressing issues flagged in HWC's reports and research around women not being listened to and the importance of trauma-informed care etc. The Council is also investing in a test and learn women and girls nurse post to do more outreach, community-based work around menstrual health. These actions were directly shaped by findings in Healthwatch's reports". London Borough of Camden

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, as well as the wider public, using patient feedback to shape services, for example:

Raising awareness by bringing experiences to life



Using personal experiences to help save lives

We were able to work with Ana, a local resident who courageously shared her cancer journey with us. Ana gave us permission to use her story to inspire and help others. We shared Ana's experience with the North Central London Cancer Alliance and with Camden's Cancer Screening Group.

Mother: Get a second opinion if you're in pain

A WOMAN with breast cancer stressed the importance of getting a second opinion as she backed a campaign for the public and to delay checking out a bodily change, writes Zim Four.



We also secured a feature on Ana in the London newspaper, The Camden New Journal (see left). This paper has a readership of over 160K people. The article also touched on key cancer messages, aimed at increasing early-stage diagnosis rates and saving lives.

Getting services to involve the public



Sharing under-represented experiences to help shape local services

We were able to carry out in-depth interviews with over 60 local diabetic Bengali women on their experiences of having diabetes in Camden. We were pleased that we were able to speak to so many women in-depth.



This was a result of a targeted and innovative recruitment approach, including running a Mehndi stall (see left) which offered free hand art at the Camden Bangladesh Mela.

Our subsequent [report](#) highlighted unique and important issues faced by diabetic Bengali women in Camden, including the need for more diabetic-friendly cooking classes. We will be running such a class later this year. The report was also positively received, with the view to shaping services, by the *Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee*.

Improving care over time



After publishing our [Living with Endometriosis in Camden Report](#), in 2024, Camden Council reached out recently to let us know that this report has led to three service changes in Camden:

- Funding a new test and learn women and girls' nurse post, to do more outreach and community-based work around menstrual health and contraception.
- The NHS trial of community-based gynaecology clinics in Camden is being designed with "conscious thought given to addressing issues flagged in Healthwatch Camden's reports and research around women not being listened to and the importance of trauma-informed care etc".



Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community, including people who are:

- elderly and vulnerable
- white with economic disadvantage
- experiencing health and unemployment issues
- experiencing dementia
- living with food and financial insecurity
- homeless and/or with alcohol or drug issues
- gay men who are HIV+
- from ethnic minority groups including Somali women, the Bengali community and the South Asian community
- experience multiple disadvantages

People's experiences help us to know what's working in Camden and what isn't, so we can give feedback to: • Camden Council • North Central London Integrated Care Board • North Central London Cancer Alliance • Our local MPs



Listening to your experiences

Shining a spotlight onto the medical and social challenges for Diabetic Bengali women

Diabetes is the second most common long-term condition in Camden. It is especially problematic among Asian ethnic groups who have a higher prevalence of diabetes. 4.3% of Camden residents are Bangladeshi, making them the largest single minority ethnic group in Camden. We wanted to understand more about how this group experiences diabetes in Camden. We were pleased to recruit over 60 women to take part in in-depth interviews about their lives.



Key things we heard



**Only
34%
women**

Felt they had received enough information about managing or preventing diabetes from healthcare professionals in Camden.



We are sad, and I am scared as I don't want to end up like my dad taking insulin and kidney failure."

What difference did this make?

- We are facilitating later this year a hands-on, Bengali and diabetes-friendly cooking class, set in the community, which was one of the report's recommendations.
- The report was widely shared with local community groups, all stakeholders and was downloaded 30 times.
- The report was well received by the *Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee* who will be looking at how it can influence provision

Listening to your experiences

Shining a spotlight onto the provision gap for young people navigating sexual health

It is crucial that young people are safeguarded and that they are equipped with information and tools to develop the skills necessary to make healthy decisions about their sexual health, including understanding what healthy relationships look like, as well as abuse.

Our report into young people's experience of sexual health in Camden published in 2024 has had a big impact on Camden's sexual health provision for young people.

