Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2025-26



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This report gives you the bigger picture of how frontline safeguarding fits into Camden's wider system. Feel free to dip in and out of sections as your priorities shift—it's designed to support multi-agency practice and spark reflection. Your role has a real impact on children's lives, so use this resource to help you think, learn, and improve.
For feedback or suggestions, please visit: CSCP Annual Report

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Foreword from Lead Statutory Partners

Welcome to the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) 2025-26 Annual Report. While, as safeguarding partners, much of our focus is naturally on looking ahead, this report gives us the opportunity to pause, reflect and learn. Being willing to challenge our own decisions, recognise what worked well and be honest about what could have been better is not always comfortable, but it is essential if we are to keep children safe.

Children's lives are constantly changing, and so too are the risks and opportunities they face. As leaders, we must ensure our safeguarding arrangements evolve alongside them. By listening, learning and working together, we can improve outcomes for children and young people across Camden. Our aim is simple: to provide help earlier, prevent needs escalating into crisis and improve outcomes for children and families.



Our safeguarding partnership continues to be guided by our shared values:

- **Relational working** built on trust, accountability and meaningful engagement with children and families.
- **Compassionate**, trauma-informed and anti-racist approaches.
- **Shared learning**, reflection and constructive challenge.
- **Curiosity and courage** in understanding and responding to risk.

Across Camden, we are embracing the opportunities presented by the Families First for Children reforms and the wider move towards stronger multi-agency accountability. These changes support our ambition to bring services closer to where children and families live, learn and spend their time. This is about more than new structures; it requires a shared commitment to working differently across the partnership. By strengthening locality-based working and organising support around families rather than organisational boundaries, we are well placed to respond to this evolving landscape while remaining flexible to changing needs.

This year, we have celebrated progress, recognised the dedication of our workforce and strengthened collaboration across Camden. We have also reflected on our practice, learned from safeguarding reviews and listened carefully to children, families and practitioners. These experiences continue to remind us that effective safeguarding depends on strong relationships, professional curiosity and the confidence to challenge ourselves and one another.

Learning from serious safeguarding incidents and reviews has highlighted the need to strengthen engagement, improve information sharing and deepen our understanding of children's lived experiences so that concerns are identified and

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addressed earlier. While there were many examples of strong practice, this learning reminds us that safeguarding requires constant vigilance, curiosity and challenge.

We are using this learning to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements, including building stronger connections with the private, voluntary and independent sector and ensuring everyone who works with children and families feels confident and connected in their role in keeping children safe.

While Camden continues to build on strong inspection outcomes, we know that many children and families face increasingly complex challenges, and inequality.

We also recognise the particular vulnerabilities experienced by some groups, including care-experienced young people and young adults whose needs do not simply disappear when they turn 18. As safeguarding partners, we share a responsibility to identify vulnerability early, respond effectively to risk and ensure children, young people and vulnerable young adults receive the support and help they need.

Looking ahead, our ambition is clear: to be a safeguarding partnership that is reflective, adaptable and responsive to those we serve. We will continue to strengthen partnership working, use learning and evidence to drive improvement, and work together to ensure that children, families and vulnerable young adults across Camden are safe, supported and able to thrive.



Tim Aldridge

Executive Director, (DCS) Children and Learning, Camden Council

Camden

David Pennington

Director of Safeguarding & Looked After Children
NHS West and North London

NHS West and North London

Jason Stewart

Chief Superintendent BCU Commander, Central North BCU, Metropolitan Police Service

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Stephen Hall

Chief Executive Officer, Camden Learning

Camden Learning

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About the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)



Our shared vision:

All children and young people in Camden are safe, thriving, and heard.



Our mission statement:

Working in partnership to keep all children and young people safe, thriving, and heard, within a community where safeguarding is a shared responsibility.

What we do:

The Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) is a multi-agency statutory body established to ensure that local safeguarding arrangements are effective. In Camden, the three lead safeguarding partners are Camden Council, West and North London Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the London Metropolitan Police Service, who work in collaboration with Camden Learning to implement our model of joint strategic leadership and accountability.

The CSCP sets policies, conducts reviews, and provides training to ensure that all agencies work collaboratively to protect children.

The government updated **Working Together in March 2026**. The refreshed approach puts stronger focus on strengthened pre-birth safeguarding, continuing working closely with parents, ensuring children's lived experience informs all decision making, and continuing to ensure all lead safeguarding partners actively identify, challenge and address racism and discrimination. They also ask that partnerships have a shared focus on the use of data to drive learning and improve outcomes for children and how this is widely shared and scrutinised to ensure a joined up and effective safeguarding system. The partnership will continue to incorporate these changes into updated Working arrangements in 2026-27.

The CSCP Working arrangements and governance is published on our website here: **CSCP Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements 2026.**

What is the purpose of the CSCP Annual Report 2025-26:

This joint annual report from the Lead Safeguarding Partners reviews the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership's activities and impact during 2025-26. It outlines the actions taken by safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, focusing on the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements and the outcomes of child safeguarding practice reviews and the impact of improvements in safeguarding for children in Camden.

The report aims to evidence the partnership approach to a stronger, more cohesive multi-agency safeguarding system which provides:

- Strengthened oversight and governance
- Priority driven, evidence-based improvements
- Lived experience and evidence of impact shaping decision making
- Learning from reviews, audits and incidents more consistently embedded
- Shared focus to ensure Camden's children are safe and heard

The report centres on multi-agency priorities, **learning, impact, evidence, and continuous improvement**. The annual report is published on the CSCP website:

Annual Report - Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership CSCP.

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Scrutiny and Governance

Independent Scrutineer evaluations on safeguarding arrangements 2025-26:

The role of independent scrutiny is to provide critical challenge and seek assurance on the effectiveness of the multi-agency arrangements which aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding incidents.

Across 2025-2026, as the Independent Scrutineer, I have attended every CSCP meeting, contributed to their development, and reviewed rapid review reports on serious incidents alongside the three Delegated Safeguarding Partners. Within the scrutineer role, I have chaired two further rapid reviews and continued as part of the oversight of subsequent Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR).



The partnership of agencies within the CSCP, are particularly skilled and experienced in commissioning and supporting independent LSCPRs. In the last two years they have been closely involved in cases which have implications for practice beyond Camden and have had direct influence on national policy and practice.

This year's scrutiny of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) in place across Camden, has evidenced again, a highly performing partnership with committed and skilled partners.

A clear strength of the MASA in place across Camden is the quality of the governance of the arrangements. This can be evidenced through its publications, planning processes and review.

Chairs, sub-group chairs, and staff who lead on the work programme are very well served and supported by the CSCP Team. Participation within regional and national networks is highly regarded and respected. The "golden thread" that runs from governance to practice is understood and very visible within all aspects of the safeguarding arrangements.

Areas requiring particular focus over the next couple of years continue to be explored within the present agendas for the partnership. These include:

- Further development of a clearer analytical framework, with stronger use of data, including more explicit expectations for partners regarding racial equity.
- Further implementation of "The Family First National Reform" across Children's services and partners services.
- The output from LSCPRs and Rapid Reviews will require practice, governance and regulatory changes on both local and national arenas, to address the learning gained from these tragic incidents.
- Further expansion of the partnership's influence to better include services and agents within the; private, commercial, voluntary, community and religious sector.

The CSCP continues to challenge itself and others to mitigate the current and emerging safeguarding risks. It is a partnership that recognises the need for change and adaptation, to allow us to continue to nurture and protect the most vulnerable in our communities, our children and young people.

Rob McCulloch-Graham
Independent Scrutineer, Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership

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Key questions to test the effectiveness of the CSCP:

The CSCP has reviewed findings from a range of inspections and agency reviews, which have provided positive assurance and highlighted strong partnership working and effective multi-agency safeguarding practice. Most services were rated good or outstanding.

The CSCP Annual Report continues to monitor progress against recommendations, providing challenge and support to ensure improvements are embedded and safeguarding standards remain high. It seeks assurance by asking;

- How effective are these arrangements in providing a clear view of single and multi-agency safeguarding practices?
- Do the arrangements create space for reflection and learning from practice?
- How do the arrangements positively affect the lives of children, multi-agency working, and front-line practice?
- What do inspections tell us about the effectiveness of our safeguarding arrangements?

The report includes evidence and analyses to provide assurance against these questions. It aims to understand the performance and impact of the Partnership's work.

Area for improvement:	Progress made in 2025-26 in implementing inspection recommendations and improving outcomes for children:
Camden local authority children's services rated Outstanding by Ofsted (April 2025)	
Strengthen permanence planning.	Introduced twice-weekly Permanence Planning Clinics to improve oversight, challenge delays, and ensure timely progression of permanence plans.
Strengthen oversight of children's experiences and care planning.	Sought assurance on practice quality, identifying strengths in relational, child-focused practice and support provided to Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs).
Improve the quality and consistency of supervision.	Reviewed supervision evaluation findings and implemented a workforce development programme to strengthen supervisory practice and management oversight.
Improve consistency of decision-making within MASH.	Introduced bi-monthly dip sampling of decision-making, strengthened recording practices, and enhanced management oversight.
Increase identification and support for Young Carers.	Enhanced data collection and reporting systems and explored additional support pathways through Young Carers strategy development.
Improve placement stability and access to local placements.	Continued weekly Placement Panels and expanded Placement Stability Meetings to include all under-18s at risk of placement breakdown and care-experienced young people aged 18+.
Camden Local Authority Youth Justice Service was rated Outstanding by the HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) (June 2025)	
Enhance transitional safeguarding and reduce reoffending for children leaving the service.	Developed the New Adolescent Service, focused on responding to disproportionality, prioritising prevention, addressing risks outside the home, and providing an agile response to need.
Strengthen partnership working around victim support for child victims.	Developed an intervention for child victims of Serious Youth Violence (SYV) living in Camden in partnership with relevant agencies.

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Implement a comprehensive victim support and engagement strategy.	Developed a victim strategy linked to existing borough services and worked with partners to support implementation across the partnership.
Strengthen strategic oversight of victim engagement.	Identified a Victim Champion at Board level to oversee implementation and monitor progress against the strategy.
Monitor and address disproportionality in victim engagement and outcomes.	Introduced audits and surveys to identify and address disproportionality in victim engagement and outcomes.
Improve understanding of victim demographics and service uptake.	Analysed victim demographic and service uptake data to inform service development and targeted interventions.
Develop interventions for child victims of Serious Youth Violence.	Undertook research and developed interventions aimed at supporting child victims and preventing future offending.
Camden local authority Adult Social Care was rated Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (February 2025)	
Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated '**Good**' for all hospital Trusts in the London Borough of Camden	
Ofsted ratings for Camden Schools - Since April 2025 Ofsted have inspected ten schools in Camden. Safeguarding arrangements in every school inspected was judged to be **effective**.	

NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB)

Following a review in July 2025, North Central London (NCL) and North West London (NWL) Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) agreed to merge to improve efficiency, strengthen leadership and commissioning, tackle health inequalities more effectively, and deliver more consistent services across a wider population. A single operating model was introduced to align policies, processes and ways of working. On 1 April 2026, the two organisations formally merged to establish the **NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB)**, now responsible for planning and commissioning health services for approximately 4.5 million residents across 13 London boroughs, making it one of the largest ICBs in England.

Scrutiny: Lead safeguarding partners will seek assurance that safeguarding arrangements remain effective following the ICB merger. This will include assurance that there is strong safeguarding leadership, sufficient workforce capacity, effective multi-agency partnership working, and consistent service delivery across the new footprint, with appropriate oversight of risks and impacts on children, young people and families.

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National social care reforms

The national Children's Social Care reforms are the biggest changes to the system in more than 30 years, shifting the focus towards early intervention, prevention and family-led support. Central to the reforms is the introduction of Family Help services, which bring together early help and children in need support, alongside stronger multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and greater involvement of families and communities. Camden has adopted a test-and-learn approach and introduced integrated locality teams to provide more coordinated support for families. Overall, the reforms aim to create a more joined-up, preventative and relationship-based system that delivers better outcomes for children and families while addressing longstanding inequalities.

The Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) has been kept regularly updated on the progress, learning and emerging impact of the Children's Social Care reforms through governance and partnership reporting. This has enabled partners to monitor implementation, provide challenge and support, and ensure that the changes continue to strengthen safeguarding arrangements and improve outcomes for children and families. As the reforms become fully embedded over the next year, the CSCP will be better placed to scrutinise their impact, assess how effectively the new arrangements are improving outcomes for children and families, and identify any areas requiring further development or assurance.