Key things we heard



**Only 19%
of young
people**

Said they went to a sexual health clinic or to see the school nurse, when asked about where they went for sexual health information.



It is focused around contraception and STIs which is very important, but doesn't touch much on violence or healthy relationships."



"I don't speak to anyone. I ask Google".

What difference did this make?

Camden Council recently confirmed that as direct result of this Healthwatch Camden report we have seen a number of changes to services including:

- Development of a new '**intimate lives**' policy to support conversations about sexual health and relationships with groups of residents working with social care. Also, more focus in this area on the health of women and girls.
- More targeted contraception outreach to communities at risk.
- More sexual health vaccinations for communities at risk.
- A new investment of a test and learn women and girls nurse post to do more outreach, community-based work around menstrual health and contraception.

Reaching and hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Camden. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services.

This year, for example, we have reached different communities by:

- Holding a workshop on the early signs of cancer and feeding this back to the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA).
- Making sure different more vulnerable groups in Camden can properly access local Sexual and Reproductive Health Services.



Helping seldom heard communities to recognise the early signs of cancer

As part of the national campaign **Help Us Help You**, we worked with a variety of different groups to raise awareness of the early signs of cancer. We achieved this through engagement, press and marketing, reaching over 160,000 people, including those who are:

- elderly and vulnerable
- white with economic disadvantage
- experiencing health and unemployment issues
- experiencing dementia
- living with food and financial insecurity

We held dedicated events at a variety of different community centres including specific events at Castlehaven Community Centre, Holy Sepulchre Church, Euston Food Bank and via the Camden Health Bus, which visits the most economically deprived areas of the borough.

What difference did this make?

Having reached over 160,000 people, including a feature in a London paper, we can be sure that this campaign will have an impact on early cancer diagnosis rates in Camden, but as with previous campaigns it will take time before we can have sight of that data.

However, looking at the impact of one of our dedicated engagement events, at the Castlehaven Community Centre, we found the workshop had successfully changed the perceptions around early cancer signs:

Before

- only 9% of attendees knew the possible signs of cancer
- and only 9% of attendees felt confident to explain their symptoms to a GP

After

- 93% of attendees knew the possible signs of cancer
- and 100% of attendees felt confident to explain symptoms to a GP



Reaching and hearing from all communities

Increasing Bowel Cancer Screening uptake

As part of the national campaign to increase bowel cancer screening, we worked with a variety of different groups to raise awareness of the early signs of cancer. **We achieved this through engagement, press and marketing reaching at least 275,000 people.** Groups we particularly addressed in this campaign included

- Asian women
- carers including older male carers
- communities likely to experience economic and social deprivation
- people experiencing mental and physical disabilities
- the Irish community, particularly older members

We held dedicated events at a variety of different community centres and the Camden Health Bus, as well as producing a British Sign Language Bowel Cancer information video.



What difference did this make?

Having successfully reached 47,000 people, we also reached an additional number of residents through creating an accessible and fun short video, with British Sign Language.

The video was shown by pharmacists on in-store screens. It was also screened in libraries, various community centres, including Camden Disability Action and Arsenal Football Club.



Looking at reach, we know that marketing benchmarks state that between 58% to 84% people notice a video screen in a pharmacist. So, we can expect to reach between 228,000 (58%) to 330,000 (84%) pharmacy visitors*.

**There are a total of 109 pharmacists (61 in Camden and 48 in Islington) in Camden and Islington where the video was distributed. Each has an average number of visits of 40,000 a year, which is 3,300 a month. Number of pharmacists x 3,300 is 392,400 video views, from which is calculated the reach of 58% and 84%.*

Reaching and hearing from all communities

Saving lives from Lung Cancer

We were commissioned by the North Central London Cancer Alliance to raise awareness of Camden's Lung Cancer Screening programme, which helps to save lives by being able to test and diagnose lung cancer. We targeted a number of groups for this important campaign, including the following:

- the Irish community, particularly older members
- Asian women
- carers including older male carers
- communities likely to experience economic and social deprivation
- people experiencing mental and physical disabilities

We held dedicated engagement events at Euston Food Bank and The London Irish Centre, amongst other places, but we also decided to stage a live gospel choir event inside the main concourse of Kings Cross Station on a busy lunchtime in March 2026.

What difference did this make?

The lung cancer gospel event caught the attention of the Camden New Journal, ultimately reaching 160,000 through their readership.

We were able to engage with around 100 people on the day - talking about the life saving importance of lung cancer screening. We were also able to have our messages experienced by hundreds more people who were passing through the station.

The professional gospel choir, Eden Grandeur, sang songs on the theme of breath to highlight that even if your breathing is easy and pain free, lung cancer can still be growing. That is why the Lung Cancer Screening Programme saves so many lives.



Over this last year, we were pleased to have maintained an ongoing presence in the local press on key issues we have campaigned on.

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Support the CNJ by signing up to: newjournal.substack.com

Camden New Journal Thursday 5 March 2026

Proper help for endometriosis sufferers is long overdue

IT is a crippling health condition affecting millions of women across this country, and yet it remains shrouded in silence, minimised in offices, and misunderstood by those in power.

Healthwatch Camden was right to shine a light on endometriosis at the end of 2024. But awareness alone is not enough. Women do not need patronising and sympathetic nods, they need structural change.

Endometriosis is not just bad period pain. It is a chronic, life-altering disease in which tissue similar to the lining of the womb grows elsewhere in

CamdenNewJournal Comment

the body, responding to monthly cycles and triggering relentless bleeding, inflammation and agony.

There is no cure. Treatment is often limited to blunt-force pain relief or invasive surgery. And the average diagnosis time? Nearly nine years. Nine years of being dismissed, doubted and told it is all in their heads.

In 2024, we reported on a mother from Camden Town who described being gaslighted by employers, health professionals and even friends – made to feel as though she was exaggerating, as though her suffering was melodrama. That was not an isolated story. It was emblematic of a system that trivialises women's pain. Now,

another woman's life has been turned upside down by the same condition, and her legal challenge may finally force a reckoning (see page 14). It should not take court action for basic dignity to be afforded.

This week, as we mark International Women's Day, the slogans and social media posts ring hollow unless they are matched with concrete demands. Employers must be given strict, enforceable guidance on how to support staff with endometriosis. The condition should be fully recognised as a disability where symptoms are chronic

and debilitating. That recognition is not about labels; it is about rights – legal protection, reasonable adjustments, and freedom from discrimination. No one with this disease should feel ashamed or fearful about taking time off. We should be demanding a minimum of two days' paid leave a month for those experiencing severe symptoms. That is not radical. It is realistic. It is humane.

Flexible working, remote options and understanding line management should be standard, not exceptional. And let us be honest: if men

were routinely doubled over in pain, bleeding heavily and still expected to get on with their working lives as if nothing was happening, there would be national outrage. Policies would be drafted in weeks. Resources would be found.

Enough of the whispers. Endometriosis is real, it is brutal, and it is time workplaces caught up with that reality.

Recognition, protection and practical support are not optional extras. They are overdue – and women should accept nothing less.

Camden New Journal Thursday 29 May 2025

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NEWS 11

Vape ban: it's everything must blow!

VAPERS have been scrambling to stockpile their favourite products as shopkeepers unload disposable devices with big discounts ahead of a ban.

The sale and supply of all single-use disposable vapes in shops and online will be illegal in the UK from Monday.

Instead of throw-away devices, the nicotine-delivery devices can only be legally sold if they are able to be refilled and recharged.

The legislation was enacted following a public outcry over the dramatic rise in young people becoming addicted to nicotine, and to keth throwaway battery-operated products that are routinely causing fires in homes, street bins and rubbish trucks.

But is any of it going to make any real difference? Mark Gates, from the campaign group We Vape, said there was "no point having new rules if there is no one there to enforce it". He said: "Clearly some companies are going to change their product slightly to get round the law."

by TOM FOOT and VIKTOR GELBMAN

"And then there is the issue of enforcement: there is no point having new rules if no one is checking or on it. But the government can't just be playing 'whackamole' with shopkeepers. They are not dealing with the underlying issues."