Camden's Relational Practice Framework promotes a relationship-based approach that prioritises trust, compassion and understanding the impact of trauma on children and families. The framework encourages the use of systemic approaches to better understand family experiences and needs, while emphasising partnership working and a shared commitment across services to apply relational practice consistently. This has been evidenced in CSCP audits and reviews, which have identified strong relationship-based practice and effective multi-agency working as key strengths.



Children, Young People and Families Shaping Safeguarding Practice

The CSCP Independent Scrutineer has highlighted the Partnership's strong commitment to ensuring that the voices of children, young people and families shape its work. This is reflected in Camden's Core Principles for Engagement, which emphasise trusting relationships, inclusive communication, participation in decision-making, and co-production with families. The Scrutineer has noted that these principles are evident across the Partnership's work, providing assurance that services and practice are informed by the lived experiences of children and families.

The Young Advisors and Young Inspectors Programmes ensure that the voices and experiences of young people inform safeguarding practice and service development. Young people provide advice to the CSCP and Independent Scrutineer, act as peer advocates, and inspect services from a young person's perspective, making recommendations for improvement. Their work has contributed to multi-agency safeguarding evaluations, improved service planning and delivery, and supported the development of **resources** to help partnerships engage young people in scrutiny activities. The programmes help ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain informed by lived experience and responsive to the needs of children and young people.

Camden Rise provides direct opportunities for young people aged 16–25 to participate in decision-making, influence services, and shape support available to them. Through initiatives such as peer advocacy, mentoring, digital tools and creative engagement, young people are empowered to share their experiences and contribute to service design and improvement. This approach strengthens co-production by ensuring that care-experienced young people and those with lived experience have a meaningful role in both evaluating and developing services. It also complements wider participation activities, helping services remain responsive to the needs, perspectives and experiences of young people in Camden.

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Camden - A borough of diversity and contrast



35,000
children and young people aged under 18 years.

In Camden,
two in five
children live in poverty, after housing costs are considered.

44% of
Camden pupils are **eligible** for **free school meals**.

15% of
Camden's population are disabled compared to the national average (**17%**).

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Religion in Camden:

34% no religion,
31% Christian
16% Muslim
5% Jewish
2% Hindi,
9% not stated,
2% Other.



100%
of early years settings inspected were rated effective in safeguarding



Disability:
15% of Camden's population are disabled and **550 children and young people** with **disabilities** are supported by the CYPDS (**aged 0-25**).



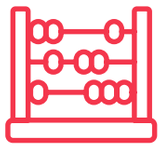
The gap in between disadvantaged and advantaged students in Camden remains narrower than London and England across all education **stages**



17% of primary and **30%** of secondary pupils were persistently absent from school.



Gender identity:
47% Male
53% Female
0.5% identify as non-binary, or different to assigned sex at birth.



71% of children achieve a good level of development.



30%
of Camden secondary school pupils missed more than 10% of sessions in 2024-25.



Around **56 in every 10,000 children** in Camden are looked after by the local authority.



Around **30 children in every 10,000 children** in Camden are subject to a Child Protection Plan.



LGBTQ+:
17% identified as non-heterosexual orientation.



All
Camden schools inspected this year were judged effective in safeguarding



94.5% of **Key Stage 4** pupils progress to sustained education.



The attainment of children leaving both primary and secondary education **is better than the national average**

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Reflecting on progress and setting future strategic priorities

Building on the progress reported in the **2024–25 Annual Report**, the table below highlights the key developments, outcomes and impact achieved across each priority area during 2025–26. Further detail on the evidence, analysis and partnership activity underpinning this progress is provided throughout the relevant sections of this report, together with an assessment of ongoing challenges, areas requiring further development, and partnership priorities for 2026-28.



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	Progress made 2025–26	Impact for children	Data insights
Children Looked After and Care Experienced	**Identity, Inclusion and Anti-Racist Practice** • Strengthened recognition of care experience, identity and trauma by embedding these themes, alongside belonging and racial disproportionality, into safeguarding practice, audits and multi-agency learning. • Enhanced culturally responsive and anti-racist practice through greater understanding of identity and intersectionality, improved support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and more personalised responses. **Corporate Parenting and Strategic Leadership** • Maintained strong multi-agency commitment to Corporate Parenting through review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, contributions to national reform and inspection learning, and development of partnership guidance for practitioners. **Health, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Emotional Wellbeing** • Improved integration of health, social care and SEND through stronger ICB oversight, coordinated visits, improved monitoring of residential placements, and better alignment of assessments and care planning. • Strengthened mental health and transition support for care experienced young people, improving continuity between children's and adult services and promoting emotional wellbeing. **Relationships, Family Networks and Parenting Support** • Promoted resilience through greater involvement of family networks, support for parental identity, and relationship-based approaches to independence. • Enhanced support for care experienced young parents through stronger multi-agency planning, trauma-informed parenting support, strengthened kinship networks, and improved access to Family Hubs, early help and domestic abuse services. **Education, Employment and Independence** • Expanded education, employment and higher education opportunities through targeted careers support, work experience, internships, university application support, employment partnerships, and Camden's Virtual School Education Navigator.	Children and young people receive more holistic, trauma-informed support that recognises their identity, experiences and needs. Better support during key life transitions, reducing the risk of young people disengaging from services. Increased opportunities to achieve positive outcomes and long-term independence.	**205** children were looked after at the end of March 2026. Consistent demand has enabled continued focus on placement stability, timely support and improved outcomes for children and young people in care. **77%** of Children Looked After for more than 12 months experienced fewer than three placement moves, supporting better wellbeing, relationships and outcomes. Timely visits were maintained for **92%** of Children Looked After, ensuring regular oversight and support. **99%** of Children Looked After contributed to their reviews giving opportunities for young people to have their voices heard.

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Mental Health in the Family	**Mental Health, Neglect and Early Intervention** • Increased understanding of parental and adolescent mental health through inspections, serious incident reviews and multi-agency audits, informing safeguarding, early help and intervention pathways. • Embedded mental health within neglect and early help responses through the multi-agency Neglect Toolkit, ensuring parental mental health, emotional availability and household stability are considered in risk assessment and support planning. **Adolescent Services and Transitional Safeguarding** • Developed Camden's Adolescent Service to provide targeted support for vulnerable 11-25 year olds facing complex needs, including exploitation, domestic abuse, disrupted education, parental mental health, suspected SEND, poverty, care experience and caring responsibilities. Dedicated workers support family relationships, education, health and extra-familial risks. • Advanced Transitional Safeguarding through Camden's test-and-learn programme, joint Children Act and Care Act training, and exploration of improved access to social care records to support continuity into adulthood. **Workforce Development and Safeguarding Practice** • Strengthened workforce confidence through multi-agency training informed by local learning, covering trauma-informed practice, coercive control, teenage relationship abuse, intersectionality and cumulative disadvantage, supporting earlier identification of need and stronger assessments. **Integrated Support for Children with Complex Needs** • Improved coordination across mental health, health, SEND and social care services through stronger oversight of children with complex needs, better alignment between CAMHS, paediatrics, SEND and children's social care, and more joined-up, person-centred pathways for children and families.	Earlier identification of emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, improving access to coordinated support. Reduced escalation of need through earlier intervention and joined-up services. More consistent, person-centred support across agencies for children, young people and families.	**27% of assessments** identified parental mental health concerns, enabling targeted support to improve children's safety and wellbeing. **3,162 referrals** to CAMHS with 86% accepted. **55% of children working with CAMHS** showed positive improvement against Goal Based Outcomes. Camden's Parent Wellbeing Service supported **96 parents, positively impacting the wellbeing of 179 children** through whole-family mental health interventions.

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Re-engaging Vulnerable Children in Education (Including SEND)	**Elective Home Education (EHE) and Safeguarding** • Strengthened oversight of EHE and vulnerable learners through Quality Assurance Subgroup scrutiny, vulnerability criteria, and improved pathways with schools, SEND and Early Help. • Improved identification and support through better use of the EHE register, increased officer capacity, and stronger oversight of children with EHCPs and those known to social care. • Enhanced information sharing and risk identification through improved vulnerability tracking, clearer off-rolling notifications and earlier safeguarding assessments. **Attendance, Educational Neglect and Inclusion** • Strengthened understanding of educational neglect, attendance and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) through multi-agency learning and updates to the Neglect Toolkit. • Improved school practice through attendance-focused training, targeted EBSA support and an Attendance Practice Toolkit. **SEND, Neurodiversity and Specialist Support** • Expanded SEND, neurodiversity and inclusion support through increased specialist capacity, enhanced Family Hub and Youth Hub provision, streamlined referrals, and implementation of the All-Age Autism Strategy. • Improved integration of SEND and inclusion services through a more coordinated model, strengthening collaboration and access to specialist support. • Introduced an Early Intervention SEMH pilot for EYFS and KS1 pupils, providing therapeutic support and reintegration into mainstream education.	More vulnerable children remain visible to services and receive support earlier. Improved school attendance, engagement and educational stability for children experiencing barriers to learning. Greater access to specialist support, helping children achieve positive educational and social outcomes. Improved inclusion, belonging and participation in education and community life.	**339 SEND referrals** demonstrate strong identification of need and effective multi-agency collaboration, enabling children to access coordinated support more quickly. **168 children missing education** were identified and supported, helping vulnerable children re-engage with learning and education services. **Suspension rates of 1%** in primary and 11% in secondary schools (2024-25) highlight ongoing challenges for some children and young people. Monitoring trends helps partners identify vulnerable groups, provide targeted support, and reduce the risk of exclusion and disengagement from education.

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Looking forward - CSCP priority areas for 2026-28

The CSCP reviews its safeguarding priorities annually, informed by learning from reviews and audits, performance data, frontline workforce feedback, and engagement with children, young people and families.

Following multi-agency consultation, the Partnership has identified three priorities for 2026-28:

1. **Vulnerable babies and families**
2. **Implementation of the Families First reform programme**
3. **Strengthening the multi-agency response to safeguarding adolescents**

These priorities reflect local safeguarding needs, learning from reviews and inspections, emerging risks, forthcoming national reforms and partner feedback. Future annual reports will assess progress against these priorities and evaluate their impact on outcomes for children, young people and families. Baseline analysis and early developments relating to these priorities are highlighted throughout this report.



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6

Support, Safeguarding and Care for Children

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6.1 Multi-agency arrangements at the Front Door

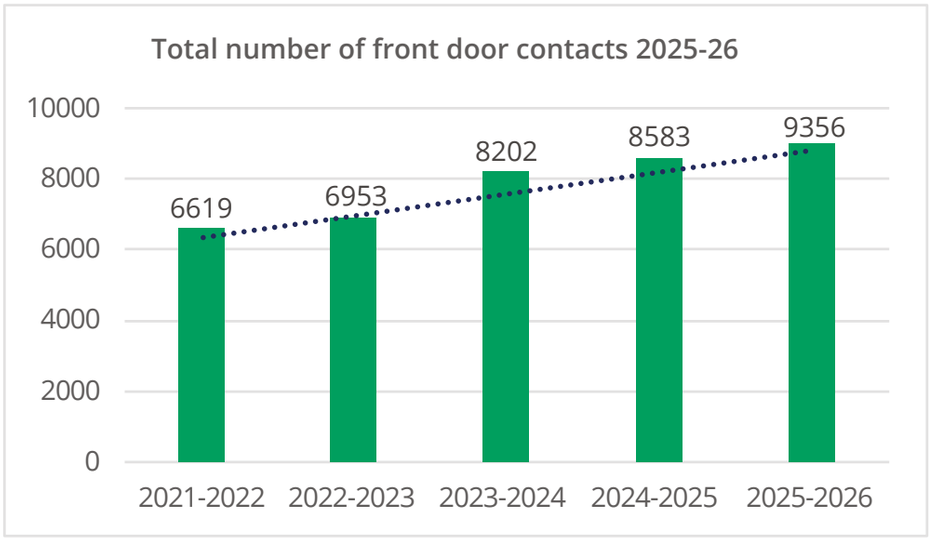
Camden's Children and Families Contact Service (also known as the Front Door) continues to be co-located with multi-agency partners and is responsible for making decisions on referrals and requests for services to ensure that children and families get the most suitable services and support depending on their level of need. However, the national reforms have offered the opportunity to reshape the role of the "Front Door". Central to this is the introduction of a single, joined up pathway of support, with Family Help and safeguarding operating as part of one coherent system, reducing threshold ambiguity and enabling more timely responses to need. There is a strong emphasis on multi-agency collaboration, with partners such as health, police and education working more closely at the point of contact to share information and make informed decisions.