Mr Gates, whose campaign group has highlighted the widespread sale of illegal vapes in shops all across the capital, suggested a licensing scheme for vape sellers, similar to pubs with alcohol, that could raise funds to boost trading standards resources.

But he said his biggest fear was that large numbers of people would return to smoking tobacco, adding: "Many of us have returned to the convenience."

Celebrated as an effective way to stop smoking tobacco, vapes' popularity has also led to a massive surge in nicotine addiction among young people.

A report by Camden



Healthwatch last year found that half teenagers who started using vapes had never smoked before. Despite the ban on disposable vapes, the new-style devices are still being produced in brightly coloured packaging with sugary and fruity flavours popular with teenagers.

And vape sellers told the New Journal how companies are creating new product lines that meet new criteria laid down by the government but appear almost identical – and just as attractive – to ones soon to be judged illegal.

The cost of buying new-style vape refill pods is also almost the same as buying a brand new device – meaning most people will simply buy a new one instead of bothering to refill. Jami Jaund, who works in a vape shop that opened last week in Camden Town, said: "Lots of people are stockpiling the disposable vapes at the moment – one customer just bought 40 boxes." But he said sales had massively dropped off after the announcement of the vape ban, adding: "We used to sell them a lot,

and now it has dropped around 50 per cent."

He said the ban would continue to hit sales, adding that people were often "too lazy" to think about refilling and recharging their devices.

Jagmohan Singh, owner of a shop called ME in Camden Town, said he was only aware about the ban through the news but said he was in support of it, adding: "The best thing is if the world stops smoking."

Kola Gani, a worker at Camden Food & Wine, said he was expecting to lose in the region of £500-£600 in stock but he

also said he "feels good about the ban".

He said he thought customers would use their money on groceries and booze, which result in less of an immediate profit, but are bought more often.

Edam Rubim, a worker at Vaped Out Camden Town, suggested the liquid used in refillable vapes tastes worse than the pre-filled variety. Stephen Heard, Director of Healthwatch Camden said: "It's an encouraging step in the right direction, but does not go far enough. The ban currently is just on disposable vapes

Shopkeepers are selling off disposable vaping devices ahead of a ban that will come into force on Monday. The old and new products are almost identical

and is not restrictive enough to have a profound impact on vaping and the health risks associated with it. It will likely open the door for illicit sales of disposable vapes locally and online."

The government's environment secretary, Steve Reed, said: "Single-use vapes get kids hooked on nicotine and blight our high streets, and we won't stand for this any longer."

A Camden Council spokesperson said: "Over the past year, our Trading Standards Team has visited over 150 businesses to prepare for this change and will continue to carry out this work when the ban is in place. This includes checking new variations of vapes on sale. "We've also invested further into our services to reduce vaping and smoking in the borough – particularly amongst young people."

14 NEWS

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Camden New Journal Thursday 14 August 2025

Healthwatch-up may see loss of 'independent public voice'

THE chief executive of Camden's health watchdog warned that government reforms could remove an important "independent public voice" and champion of some of the borough's most vulnerable people.

Camden Healthwatch's Stephen Heard said he was busy "rallying support" for his organisation that is set to be axed as part of a 10-year health plan unveiled by the Labour government earlier this year.

Health secretary Wes Streeting had said the cuts were because the NHS needed "more doers and fewer checkers" – but details beyond the minister's headline-grabbing statements are vague.

Mr Heard told the New Journal: "There is disap-

by TOM FOOT

pointment that the independent voice of patients is being put under threat. It is extremely concerning because we don't know how it will look in the future.

We are concerned that people at the sharp end of health inequalities in Camden are going to suffer. A lot of what we do is about taking those people's concerns forward. People at the highest end, or people living with disabilities, they might not be able to access or read information as easily might.

"We help people with how to access services, how to respond to requests for documents. We ensure people don't miss out and are simply left at the mercy of what

they are being told." On what might replace Healthwatch, he added: "We don't know if it will be something more automated – through the NHS app. If that's the case, this is a huge red flag. There are a vast number of people who struggle with digital inclusion. The intention has been relayed that the NHS app will grow in prominence and there will be more of a facility to feed back through the app."