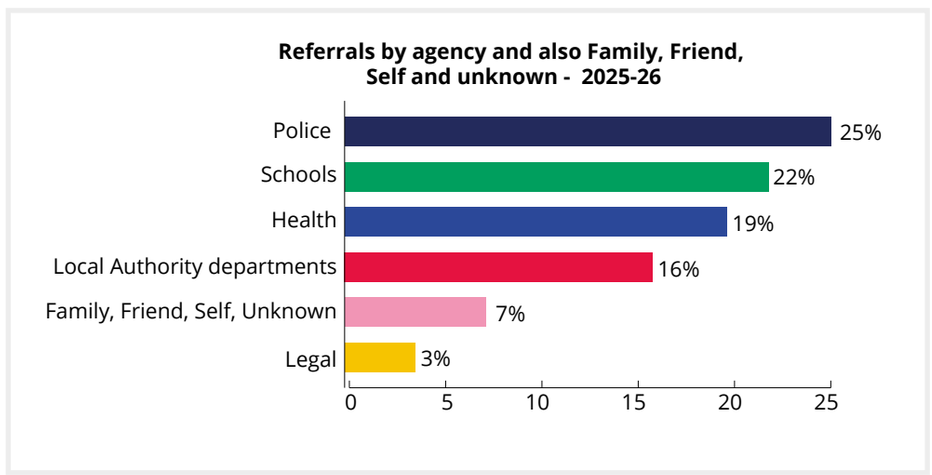
The Front Door is therefore increasingly expected to function not only as the gateway for safeguarding referrals, but also as a source of advice, consultation and signposting, ensuring that families and individuals are directed to the right support at the earliest opportunity. At the same time, safeguarding activity is being more tightly focused on those at highest risk, while greater use is made of family networks and community-based support to prevent escalation. Collectively, these changes position the Front Door as a critical part of a more preventative, proportionate and system wide approach to keeping people safe and supporting wellbeing.

There were **9,346** contacts to the Children's front door in 2025-26. This is a 9% increase in contacts reported in 2024-25. This demonstrates an increasing trend over the previous five years for children and families who require additional support.

Impact: In keeping with previous years, the highest number of referrals were received from the Police (25%) followed by Schools (22%), Health (19%) and Local Authority services (16%). This mirrors the effectiveness of our lead safeguarding partner collaboration.

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6.2 Effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

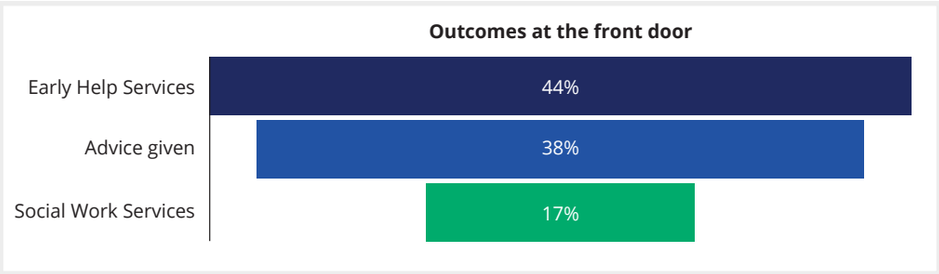
Outcome of front door contacts

Although there has been an overall increase in the number of contacts to the front door, the outcome following contact has proportionally remained similar. The graph shows that in 2025-26, 17% of contacts to the front door resulted in referrals to children's social care, this is a 6% decrease from the year previous. This is a positive indicator when considered alongside the direction of national children's social care reforms, which aim to rebalance the system towards earlier intervention, family-led support and prevention through the Families First Partnership Programme. A lower proportion of contacts requiring escalation to statutory social work services may suggest that children and families are receiving the right support at an earlier stage, preventing needs from increasing to a level that requires statutory intervention. This aligns with the national ambition to strengthen Family Help services, improve front-door decision making and provide timely support through multi-agency working.

Seeking Assurance: While the reduction in referrals is consistent with the national focus on strengthening Family Help and improving early support through multi-agency working, assurance will continue to be sought through safeguarding arrangements. Monitoring of repeat contacts, re-referrals, and the timeliness of support will help ensure that reduced referral rates are the result of effective early intervention rather than unmet need.



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The chart below depicts the multiple vulnerabilities recognised in social care assessments (themes have been grouped in colour groups). The highest factor identified in assessment includes:

- **Domestic abuse**
- **Mental health**
- **Neglect**

Safeguarding partners use this information to understand the needs of children and families locally. Knowing these trends helps partners provide effective oversight, target support where it is most needed, and ensure services are making a positive difference for children and families.

Domestic abuse remains the most common factor identified in children's assessments, highlighting its significant impact on children's wellbeing and development. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims in their own right where they see, hear, experience, or are connected to domestic abuse. Exposure to domestic abuse can affect children's emotional wellbeing, sense of safety, relationships, behaviour, and educational outcomes, with some children experiencing longer-term impacts if support is not available at the earliest opportunity. This reinforces the importance of a coordinated, trauma-informed approach that recognises the needs of children and families affected by domestic abuse. It highlights the need for early identification, effective multi-agency collaboration, and accessible support services that help children build resilience, strengthen family wellbeing, and promote recovery and positive outcomes.

Mental health is the second most prevalent factor identified in children's assessments, highlighting the significant impact that parental and child mental health needs can have on family wellbeing. This emphasises the importance of early identification, strong collaboration between children's services, health partners and schools, and ensuring families can access timely support. National reviews, including Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, have consistently identified parental mental ill health as a recurring factor in serious incidents involving children, reinforcing the need for joined-up, family-focused and trauma-informed responses that promote resilience and positive outcomes for children and families.

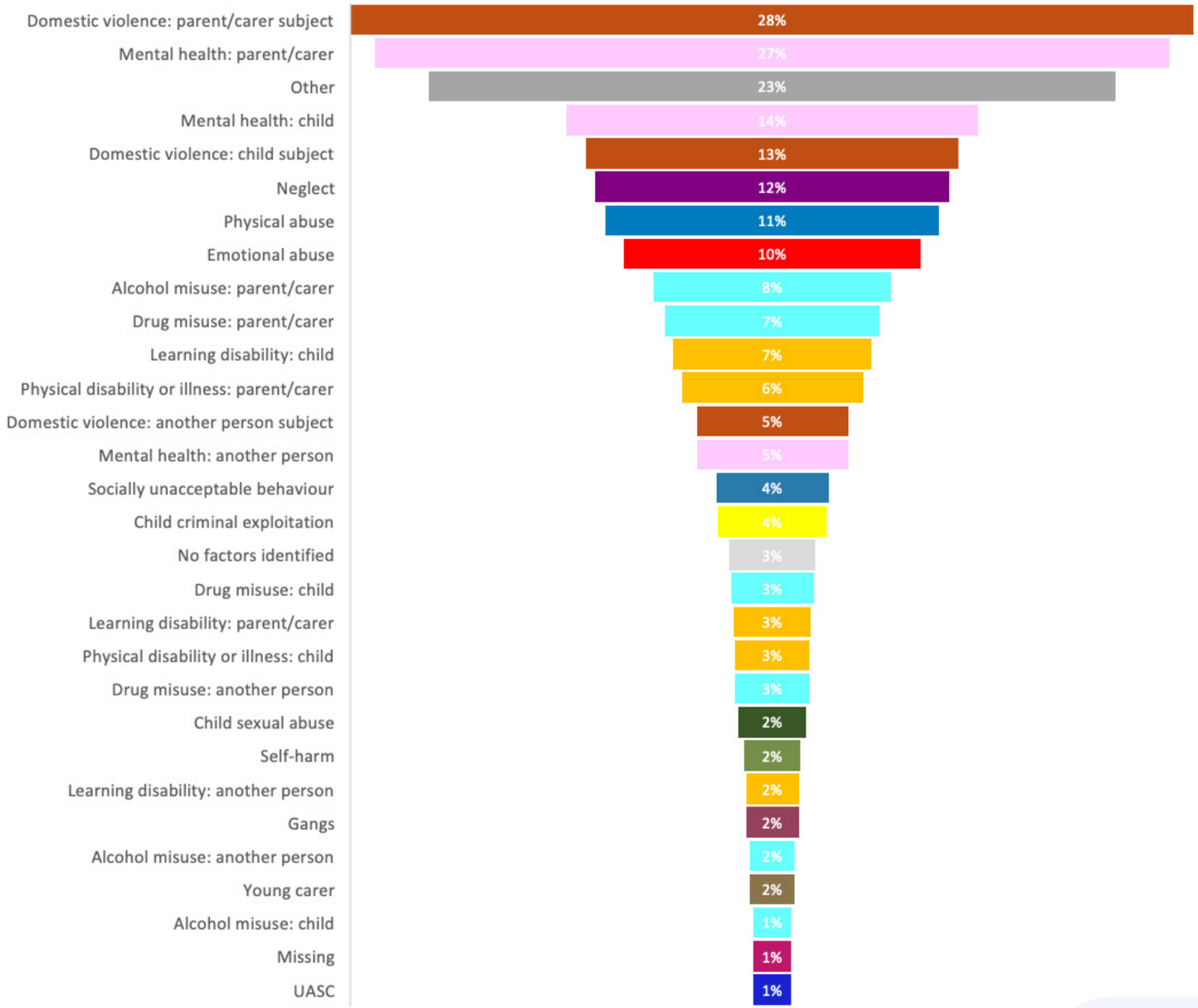
Neglect was the third most prevalent factor identified in assessments and increased from 2% to 12% compared with the previous year. While this may reflect growing need, it may also indicate improved professional awareness, confidence and use of assessment frameworks, resulting in earlier identification of neglect and more children receiving support. Neglect can have a significant impact on children, affecting their physical health, emotional wellbeing, development, educational attainment and long-term life outcomes. This highlights the importance of maintaining a strong focus on the early recognition of neglect, effective multi-agency working and timely support for families.

Also worthy of note is the high proportion of assessments identifying substance use as a contributing factor. This highlights the importance of strong multi-agency working between children's services, adult substance misuse services, health partners and schools to ensure that families receive the right support at the earliest opportunity.



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Child and Family Assessment - Identified Vulnerability Factors



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6.3 Delivering Family First: Early Intervention, Safeguarding and Child Protection

Supporting Families Earlier and Preventing Escalation

The Families First for Children reforms present an opportunity to fundamentally reshape how support is provided to children and families. Camden's Family Help model has been developed to ensure that families receive the right support at the earliest opportunity, reducing the need for crisis intervention and helping children remain safely within their family and community networks wherever possible. Following learning from the East Camden prototype, Family Help was launched across all localities in April 2026, creating a more integrated, accessible and family-centred system of support.

Aim of Families First (Impact measures): Children and families are benefiting from:

- Earlier access to support within their local communities.
- Reduced need to repeat their story through a single assessment process.
- Greater involvement in decisions affecting their lives.
- Better coordinated support from professionals working together.
- Increased family resilience and reduced escalation into statutory services.
- Access to support that builds on family and community strengths rather than focusing solely on risks and deficits.



Impact: The introduction of multidisciplinary neighbourhood teams has enabled families to receive more coordinated support through a single assessment and plan. Early feedback suggests families feel more involved in decision-making and value relationship-based support from practitioners who understand their circumstances.

The CSCP welcomes these early indications of progress but recognises that further evidence is needed to understand the long-term impact on children and family outcomes. Initial performance data is encouraging: in 2025–26, 85% of families supported through the Early Help front door did not require further Early Help or Children's Social Care intervention after closure, and step-ups to Children's Social Care reduced by 66% compared with the previous year.

While these findings suggest that support may be reaching families earlier and helping to prevent escalation, the **CSCP will continue to scrutinise outcomes, children's experiences and sustainability of change** to assess whether Family Help is delivering the intended benefits over time.

Improving Outcomes for Children in Need

In 2025–26, 1,391 children were allocated to Children in Need services. The Family Help model aims to improve outcomes for Children in Need through whole-family support that addresses the factors most affecting children's wellbeing and development. Practitioners work with families to understand strengths, relationships, community networks and underlying challenges, rather than focusing solely on presenting concerns.

> **"We're looking forward to building those relationships and connections with our counterparts in the community."**
>
> **Voice of Frontline Practitioners**

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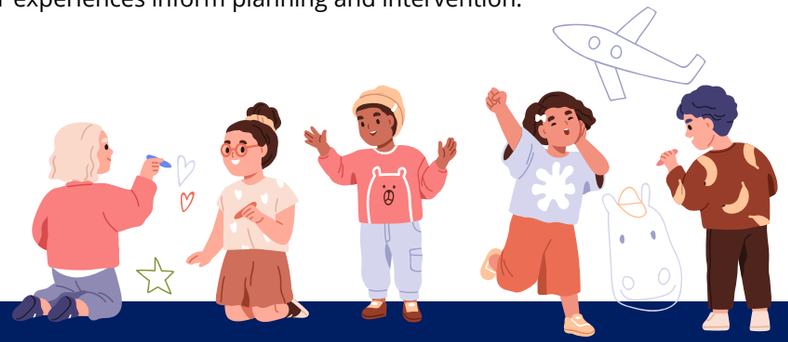
Scrutiny: The CSCP will continue to assess whether Family Help is improving family resilience and reducing the need for more intensive statutory intervention. Analysis of Children in Need practice identified parental mental health difficulties, intergenerational trauma and adolescent vulnerabilities as significant influences on children's experiences. In response, partners strengthened reflective practice and assessment tools to support earlier identification of need and more targeted intervention.

Children's voices remain central to practice through direct work, cultural genograms and identity-focused approaches. Schools, CAMHS, health services and youth practitioners contribute to this work. However, the CSCP will continue to challenge partners to better evidence how children's views influence decision-making and whether this leads to improved outcomes over time.

Impact: A Family Help Lead Practitioner reported being able to visit several families within walking distance of their base in a single day, significantly reducing travel time. This enabled more time for direct work with families, demonstrating how locality-based working is improving practitioner capacity, responsiveness and the quality of support provided.

Scrutiny and Assurance

The timely identification of need and provision of support remain key priorities for the CSCP. During 2025-26, 91% of Children in Need visits were completed within timescales, providing assurance that children continued to receive regular oversight and support. The partnership recognises the importance of practitioners spending meaningful time with children, hearing their views directly and ensuring their experiences inform planning and intervention.



What Difference Is This Making?

The CSCP meetings have discussed early evidence that children are:

- Receiving more timely support.
- Experiencing greater continuity and coordination between services.
- Being better supported within their family and community networks.
- Having more opportunities to contribute to decisions that affect them.
- Benefiting from interventions that reflect their individual identities, experiences and needs.

Voice of families

The name Family Help is so much better – I know you're a social worker but I don't feel scared". The simple change in language had a significant impact on the willingness of the family to engage and confidence in accepting support.

Impact: A Family Help Lead Practitioner resolved a family's housing issue more quickly by attending a weekly 'housing meeting' and seeking direct advice. This demonstrates how the prototype model is strengthening local partnership working, improving responsiveness and reducing delays for families.

Strengthening Safety Through Relational Child Protection

Camden's approach to Child Protection is evolving in line with national reforms, placing greater emphasis on relationships, partnership working and understanding children's lived experiences. The introduction of Lead Child Protection Practitioners and community-based approaches aims to make safeguarding processes more accessible for families while maintaining a focus on children's safety.

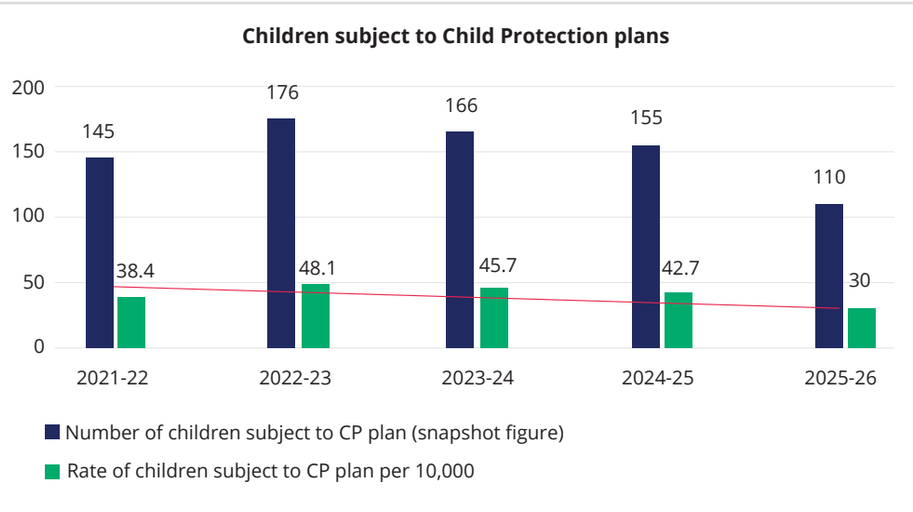
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Early indicators show reductions in Section 47 enquiries, Initial Child Protection Conferences and Child Protection Plans. While encouraging, the CSCP recognises that these trends require ongoing scrutiny to understand whether they reflect improved outcomes for children, more effective early intervention, or changes in system demand.

At the end of 2025–26, 110 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan, continuing a downward trend since the pandemic peak in 2020–21. Neglect remained the primary category of concern, followed by emotional, sexual and physical abuse.

Seeking assurance: The CSCP will continue to monitor these patterns closely to ensure reductions in statutory intervention are matched by evidence of improved safety and wellbeing for children.

Multi-agency participation in Child Protection Conferences and planning remains strong, with attendance and contributions monitored through CSCP governance.



Scrutiny: However, the CSCP recognises the need to move beyond attendance measures and better understand the quality and impact of partner contributions on safeguarding decision-making and outcomes for children.

Child Protection - How to measure what matters to families

As Camden embeds the Families First for Children reforms, the CSCP recognises that traditional performance measures alone do not demonstrate whether children's lives are improving. While indicators such as referrals, assessments, Child Protection Plans and statutory visits remain important, they primarily measure service activity rather than the impact of support on children and families.

Scrutiny: Over the coming year, the CSCP will continue developing an outcomes-focused framework that places greater emphasis on understanding whether interventions have led to meaningful change. This reflects a critical shift from counting services delivered to evaluating whether families are safer, stronger and more resilient as a result of support.

Key measures will include whether children feel safer and listened to;

- families are better able to manage challenges independently;
- family relationships and stability improve;
- escalation to statutory services reduces;
- and children remain safely within their families and communities wherever possible.

The framework will also consider children's wellbeing, educational participation, engagement with family and community networks, and families' confidence in the support they receive.

By combining performance data with the experiences of children, families and practitioners, the CSCP aims to develop a more robust understanding of what is making a difference, where gaps remain, and whether reforms are delivering sustainable improvements in outcomes for children and families.

Impact: A Lead Child Protection Practitioner held a pre-meeting with a family before their child protection conference, helping them understand the process and address any concerns. Having previously not attended conferences, the family felt confident to participate, contributing to the development of clear goals for their child's safety and wellbeing. This approach has strengthened family engagement and improved partnership working and planning.

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6.4 Engaging Families in Safeguarding

Family Group Conferences

Family Group Conferences (FGCs) remain a cornerstone of Camden's relational safeguarding approach. FGCs empower families by bringing together extended family members and significant network members to develop solutions and make informed decisions about children's care and safety. By placing families at the centre of planning, FGCs help build sustainable support arrangements that draw on existing strengths and relationships.

There were 164 children's FGC referrals in 2025-26, which involved 216 children with a further 18 for Lifelong Links.

Looking ahead, the National Reform programme promotes earlier help and family-led decision-making, enabling families to identify solutions, strengthen support networks and play a central role in decisions affecting their children. In Camden, a new family-led practice framework has been developed to support these aims. Family Group Conferencing (FGC) will remain central, alongside a broader range of options available to practitioners and families, helping to reduce the need for more intensive statutory intervention.

Scrutiny: FGC referral patterns reflect wider disproportionality across Camden's children's services, with Black and Mixed ethnicity children overrepresented and White children underrepresented relative to the local population. The lower representation of Asian, Chinese and other ethnic groups requires further scrutiny to understand whether barriers to access, referral practices or other factors are affecting take-up, and to ensure there is equitable access to family-led decision-making for all families.



Scrutiny: During 2025, the FGC service undertook a **comprehensive audit** as part of the National Reform programme to better understand strengths, gaps and areas for improvement. The findings will inform service development and quality assurance work with independent coordinators.

The review identified **opportunities to strengthen children's participation**, particularly for younger children whose views may be harder to capture directly. Improvements include new approaches that help families better understand the child's experience and focus discussion on what children want their network to know and how they would like to be supported. The CSCP will continue to seek evidence that children's voices are consistently influencing family decision-making and leading to improved outcomes.

Camden Advocacy Policy

The **Camden Advocacy Policy** has been developed in 2025-26, aims to strengthen the participation of children, young people and families in safeguarding processes by ensuring their voices are heard in decisions affecting their lives.

The policy sets clear expectations for safe, respectful and person-centred advocacy, helping families understand their rights, express their views and participate fully in decision-making. This aligns with the **principles of the Families First for Children reforms**, which emphasise partnership with families, relationship-based practice and shared decision-making.

Practice development: The policy reflects learning from Camden's Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs). While advocacy can be valuable, practitioners must remain alert to situations where it may not effectively amplify the child's or family's voice, or where it could unintentionally hinder engagement or progress. The policy encourages ongoing reflection and respectful challenge to help ensure advocacy remains focused on the best interests of children and families. The CSCP will continue to seek assurance that advocacy is achieving its intended purpose and contributing to better engagement and outcomes.

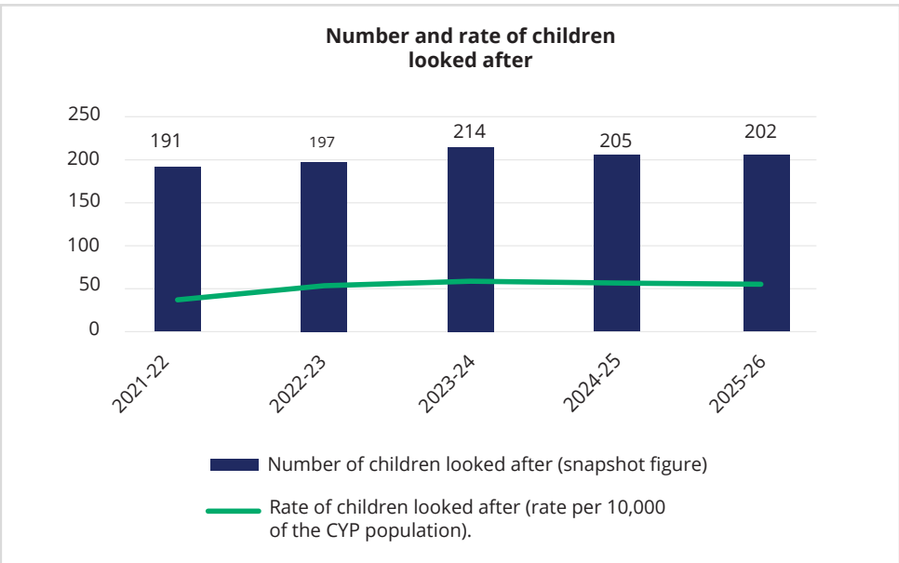
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6.5 Children looked after

Building on last year's introduction of the Children Looked After Strategy, partners have embedded the strategy across services, strengthening their shared corporate parenting responsibilities and increasing focus on improving outcomes for children in care. The strategy continues to be shaped around children's voices, using accessible language and reflecting what children say matters most to them.

This year, partners have worked closely to ensure that children in care receive coordinated support that recognises the additional challenges they may face, including poorer mental health outcomes and wider health inequalities. Analytically, this demonstrates a shift from establishing a shared vision for corporate parenting to embedding collective responsibility and delivering more consistent, child-centred support across the partnership.

The number of children looked after has remained stable, with 202 children looked after at the end of March 2026, broadly in line with the previous year. The looked after population is predominantly made up of older children and young people, with 51% of the CLA cohort being 13 years of age and over. This means that more than half of children in care are adolescents.