Healthwatch is a statutory body that can help and support people with barriers to accessing care, and those wanting to challenge poor decisions. It lobbies authorities on patients' behalf and publishes in-depth reports about the borough's health landscape. Mr Heard said it



Stephen Heard

provided an important role in preventing illness by nurturing a population that is more clued-up about how services work and what is out there. It is expected the role of representing patients' concerns will fall onto councils and also the Integrated Care Boards, mega structures that decide how NHS fund-

ing is spent. Critics of this system have suggested that the health service will effectively be "marking its own homework."

Mr Heard said Healthwatch boosted volunteer engagement in the NHS and helped dozens of people find out about work in social and healthcare, adding: "We are the antithesis of bureaucracy."

On top of aiming to fight the corner of the public, Healthwatch has also published a series of in-depth reports into issues affecting patients. Recent publications have looked at the addiction impact of vaping on young people, the difficulties in finding NHS dental treatment and also living with endometriosis.

With six members of full-time staff, Camden Healthwatch has signed an open letter from 131 other bodies that said: "Since 1974 there has been continuous parliamentary support for independent public voice initiatives being able to hold services to account. Therefore, we urge you to reconsider this direction."

A Department for Health and Social Care statement said: "These changes will make things clearer for patients and give them a stronger voice."

"10 Year Health Plan will bring patient care into the 21st Century, using tech and AI to make checks more rigorous and efficient and ensure we never turn a blind eye to failure."

Meteor display for stargazers

STARGAZERS at the Hampstead Observatory were tuning their telescopes towards one of the night sky's most spectacular phenomena last night (Wednesday).

The Perseids meteor shower sees around 100 super-fast fireballs speed past Earth leaving a magnificent trail of dust behind. It is expected to last until August 24, but this week is the best time to try and spot it.

The Hampstead Observatory's advice for "best viewing" is around 2am and to look "straight up" while "lying flat on your back".

It added: "For those who wish to watch the dawn approach look east and you will see Venus and Jupiter in conjunction." The observatory, near Whitehouse Pond, has recently bought a new telescope ahead of its reopening in October.

Information and signposting

This year we are proud to say that we have reached out to over 598,000 people to share advice or public health messages.

We have helped people by:

- Explaining in clear, plain-English terms the key life-saving messages around the early signs of cancer, as well as lung and bowel screening.
- Bringing to light the medical journeys of local residents to help make an emotional connection with the public, to bring home the importance of taking up cancer screening offers.
- Showing our engaging public information videos in Camden's libraries and pharmacists.
- Bringing a light touch to much of our material, with notable successes being the popular bowel cancer screening magnets which bore a nature design, one more aimed at men, the other more at women.



Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given hundreds of hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Visited communities to share messages on diabetes.
- Shared life saving cancer public health messages at many different types of events and festivals.
- Collected experiences and supported communities to share their views.
- Gave advice and help on individual concerns.



Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

Our volunteers have been able to learn much from their generous donation of time to us at Healthwatch Camden. We are so grateful to everyone who has been part of our team here.

Volunteering as part of her degree in *Biology and Studio Art*, Addison Sapp, 21, says she loved her time volunteering for Healthwatch Camden.

"My internship with Healthwatch Camden has been one of the most influential experiences in shaping my future career in healthcare.

I learned how patient voices can drive meaningful improvements within healthcare systems and the whole experience challenged me to think beyond the clinical setting and recognize the importance of advocacy, communication, and trust in patient care. As someone currently working as an Emergency Services Technician in a Level 1 Trauma Centre, hearing these stories helped me better understand the barriers patients may face - long before they arrive in the emergency department'.

Addison



Hei Yiu Jessie Lam, 26 years old, is a UCL MSc Global Health and Development student

"Talking to people in Camden has helped me get to know the diverse groups here, people's daily lives, and their thoughts on healthcare. Throughout this journey, I have felt well supported and guided by my volunteer supervisor. I am very happy to contribute to public health and put what I have learnt into practice."