The lead safeguarding partners are aware that service planning and resources may need to focus on the needs of older children and young people, including support with:

- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Education, training and employment
- Preparing for adulthood and independence
- Housing and accommodation
- Exploitation, contextual safeguarding and risk-taking behaviours

The age profile also highlights the importance of effective transition planning, ensuring young people receive appropriate support as they move towards adulthood and leaving care services.

Voice of the child

Listening, hearing, and taking account of children and young people views shapes every element of our work, and enables us to understand their lived experience, and their experience of the safeguarding system. 99% of children looked after contributed to their reviews in 2025-26.

Voice of the child

Working in partnership with Family Rights Group, The Family Group Conference Service reviewed and strengthened the Lifelong Links offer, improving governance and increasing awareness across Children Looked After and Care Experience services through regular practice support and information sessions. The service has also trained additional FGC Coordinators in the Lifelong Links approach, resulting in a significant increase in referrals for care leavers and creating more opportunities for young people to build and maintain meaningful lifelong relationships.

Impact: The CSCP sought assurance on the number of children looked after with an up-to-date statutory visit in acknowledgement of the important role practitioners play in the lives of these vulnerable children. 92% of visits in 2025-26 were completed within timescales.

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Impact: Effective multi-agency working continues to support positive health outcomes for children looked after, with 93% receiving up-to-date health and dental checks, providing assurance that the majority of children are accessing essential health services.

CSCP has sought assurance that children and young people are supported to maintain local connections where safe to do so. 83% of children looked after were placed within 20 miles of their home address and over half of CLA (56%) are in foster care in the borough. Partners have focused attention on moving young people who have been placed out of borough, especially in less diverse areas back into Camden, prioritising those who are isolated and /or experiencing mental health difficulties.

Scrutiny: In line with national trends, a small number of children with complex needs may experience multiple placement moves before a suitable long-term placement is found. In 2025–26, the lead safeguarding partners noted that 13% of children who had been looked after for more than 12 months experienced three or more placement moves. The CSCP recognises that meeting the needs of older children and adolescents can be particularly complex. However, there remains a collective responsibility to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time to promote stability and reduce the likelihood of repeated placement moves.

Scrutiny: Data continues to show disproportionality across Camden's child protection system. Global Majority children remain overrepresented at all stages of intervention, particularly within the care system, while White children remain underrepresented relative to the local child population. This requires ongoing scrutiny of decision-making, service responses and access to culturally responsive support. The CSCP will continue to examine the impact of structural inequalities, potential bias and access to early help to ensure safeguarding responses are equitable, proportionate and responsive to the needs of all children and families.

CSCP multi-agency audit on Care experienced children & young people – exploring their mental health and experiences of transitions

In 2025, the CSCP commissioned a multi-agency audit to examine how well agencies work together to support care experienced children and young people, particularly around mental health and key transition points into adulthood. The theme of the audit was following an accumulation of incidents of serious harm or death of care leavers since 2023.

The audit identified evidence of robust multi-agency practice in the following areas:

- Strong multi-agency working, with professionals building positive and trusting relationships with young people.
- Consistent support from stable professional networks and specialist services.
- Timely access to mental health support and flexible, tailored interventions.
- Effective transition planning, with most young people experiencing gradual and well-managed moves between services.
- Trauma-informed practice was well embedded across most services.
- Effective attention to identity, culture and the voices of young people in planning and decision-making.
- Practitioners benefited from strong supervision, leadership and training.

Through the Quality Assurance Subgroup, the lead safeguarding partners will review and monitor the impact of the following key areas for development during 2026–27:

- Strengthen multi-agency planning and review arrangements for care experienced young adults.
- Improve information sharing and recording during transitions between services.
- Ensure mental health needs are reviewed at every significant transition point.
- Increase awareness across all partner agencies of the long-term impact of care experience and trauma.
- Continue workforce development on trauma-informed, anti-racist and culturally responsive practice.
- Include Housing, GPs and other adult-focused services more consistently in future audits and learning activities.

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6.6 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)

During 2025-26, Lead Safeguarding Partners strengthened oversight of the Corporate Parenting Strategy to ensure unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) remained a safeguarding priority. This reflects ongoing national concerns regarding the vulnerability of unaccompanied children, including risks linked to trauma, exploitation, missing episodes, age disputes and transition into adulthood.

Multi-agency efforts have improved access to culturally responsive and trauma-informed support, including culturally matched placements where possible, enhanced training for carers and professionals, improved access to interpreters, digital accessibility tools and stronger coordination between children's and adults' services. Evidence continues to demonstrate that stable relationships, cultural belonging and effective transition planning are key protective factors.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), including former UASC, comprise 18% of Camden's Children Looked After population. A specialist UASC lead has been appointed to strengthen practice, improve support and promote timely age assessments. While these developments provide assurance of progress, the CSCP recognises ongoing challenges and the need for continued scrutiny of placement stability, access to legal advice, emotional wellbeing and safeguarding outcomes.

CSCP Scrutiny: National developments continue to highlight risks facing unaccompanied children within both asylum and care systems. The partnership will continue to challenge whether services are sufficiently responsive to the complex needs of UASC and whether safeguarding arrangements consistently promote safety, stability, belonging and positive long-term outcomes for this vulnerable cohort.

Voice of the child

One of the most important forms of support is helping young people feel believed, understood and not judged for the trauma and uncertainty that shaped their journeys to the UK. Access to consistent professionals who clearly explain immigration processes, use interpreters and build trusting relationships helps young people feel safer and more settled. Evidence shows that trust, continuity and effective communication are key factors in reducing anxiety and supporting successful transitions into adulthood.

Further details of our collaborative approach to supporting families seeking asylum is detailed in section 7.7.

6.7 Care leavers

Camden's commitment to recognising care experience as a protected characteristic was formalised through a council motion in January 2024. By March 2026, 285 young people aged 18+ were supported by the Children Looked After and Care Leavers Service. To prevent a 'cliff edge' at 18, Personal Advisors continue to provide support up to age 25, promoting stability during the transition to adulthood. Data suggests care-experienced young people are more likely to become parents at a younger age; in response, Camden works with Early Help and Family Hubs to strengthen relationships, parenting skills and positive parenting opportunities.

Learning from Rapid Reviews

Between January 2024 and March 2026, 42% of Camden's serious incident notifications involved a care leaver, highlighting the continued vulnerability of care-experienced young adults and the need for sustained safeguarding oversight beyond childhood.

Safer Transitions into Adulthood

Reviews repeatedly highlighted the risks young people face when moving into adulthood, particularly care-experienced young people and former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). While Camden has strengthened transition planning, access to mental health support and continuity of relationships beyond age 18, reviews continue to demonstrate that transitions can create gaps in support, reduced professional oversight and increased vulnerability, requiring ongoing focus from Lead Safeguarding Partners.

Stability, Housing and Support Networks

Learning reinforced the importance of stable accommodation, trusted relationships and strong support networks. Camden has strengthened permanence planning, culturally responsive placements and homelessness prevention arrangements. However, reviews highlight that housing instability, placement disruption and disengagement from services continue to present safeguarding risks for some young adults.

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Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Support

LCSPR and Serious Incidents identified the lasting impact of trauma, bereavement, migration experiences, exploitation and discrimination on young people's wellbeing. In response, Camden has expanded trauma-informed practice and improved access to emotional wellbeing and mental health support. The CSCP continues to scrutinise whether services consistently recognise and respond to the diverse experiences and identities of vulnerable young people.

Responding to Complex Vulnerability

A recurring theme was the interaction between mental health, physical health, substance misuse, exploitation, immigration status, education, employment, poverty and housing instability. Reviews highlighted the need for a more holistic understanding of lived experience and cumulative harm. Camden has strengthened its whole-system approach to assessment and intervention, although ensuring coordinated responses to multiple vulnerabilities remains an ongoing challenge.

Stronger Safeguarding, Multi-Agency Working and Information Sharing

Learning from serious incidents reinforced the importance of effective safeguarding arrangements where risks span services, agencies and professional networks. Camden has strengthened information sharing, joint planning and responses to exploitation, child sexual abuse, domestic abuse and other safeguarding concerns. However, learning continues to highlight the need for professional curiosity, challenge and timely escalation where concerns emerge or risks accumulate over time.

Tackling Inequality, Adultification and Discrimination

Learning from serious incidents highlighted the impact of structural inequality, racism, discrimination and adultification on safeguarding experiences and decision-making. This has strengthened Camden's focus on anti-racist practice and safeguarding equity. The CSCP continues to scrutinise whether care-experienced young people, Black children and former UASC are consistently recognised as vulnerable and receive equitable support, protection and access to services.

Impact: Reducing the Criminalisation of Care-Experienced Children
Learning from local and national reviews continues to highlight concerns regarding the over-criminalisation of children in care and care leavers. As part of the Metropolitan Police Service's Children First approach, enhanced training, updated guidance and improvements to recording systems have strengthened decision-making. These developments aim to promote proportionate responses to incidents involving children in care, foster placements and supported accommodation. The partnership will continue to scrutinise whether safeguarding needs are prioritised and care-experienced children are protected from unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system.

Advocacy, Rights and Participation

Learning from serious incidents highlighted that young people do not always feel informed or involved in decisions affecting their lives. In response, Camden has strengthened access to advocacy, legal advice, interpreters and specialist immigration support. While these developments have improved participation, the partnership continues to challenge itself on whether young people fully understand their rights and can influence decisions during key transitions.

Trusted Relationships, Corporate Parenting and Continuity of Care

A consistent theme across reviews has been the protective value of trusted relationships and the risks associated with losing support during adulthood. Camden has strengthened its corporate parenting approach through extended support beyond age 18, promoting lifelong connections and improving access to health and community-based services. However, reviews continue to highlight the need to sustain meaningful relationships and prevent reductions in support when vulnerability remains high.

Workforce Development and Continuous Learning

LCSPRs reinforced the importance of a skilled and reflective workforce able to recognise vulnerability, respond to trauma and understand the complexity of young people's experiences. Learning has been embedded through enhanced supervision, multi-agency training, reflective practice and service development. Focus areas have included trauma-informed practice, safeguarding analysis, communication needs, neurodiversity and relationship-based working. The partnership continues to seek assurance that learning from serious incidents translates into improved practice and outcomes.

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CSCP Suicide Prevention Learning Session held in September 2025, was developed in response to learning from serious safeguarding incidents, including incidents involving care-experienced young people where suicide was identified as a significant theme. The session strengthened practitioners' understanding of suicide risk, self-harm and the specific vulnerabilities experienced by children and young people within the care-experienced cohort through learning from local incidents and evidence-based prevention approaches.

The training increased practitioner confidence in recognising risk factors and warning signs, having sensitive conversations about suicide, and developing culturally responsive safety plans with young people and their families. It also reinforced the importance of effective multi-agency working, improved awareness of local support and bereavement services, and highlighted resources available to support practitioner wellbeing. Collectively, this learning supports a more informed, coordinated and effective safeguarding response to care-experienced children and young people, and others affected by suicide and self-harm.



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Key areas of safeguarding assurance



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7.1 Neglect

The CSCP recognises that neglect continues to be one of the most complex safeguarding issues faced by children and young people in the borough. Neglect often develops gradually, can be influenced by trauma, parental mental health, poverty, discrimination and exclusion, and can cause significant harm when needs go unmet.

Impact on workforce - Analysis: Neglect was the third most common factor identified in assessments, increasing from 2% in 2024–25 to 12% in 2025–26. This rise likely reflects improved practitioner awareness, stronger assessment practice, and better recognition of the signs and cumulative impact of neglect. Professionals are increasingly identifying and responding to concerns, supporting earlier intervention and help for children and families.

Through a bespoke Practice Learning session delivered to frontline practitioners, the CSCP presented the learning from Birmingham SCP on **Abiyah – You Lost Sight of Me** to 133 practitioners and senior mangers to recognise when children may be overlooked and to ensure their needs and experiences remain central to practice. The key learning from this review is beneficial to local practice and aligns with learning from our local serious incident notifications. Themes explored with practitioners:

- How do we keep the child at the centre of all assessment and decision-making?
- How do we not allow small improvements in parental cooperation to reduce professional curiosity or concerns about the child's welfare?
- How do we remain professionally curious about culture, faith, beliefs and lifestyle choices, and consider how these may influence parenting and child wellbeing?
- How can we stay curious about children who are 'out of sight' and may be at increased risk?
- How can we share information effectively and work more collaboratively at earlier points?

The work of the CSCP with multi-agency practitioners in 2025-26, explored case studies on educational neglect, focusing on how unmet educational needs can escalate over time. Discussions covered indicators such as poor attendance, persistent absence, delayed enrolment and disengagement from learning, alongside the importance of early identification, professional curiosity, information sharing and timely intervention.

Multi-agency learning reinforced the need to understand neglect within the context of a child's wider lived experience, particularly where multiple vulnerabilities exist. Learning from a recent rapid review informed the development of **Multi-agency Neglect — Practitioners Guide to Identification and Assessment**. This has been co-designed by local families to support consistent assessment and response through professional curiosity, effective partnership working, cultural awareness, anti-discriminatory practice and a strong focus on the child's voice.

Key considerations include:

- Addressing disproportionality and ensuring anti-discriminatory practice.
- Impact of poverty and wider socio-economic factors on neglect.
- Affluent neglect - where emotional and developmental needs remain unmet despite material advantage.
- Additional vulnerabilities such as disability, mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.

Voice of the child

Participation work and inspections highlighted that children value consistent relationships, cultural sensitivity and being asked about their daily lives. Tools such as cultural genograms and identity mapping helped children share experiences of neglect, emotional absence and instability.



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7.2 Domestic abuse & violence against women and girls

CSCP oversight identified domestic abuse as a continuing safeguarding concern and a recurring theme in serious incidents, reviews and audits. In 2025–26, it featured in 14% of MASH contacts but 31% of completed assessments, suggesting risks are often identified through assessment, professional curiosity and multi-agency information sharing rather than at referral stage.

Camden MARAC considered 483 high-risk domestic abuse cases during 2025-26. A substantial proportion of the cases involved children living in the household, highlighting the ongoing impact of domestic abuse on children's safety, wellbeing and development. This highlights the continuing need for effective partnership working to identify risks early and provide support and protection for children and families affected by domestic abuse.

New National Reform Impact: The Lead Safeguarding Partners maintained oversight of domestic abuse through performance monitoring, safeguarding reviews, audits and partnership scrutiny. Particular attention was given to the implementation of national safeguarding reforms, including the introduction of Family Help teams and Safeguarding Family Group Conferences (SFGCs). Each locality-based Family Help team now includes an embedded domestic abuse specialist, strengthening practitioners' ability to identify, assess and respond to domestic abuse concerns at an earlier stage. The impact of these reforms will continue to be monitored as arrangements become embedded.

Learning from **transitional safeguarding** highlighted the increased vulnerability of adolescents affected by domestic abuse, exploitation, trauma and care experience. The CSCP discussed growing concerns about teenage relationship abuse, including coercive control, stalking, online monitoring and harmful use of social media. Feedback from Youth Justice Services emphasised the need for earlier intervention, prevention and education to help young people recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships.

During the year, the CSCP contributed to the development of **Camden's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy**, ensuring a stronger focus on the experiences of children and young people. The Partnership agreed that adolescent relationship abuse should be addressed through existing safeguarding structures, including stronger links between VAWG, Multi-agency Risk-Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) and vulnerability forums.

Impact: Local developments also strengthened support for victims and survivors. At UCLH, children and young people aged 16 and over can access support from a hospital-based Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) through a partnership arrangement with Camden Safety Net. In addition, Camden's Family Group Conference Service, Camden Safety Net and the Safe & Together Partnership Team developed refreshed guidance to support domestic abuse-informed Family Group Conferences, helping ensure family-led planning remains survivor-focused and safe.

Analysis and Challenges to overcome: A multi-agency review of domestic abuse practice found strong responses to high-risk cases, supported by effective partnership arrangements across Family Help, MASH, MARAC and specialist domestic abuse services. Practitioners demonstrated a good understanding of domestic abuse dynamics and relationship-based practice. The review also identified areas for improvement, including earlier support for children and families, making sure children's views and recovery needs shape plans, improving access to specialist support, and strengthening joint accountability across agencies. As a result, the CSCP agreed the following priorities for VAWG Board to take forward over 2026–27:

- Strengthen early identification and intervention before risks escalate.
- Ensure children's voices, experiences and recovery needs inform assessment and planning.
- Improve responses to adolescent relationship abuse and violence against women and girls.
- Ensure Children's Services engagement with the MARAC and the MARAC process is effective so victims who are children are kept safe.
- Further develop practitioner understanding of coercive control, cumulative harm and trauma-informed practice.

These priorities will remain under active scrutiny through the CSCP's quality assurance and performance framework to ensure safeguarding responses continue to improve outcomes for children and families affected by domestic abuse.

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The Lead Safeguarding Partners recognise **Operation Encompass** as an important early intervention for children affected by domestic abuse. During 2025-26, 202 notifications were made for Camden children, helping schools to identify and respond to children who may need additional support. All Camden state schools and 24 independent schools are now participating in the programme, following its expansion in September 2025. Timely information sharing between police and schools has enabled Designated Safeguarding Leads to provide early support, monitor wellbeing and respond to children's needs following domestic abuse incidents. Partners report positive impacts on early identification and pastoral support for children. To strengthen delivery, Safeguarding Partners have reviewed Operation Encompass performance and identified some gaps in the recording of school details. In response, targeted training has been provided to frontline officers and police systems have been updated to make school information a mandatory field when crime reports are created. These improvements are expected to increase the consistency and timeliness of notifications. The CSCP will continue to monitor performance, school responses and outcomes for children to ensure the programme is supporting vulnerable children and young people.

Impact of partnership working – case study: Through a relationship-based, multi-agency approach, a parent experiencing domestic abuse, housing instability and significant caring responsibilities was supported to move from crisis to safety. A dedicated practitioner invested time in building trust, creating the foundation for meaningful engagement with support. Working alongside housing services, family support, health professionals and other partners, a coordinated plan was developed that focused on the family's strengths, needs and long-term wellbeing. Despite significant challenges, agencies remained committed to a shared goal of improving outcomes for the family. As a result, the family secured safe and stable housing and is now living free from abuse. This case demonstrates how strong relationships, persistence and effective partnership working can empower families to build safer, more hopeful futures.



7.3 Child sexual abuse (CSA)

The Lighthouse is a child-centred, multi-agency service based in Camden, providing support for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse, including exploitation. It brings together medical, therapeutic, advocacy, social care and police support in one location, helping children and families access the right help at the right time and supporting recovery from trauma. The service supports children and young people across Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington. This innovative approach enables agencies to work together more effectively, improving the experience and outcomes of children and young people affected by sexual abuse.

Scrutiny: National evidence suggests that child sexual abuse (CSA) may be under-recognised within safeguarding systems. Despite concerns about the prevalence of CSA, the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans under the category of sexual abuse is at its lowest level nationally in more than 30 years. This highlights the importance of ongoing scrutiny of how CSA is identified, assessed and recorded across local safeguarding partnerships. Research **published by the Department for Education** found that child sexual abuse and exploitation are often under-represented in children's social care data due to variations in recording practices, differences in professional interpretation, and the complex and overlapping nature of abuse. As a result, the relatively low number of locally recorded CSA cases should be interpreted with caution, as recorded data may not fully reflect the true extent of harm experienced by children.

Partners recognise the importance of maintaining professional curiosity, particularly where children are experiencing neglect, domestic abuse or other vulnerabilities that may increase their risk of sexual abuse.

Lead Safeguarding Partners are committed to strengthening awareness, confidence and identification of CSA through a whole-system approach that includes leadership oversight, specialist support and opportunities for reflective practice. While there is evidence of effective support where concerns are identified, partners will continue to seek assurance that children at risk of, or experiencing, sexual abuse are recognised early and receive timely and appropriate support.

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Responding to the National Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation

In June 2025, Baroness Casey published the National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, highlighting significant concerns regarding the response of agencies to child sexual exploitation. This led to the establishment of the statutory Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs in December 2025. The inquiry will examine institutional responses to child sexual exploitation and abuse and is expected to have significant implications for safeguarding partnerships, including demonstrating assurance that local arrangements effectively protect children and respond to the needs of victims and survivors. While the inquiry presents an important opportunity for survivors' experiences to be heard, acknowledged and used to inform systemic improvements, it may also lead to renewed emotional distress for some individuals. The Partnership recognises the importance of ensuring that trauma-informed support, advocacy and therapeutic services remain available to survivors and that their voices continue to shape local safeguarding practice and service development.

In response to insights from new research and evidence from **the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse**, the CSCP launched our updated **CSA multi-agency guidance and strategy** in December 2025. The Strategy aims to strengthen multi-agency safeguarding by helping practitioners identify and respond to child sexual abuse earlier and with greater confidence. Through targeted training, specialist support from **The Lighthouse**, and a stronger focus on professional curiosity, the strategy encourages practitioners to recognise signs of abuse even where a child has not made a disclosure. The strategy also supports practitioners to challenge unconscious bias and adultification, improve information sharing, and better understand the different forms of child sexual abuse, including online abuse and exploitation. By promoting a trauma-informed, child-centred approach and stronger multi-agency working, the strategy aims to improve outcomes for children at risk of sexual abuse and ensure more timely and effective safeguarding responses.

Operation Lanark Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) is due to be published in late 2026 and detailed further in Chapter 9. The LCSPR has highlighted the importance of responding effectively to child sexual abuse perpetrated by individuals working with children, supported by professional curiosity, effective information sharing, robust safeguarding cultures and timely multi-agency action. The merging findings continue to strengthen child-centred safeguarding practice locally and nationally.

Assurance of Local Multi-Agency Responses

As a partnership, we have continued to strengthen our understanding of the local effectiveness of arrangements to prevent, identify, support, disrupt and prosecute in accordance with the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) criteria (**National review into child sexual abuse within the family environment - GOV.UK**). Following a comprehensive assurance exercise, supported by robust scrutiny, independent challenge and detailed evaluation of multi-agency practice, the evidence demonstrates a mature, embedded and well-established multi-agency response. The scrutiny findings provide strong assurance that partners are working effectively together across the JTAI domains, while maintaining a clear focus on quality, impact and continuous improvement, as outlined below:



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	Evidence collected from partners:	Areas for further consideration in 2026-27:
Prevent	There is strong evidence of a partnership-wide commitment to preventing CSA through workforce development, awareness raising and trauma-informed practice. Agencies provide Level 3 safeguarding training covering CSA, harmful sexual behaviour, online abuse, exploitation and unconscious bias. The CSCP's Think the Unthinkable strategy, relational practice framework, specialist CSA workshops, safeguarding supervision and learning from reviews have strengthened professional confidence and understanding. Health, education, youth justice, police and children's social care services all contribute to preventative work through early identification, community engagement, Operation Encompass, healthy relationships education and specialist support from The Lighthouse.	Strengthen mechanisms for gathering and analysing feedback from children and families affected by CSA to inform prevention work
Identify	There is strong evidence that agencies have developed effective processes to identify children at risk of or experiencing CSA. Professional curiosity, trauma-informed assessments, HEADSS structured psychosocial assessments, HEADSS assessments, safeguarding screening, MASH processes, psychosocial meetings, strategy discussions and specialist consultations with The Lighthouse support early recognition. Training addresses unconscious bias, adultification and barriers to disclosure, helping practitioners identify boys, children with disabilities and children from racially minoritised communities who may otherwise be overlooked. Multi-agency information sharing through MASH, strategy meetings and child protection processes supports timely identification and intervention.	Introduce thematic auditing of CSA referrals and assessments to test the quality of professional analysis and decision-making.
Support	There is substantial evidence of child-centred and trauma-informed support across the partnership. The Lighthouse provides specialist therapeutic, advocacy and justice support. Agencies demonstrate strengths-based practice, consideration of culture, identity and disability, and use interpreters, advocates, communication aids and specialist services to remove barriers. Children are supported through holistic assessments, safety planning, CAMHS, family therapy, substance misuse services and multi-agency care planning. Children's voices, wishes and feelings are routinely considered within assessments and intervention planning.	Develop partnership measures to evaluate longer-term outcomes for children receiving CSA support.
Disrupt	There is evidence of multi-agency disruption activity. Police, children's social care, youth justice and safeguarding partners use safeguarding interventions, intelligence sharing, risk briefings, Harmful Sexual Behaviour panels, Child Abduction Warning Notices, contextual safeguarding approaches, safety planning and exploitation disruption tools. MACE, strategy meetings and Vulnerable Adolescent arrangements support coordinated responses to emerging risks and perpetrators. Agencies demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding-led responses that avoid unnecessary criminalisation of children.	Increase partnership scrutiny of perpetrator-focused work and outcomes for children following disruption interventions.
Prosecute	There is evidence of effective support for criminal investigations and prosecutions. Agencies work closely with The Lighthouse, Havens, Police and Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) teams to support investigations, Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interviews and evidence gathering. Children are offered advocacy, psychological support and child-centred justice processes designed to reduce re-traumatisation. Multi-agency planning, specialist consultation and safeguarding oversight support criminal investigations while maintaining the child's welfare as the primary consideration.	Establish partnership scrutiny of ABE timeliness, quality and children's experiences of the criminal justice process.