Hei Yiu Jessie Lam



Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, please do reach out to us. We'd love to have you work with us to support local residents in Camden.



www.healthwatchcamden.co.uk/volunteer/



0207 383 2407



info@healthwatchcamden.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from the London Borough of Camden under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£187,000		
Additional income	£18,536		
Total income	£205,536	Total Expenditure	£192,165

Additional income is broken down into:

- £12,000 received from the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) for work on cancer awareness to be delivered across 2024/2025.
- £8,800 received from North Central London Integrated Care Board for Hypertension and heart health awareness campaigns to be delivered across 24/25.

NB additional income across some projects spanned across more than one financial year therefore the total for the projects may differ to the actual amount used or utilised in that financial year, due to gradual, budgeted spending.

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Collaboration with NCL representative Healthwatch	£2,000
Total	£2,000

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

Until March 2027, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people from the most vulnerable groups, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to deliver better care.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. To hand over our important research and findings to the PCN who is taking over Patient Voice.
2. To hold a series of exciting community events which will target the communication of key report recommendations, as well as general public health information.
3. To professionally wind down HWC and communicate with the public and our stakeholders about this transition of our work to the PCN, leading up to our closure in March 2027.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Camden, 85-87 Bayham Street, London NW1 0AG

Healthwatch Camden uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 6 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2025/26, the Board met four times and made decisions on matters such as working with the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) on a cancer awareness campaign. Also working with Public Health Camden to complete a specialist piece of listening work on views and experiences of local Sexual Health Services.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insights into their experience of using services.

During 2025/26, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish the report on our website and publicise it through our newsletter and social media platforms.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We are pleased to say that no local providers refused requests for information or recommendations.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

For example, we take information to the local Health and Wellbeing Board, and to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB). For example, we work alongside Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Islington, sitting on the Primary Care Contracting Committee.

In addition, we share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Camden is represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board by Stephen Heard, Director of Healthwatch Camden.

Healthwatch Camden is represented at the North Central London Integrated Care Partnerships by Healthwatch Enfield.

Social Value

Adding Social Value to Our Services

Healthwatch Camden delivered an estimated £1.35 million in social value for the 2025/26 period, representing a significant return on investment for local public health commissioners. Which is over £6.50 returned in social value per £1 of funding. This impact was anchored by £280,000 in volunteer-led community capital via our Healthwatch Camden Champions, alongside major local health economy savings.

These financial returns were achieved by driving £390,000 in preventative value through bowel and lung cancer screening campaigns, alongside £360,000 unlocked by streamlining local pathways for sexual health and endometriosis care. The remaining value was achieved through targeted health inequality research (£210,000) and cross-sector third-sector data sharing (£110,000), ensuring Camden Council investments actively reduce clinical strain across the local integrated care system.

Social Value Pillar & Initiative	Core Impact Metrics & Strategic Focus	Estimated Social Value
Volunteer & Community Capital	- Scaling up the local Healthwatch Camden Champions initiative. - Calculation maps total public engagement hours and visits	£280,000
Preventative Cancer Awareness Interventions	- Boosting NHS Bowel Cancer Screening kit returns (ages 50–74). - Targeted Lung Health Check outreach for smokers (ages 55–74). - System savings from shifting care from acute crisis to early detection. - Destigmatising cancer and cancer prevention amongst high risk cohorts	£390,000
Sexual & Reproductive Health Insight and Advocacy	- Influencing local gynaecology referrals for quicker endometriosis diagnosis. - Improving awareness, reducing stigma and increasing access and availability of information and symptom management resources - Long-term primary care savings by reducing unmanaged chronic pain and emergency hospital admissions.	£360,000
Health Inequality Reporting	- Direct insight work on Diabetes Among Bengali Women in Camden. - Recommending care pathways for socio economically and disadvantaged groups. - Strategic public health adjustments avoiding duplicate service provision.	£210,000
Cross-Sector Synergy	- Data-sharing partnerships with the Young Camden Foundation. - Enabling local non-profits to leverage public insights for corporate bids. - Multiplying external funding captured by the local third-sector.	£110,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED VALUE	Combined local social return on investment (SROI)	£1,350,000

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