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7.4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people remains a central priority for the CSCP. Mental health needs are present across every aspect of safeguarding, shaping children's lived experiences, influencing family relationships, affecting attendance and intersecting with trauma, identity, exploitation and care experience. In Camden, partners continue to strengthen a whole system approach to mental health, ensuring children, young people and families receive support that is timely, relational and responsive to their individual needs. Camden schools pupil data (2024) shows that many children and young people are experiencing poor mental health, with around one in five 11–16-year-olds and one in four 17–19-year-olds living with a mental health condition.

Strong partnership arrangements across Camden have enabled services to respond effectively to the mental health needs of children and young people. During 2025-26, CAMHS received 3,162 referrals (86% of referrals were accepted) and provided support to 2,702 children and young people. The delivery of 1,747 first appointments and 32,200 follow-up appointments highlights the capacity of services to identify needs, provide early intervention, and maintain ongoing support for those requiring continued care. The median age at referral for CAMHS services was 14.5 years old which highlights the importance of targeted mental health support for young adolescents, particularly during key transition periods such as moving from primary to secondary school and navigating increasing social, academic and emotional pressures. Camden's CAMHS continues to demonstrate strong outcomes and effective multi-agency working to support children and young people's mental health needs. However, increasing demand for services, waiting times, transition challenges between children and adult services, and inequalities in access remain key areas for ongoing oversight and partnership focus to ensure all children and young people receive timely and equitable support.

Impact: 55% of children and young people working with CAMHS showed positive improvement against Goal Based Outcomes and 50% demonstrated meaningful improvement in Children's Global Assessment Scores.

Scrutiny: CAMHS data indicates an underrepresentation of Asian Children and young people receiving CAMHS service in Camden. The CSCP will continue to scrutinise this, exploring whether this reflects unmet need, barriers to access, referral patterns, cultural factors, or data quality issues, and identifying any actions required to address potential inequalities.

Continued partnership working between CAMHS and local youth hubs has increased opportunities for clinicians to meet young people in accessible community settings rather than at CAMHS clinics. This collaborative approach improves access to mental health support while also promoting resilience and emotional wellbeing through the social connections and structured activities available at youth hubs. This includes:

The Brandon Centre counselling and psychotherapy service received 188 referrals in 2025-26, highlighting the continued demand for mental health support among young people aged 16-25 with mild to moderate mental health needs. To maximise access and support young people while they await individual interventions, the service has implemented a range of approaches, including group work and signposting to appropriate services, ensuring that young people are connected to support at the earliest opportunity.

The Hive Youth Hub provides one-to-one emotional wellbeing support, advice on employment, education, training, sexual health and substance misuse, alongside a range of activities including arts, music, sport, cooking and workshops. In 2025-26, the Hub supported 213 young people through one-to-one support and recorded 5,811 visits from 1,197 young people across 647 group sessions.

Impact: Young people reported positive outcomes, with around 70% achieving improvements against their personal goals.

Growing With You continues to provide trauma-informed mental health support for children in care and care-experienced young people, embedding therapeutic support within wider care planning. The service also strengthens the support network around young people through reflective sessions, training for Personal Advisors and foster carers, and consultation for professionals.

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Impact: Feedback shows improved engagement with services, greater continuity of support, and increased placement stability for young people receiving sustained therapeutic support.

Fitzrovia Youth in Action (FYA) Peer Mentoring - Through partnerships with 17 schools and youth organisations, FYA's Peer Mentoring Programme engaged 240 young people and delivered 975 peer support sessions in 2025-26. The programme enables young people to support one another, build resilience and increase understanding of mental health.

Impact: Outcomes were positive, with 72% of mentors and 79% of mentees reporting improved mental wellbeing, demonstrating the value of peer-led approaches in strengthening emotional health and reducing isolation.

Coram Creative Therapies works closely with schools, Early Help and CAMHS to provide art, music and drama therapies for children and young people with SEND and social, emotional and mental health needs. In 2025-26, 131 children received support, with referrals from 43 schools and partner services.

Impact: Outcomes were particularly strong, with 94% of children making progress towards their therapeutic goals, helping improve confidence, emotional regulation, relationships and engagement in education.

Delivered jointly by FYA, the Brandon Centre and The Hive, **Social Prescribing** connects young people with community activities, helping address social factors that impact wellbeing.

Impact: In 2025-26, 179 young people received support to access creative, social and sporting opportunities. Young people reported improved wellbeing, confidence, motivation, social connections and coping strategies, with all young people assessed at the Brandon Centre demonstrating positive progress towards at least one personal goal.

The Parent Wellbeing Service works collaboratively with CAMHS, adult mental health services, social care and other professionals to support parents whose mental health is affecting family wellbeing. Between Q4 2024/25 and Q3 2025/26, 57 parents entered treatment and the service maintained an average caseload of 55 parents.

Impact: By improving parental mental health, the service strengthens parenting capacity and family relationships, with 83% of parents showing improved outcomes, reducing the impact of parental mental health difficulties on children and young people.

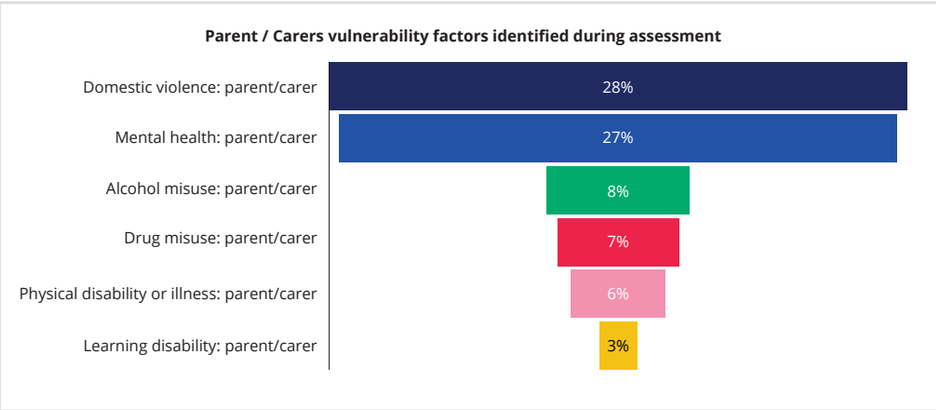
Impact: The CSCP Multi-agency Audit of Care experienced children & young people - Exploring their **mental health and experiences of transitions** highlighted the timely, flexible support which was tailored to individual needs as a key strength in supporting this vulnerable cohort of children. The independent author also highlighted '*The structure of the multi-agency offer to care experienced young people is to be commended and features strongly in the audits in terms of the level of support that young people can access.*'

7.5 Early Years and supporting vulnerable parents

The CSCP **multi-agency pre-birth assessment guidance** supports practitioners to assess risk to unborn babies and identify appropriate support for expectant parents. Recognising the heightened vulnerability of infants under one, partners reviewed learning from the **National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's Protecting All Vulnerable Babies Better report** and tested local arrangements against national findings. Lead Safeguarding Partners have reviewed the findings and identified strong alignment. Learning from national and local reviews continues to highlight recurring themes: the need for timely assessment during pregnancy, effective information sharing, engagement of both parents, and stronger oversight of families experiencing multiple and cumulative vulnerabilities.

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Social care assessment data shows that domestic domestic abuse parent/ carer (28%) and parental mental health (27%) remain the most significant parental vulnerabilities, followed by alcohol use (8%), drug use (7%), physical ill health (6%) and learning disability (3%). While this demonstrates effective identification of risk factors, it also highlights the scale of need facing families and the importance of ensuring early help and safeguarding responses are sufficiently coordinated and impactful.



Learning from serious incidents

In 2024, Camden notified a serious incident following the death of a young baby. Lead Safeguarding Partners and the National Panel agreed that a Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Review (LSCPR) should be undertaken. Partners have sought assurance that learning is being translated into practice. Progress includes:

- Introduction of a new **Camden Advocacy Policy** to strengthen understanding of advocacy roles and responsibilities.
- Multi-agency training on safe sleeping, non-accidental injury and bruising in pre-mobile infants.
- Reflective learning sessions focused on complex safeguarding practice.



- Training on intersectionality and transitional safeguarding.
- Implementation of the Family Help model from January 2026, promoting earlier, coordinated and family-led support.
- Strengthening domestic abuse and perpetrator pathways.
- Review of MARAC arrangements, including information sharing, attendance and decision-making.

From the CSCP's perspective, these developments are positive; however, the challenge is evidencing their impact on frontline practice and outcomes for babies. The forthcoming review findings, alongside audit and performance activity, will be critical in assessing whether improvements lead to earlier risk identification, stronger professional curiosity and more effective multi-agency intervention.

Safe-sleeping and coping with crying

Safe sleeping and coping with crying remain recurring themes in local and national reviews. Partners continue to promote consistent messages through maternity, health visiting and family support services, including the **ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope** programme and safer sleep campaigns.

While assurance activity indicates strong promotion of these messages, partners recognise the need to better understand reach, parental engagement and the impact of campaigns on reducing preventable harm.

To further support families and professionals, the National Child Mortality Database Programme, working in partnership with UCL, has developed a series of short videos providing practical advice on safer sleep and preventing accidents in and around the home. These resources are designed to improve awareness, promote safe caregiving practices and help reduce avoidable harm to babies and children. Videos can be accessed **here**.

Engaging fathers and male carers

Lead Safeguarding Partners recognise that fathers and male carers can be less visible within safeguarding assessments and intervention plans. Strengthening their engagement remains a key area for development, given the important role they play in promoting protective factors, reducing risk and improving outcomes for children. The Father Inclusive Practice programme sought to address engagement of fathers in children's services by challenging professional assumptions and improving the routine identification, contact and involvement of fathers in assessments and planning. The programme was underpinned by

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evidence showing that 90% of fathers attend the birth of their child and 85% of mothers are in a relationship with the child's father at birth, suggesting that fathers often become invisible through service processes rather than a lack of interest. The programme promoted practical changes, including direct engagement with fathers, improved recording practices and greater professional curiosity, to strengthen whole-family assessments and improve safeguarding outcomes. In June 2026, Camden hosted a Father's Day event in the community to strengthen father engagement, celebrate the positive role of fathers and male carers, and promote a whole-family approach to improving outcomes for children. **The Caring Dads programme**, which helps men to examine and address their behaviours and improve relationships with their children, also continued this year.

CSCP Section 11 audit: Section 11 Audit of Nursery Settings in Camden

Safeguarding in nursery settings was selected as the CSCP's 2025 Section 11 audit theme following changes to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safeguarding requirements and previous assurance activity in schools.

A total of **70 settings** participated, including Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI), maintained and school-based nurseries. Findings provided assurance that most settings demonstrated:

- Strong safeguarding leadership and culture.
- Effective DSL arrangements.
- Staff confidence in recognising and responding to concerns.
- Robust recording and escalation systems.
- Good awareness of whistleblowing and allegations procedures.
- High compliance with safer recruitment and EYFS requirements.

However, the audit identified variability across the sector, particularly within parts of the PVI sector, highlighting the need for ongoing support and challenge.

Priority Actions for 2026-27

In response to audit findings, partners will:

- Increase uptake of DSL refresher, Prevent and safeguarding training.
- Strengthen safeguarding policies to reflect current legislation and emerging risks, including online harm.
- Improve consistency in safer recruitment practices.
- Enhance engagement and support for the PVI sector through locality-based learning, training and quality assurance activity.

These actions will focus on improving consistency of safeguarding practice across all early years settings and strengthening assurance that children receive the same standard of protection regardless of provision type.

7.6 Safeguarding Children in Family and Community Care Arrangements

Private Fostering

Private fostering arrangements benefit from strong partnership working across Camden, helping to ensure children living with carers outside their immediate family are identified, assessed and supported early. Through collaboration between social care, health services, schools and community partners, children receive appropriate safeguarding oversight and support where needed.

The CSCP has strengthened awareness of private fostering through multi-agency training, updated guidance, information campaigns and engagement with health partners. This helps professionals and communities recognise and report private fostering arrangements, ensuring children remain visible, safe and able to access support.

Scrutiny: Lead Safeguarding Partner scrutiny highlights the importance of maintaining awareness across the partnership, recognising that private fostering arrangements can otherwise remain hidden. Continued efforts to improve professional understanding and community awareness will help ensure that all privately fostered children are identified promptly, assessed appropriately and supported to achieve positive outcomes.

Kinship Care: Responding to a Growing National Priority

Kinship care is increasingly recognised as a vital part of the children's social care system. It describes arrangements where children are unable to safely live with their parents and are instead cared for by relatives, family friends, or other connected adults. National reforms following the Independent Review of Children's Social Care have highlighted kinship care as a key mechanism for enabling children to remain within their family networks and communities, while reducing reliance on formal care arrangements.

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Against this national backdrop, Camden recognised the growing importance of kinship care and, in 2025, developed its first Kinship Strategy, setting out priorities and commitments to support kinship families over the next three years. As of November 2025, 230 children in Camden were living in formal kinship arrangements:

- 192 under Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs)
- 22 in kinship foster placements
- 16 under Child Arrangements Orders (CAOs)

These figures highlight the important role kinship carers play in supporting children and contributing to Camden's safeguarding system.

Scrutiny: The data reflects a broader national trend, with more children being cared for by extended family members amid increasing family pressures and demand on children's social care services. While kinship care can provide greater stability, continuity and stronger family relationships, carers often take on responsibilities during periods of crisis and may face financial, emotional and practical challenges.

The CSCP will work with the Corporate Parenting Board to oversee support for kinship families and ensure legal arrangements do not result in unequal access to services. This reflects the growing recognition that support should be based on a family's level of need rather than legal status, supporting Camden's commitment to achieving equitable outcomes for children in kinship care.

Camden's strategy addresses these challenges through a more ambitious and equitable approach, built on a commitment to:

- **A family-first approach**, ensuring family networks are considered wherever safe and appropriate before children enter care.
- **Early identification and involvement of family networks** to support decision-making and planning.
- **Equitable support based on need, reducing disparities experienced by kinship carers.**
- **Integrated multi-agency working across social care, education, health and community services.**

The strategy is structured around five priorities:

- **Security** – ensuring children and carers can access appropriate financial, legal and practical support.
- **Inclusion** – strengthening participation and ensuring kinship families help shape services.
- **Stability** – promoting sustainable arrangements and reducing the risk of family breakdown.
- **Awareness** – increasing understanding of kinship care across services and communities.
- **Achievement** – helping children achieve positive outcomes in education, health and wellbeing.

The development of Camden's first Kinship Strategy is a significant step towards embedding kinship care within the borough's wider safeguarding and early help system.

7.7 Responding to Asylum-Seeking Families

The Lead Safeguarding Partners have maintained oversight of families seeking asylum and refuge living in Home Office-procured hotels and dispersed accommodation across Camden. These children and families are among the borough's most vulnerable, often experiencing trauma, displacement, uncertainty and prolonged instability.

During the year, the partnership has focused on strengthening safeguarding responses through early identification of need, effective information sharing, trauma-informed practice and maintaining visibility of children whose circumstances can change rapidly. Particular attention has been given to the impact of frequent moves and disrupted living arrangements, which can affect school attendance, access to services and the identification of emerging safeguarding concerns.

In Spring 2025, partners reviewed the safeguarding implications of children moving into and out of Camden and the challenges this presents for maintaining oversight and continuity of support. The Independent Scrutineer provided assurance that Camden has effective arrangements for identifying and recording children living in non-traditional or informal arrangements, helping vulnerable children remain visible to services.

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Multi-agency audit activity highlighted that children experiencing mobility and disruption are not always recognised consistently across agencies. Learning from a Rapid Review presented in September 2025 reinforced the importance of professional curiosity and understanding children's lived experiences, particularly where cumulative trauma, bereavement and emotional distress may influence behaviour and engagement with services.



Scrutiny: Oversight is further supported through a pan-London steering group, which provides assurance regarding safeguarding arrangements within asylum accommodation settings. Partners remain alert to the potential impact of national immigration policy changes, which may increase the risk of homelessness, poverty and destitution for some families.

Locally, Camden continues to provide coordinated safeguarding and health oversight through Children's and Adults Services, working closely with the Home Office, Clearsprings and accommodation safeguarding leads. Clear referral pathways, joint risk management arrangements and shared accountability support effective partnership responses.

All hotel staff receive Level 3 safeguarding training, alongside additional training on trauma-informed practice and responding to suicidal ideation. Multi-agency safeguarding and health oversight meetings are held every three weeks to review risks, coordinate support and address concerns. While robust referral processes are in place, partners continue to improve the timeliness of information sharing about families arriving in Camden with known complex needs.

The Displaced Refugees and Families Service (DRFS) continues to provide practical and safeguarding support to families living in asylum accommodation. During 2025–26, 42 families successfully moved on from Home Office accommodation. At the time of reporting, 27 families, including 44 children, remained in asylum accommodation and continued to receive support while awaiting decisions on their asylum claims. Many continue to experience lengthy delays in the asylum process, increasing vulnerability and reinforcing the need for ongoing safeguarding oversight and multi-agency support.

Impact: In January 2026, UCLH introduced the **Safeguarding Complexity Toolkit**, which provided further depth to practitioners' understanding of children presenting with complex risk profiles. This development aligns with wider CSCP work on neglect and early help, strengthening recognition of how multiple and intersecting needs, including migration-related stress and social isolation, can contribute to cumulative harm over time.



Scrutiny: Education partners contributed important insights relevant to asylum seeking families. The Section 11 audit presented in November 2025 highlighted the increasing complexity of needs within school cohorts, including children experiencing emotional distress, disrupted educational histories and challenges around attendance. Partnership discussions highlighted the role of schools as key protective environments, particularly where wider family circumstances are unstable or uncertain, supporting visibility and engagement with safeguarding systems.

7.8 Safeguarding in education settings

Through safeguarding reviews, the CSCP supports continuous improvement in schools and provides partnership assurance that local safeguarding arrangements are effective and responsive. Between April 2025 and March 2026, 11 full safeguarding reviews and seven focused reviews were completed across Camden schools.

The reviews identify effective safeguarding practice and opportunities for development, helping schools strengthen their safeguarding culture and informing partnership-wide learning and improvement.

Looking ahead, the revised Ofsted inspection framework, due to be introduced in November 2026, places greater emphasis on safeguarding leadership, staff training and awareness, the management of safeguarding arrangements, safer recruitment, and responses to child-on-child violence. Safeguarding will be judged as 'met' only where all standards within the toolkit are achieved and none of the 'not met' criteria apply. The CSCP and Camden Learning will continue to support schools to meet these requirements and maintain strong safeguarding arrangements for children and young people.

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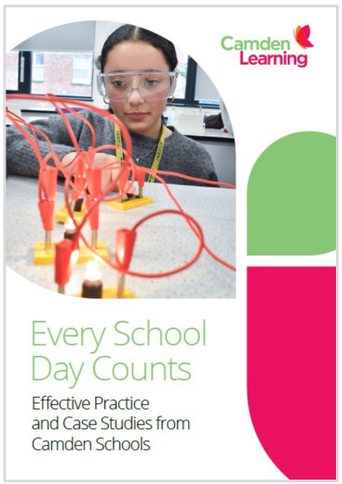
Scrutiny and Impact: Since April 2025 Ofsted have inspected ten schools in Camden. Safeguarding arrangements in every school inspected was judged to be effective.

Attendance

School absence, particularly in secondary schools, remains a concern in Camden, with overall and persistent absence rates above London and national averages. In 2024-25, 16.6% of primary and 29.7% of secondary pupils were persistently absent.

Improving attendance remains a partnership priority. Key initiatives include the publication of the Every School Day Counts good practice guide, targeted multi-agency support through Team Around the School (TAS), and the development of an attendance toolkit to help schools understand barriers to attendance.

Camden Learning's School Inclusion Support Officers also work closely with schools on data monitoring, targeted interventions and sharing effective practice.



Suspensions and exclusions

In 2024-25 52 primary pupils received 101 suspensions at a rate of 1%. Provisional data indicates that this lower than the comparable rates for London and England.

At secondary 596 pupils received 1106 suspensions at a rate of 11.1%. This is lower than the provisional rate for England but higher than the comparable rate for London.

There was one permanent exclusion from a primary school and 28 permanent exclusions from secondary schools in 2024-25. Possession of an offensive weapon was the largest single reason for exclusion, accounting for seven exclusions.

Impact: The CSCP received assurance on the implementation of the Met's Neighbourhood Policing Review while maintaining a focus on its impact for children and young people. The review aims to strengthen safeguarding through a more consistent, child-centred approach across schools and communities, with a greater emphasis on building trusted relationships, understanding vulnerabilities and addressing disproportionality.

The Partnership recognised the potential benefits of embedding officers within neighbourhood teams and strengthening links with schools, youth services and other partners. It will continue to monitor how these changes are delivered in practice, particularly their impact on the early identification of risk, information sharing, effective intervention, and improved outcomes for children and families.

Section 11 audit: Safeguarding in education settings

The biennial 2025 Section 11 safeguarding audit provided the CSCP with a comprehensive overview of safeguarding practice across Camden schools. A 100% response rate demonstrated the priority schools place on safeguarding. The audit highlighted strong safeguarding cultures, with high levels of staff training, effective reporting systems, and clear leadership through designated safeguarding leads and governors.

The findings also showed that schools are responding to increasingly complex safeguarding needs, with significant levels of vulnerability below statutory intervention thresholds. Mental health concerns were the most commonly reported issue, alongside domestic abuse and neglect, often reflecting wider socio-economic pressures affecting children and families.

There is consistent compliance with statutory requirements, including safer recruitment checks, safeguarding policies, and staff induction. Schools demonstrated confidence in managing serious allegations against staff and a commitment to the Prevent Duty is evident. Teaching of safeguarding is well embedded, though the evolving nature of online harms is something schools are constantly having to respond to.

Overall, the audit highlighted a strong multi-agency commitment to supporting children and families, with priorities centred on early help, consistent practice, effective partnership working, and responding to emerging risks, including online harm and mental health concerns.

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Impact: Online Safety was identified as priority for schools during the Section 11 audit. Recognising the partnership responsibility in response to this, an **Online Harm Task and Finish Group** is being created which will include partners from police, health, IT, and youth services, with a particular emphasis on involving school-based professionals. A key focus of the group will be to ensure that local safeguarding arrangements are aligned with the Online Safety Act and national guidance, supporting consistency across policy, practice, and messaging.

Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Designated Teacher Forum (DSL)

The termly DSL forum continues to be well-attended with attendance from approximately 60 schools at each meeting covering primary, secondary, special/ AP and independent schools. The DSL Forum provides opportunities for learning from within the sector with schools DSL's directly contributing and presenting on areas of learning including on their experiences of the Ofsted approach to safeguarding in inspections.

Over the past year the forum has covered the following areas of learning:



- Learning from Serious Incidents and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews including Operation Lanark
- Implementing Martyn's Law and the new guidance on restrictive interventions
- NSPCC's Problematic sexual behaviour Programme
- NSPCC DART (Domestic Abuse Recovering Together) Programme
- Exploitation and missing children
- The Brandon Centre Return to Learn Programme to support families back to education
- National reforms to children's social care
- Reflective supervision for DSLs

In addition to the termly forum, a monthly DSL Safeguarding Update was launched in September 2025, providing Camden DSLs with regular updates on safeguarding developments, guidance changes, learning from reviews, and key resources.

Elective Home Education

The CSCP and Camden Learning continue to monitor elective home education (EHE) as a safeguarding priority. Camden ended the 2024-25 academic year with 377 children on the voluntary EHE register, an increase from 350 in 2023-24. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which received Royal Assent in May 2026, will introduce new duties for local authorities, including a register of children not in school, although implementation is not expected before September 2027.

In response to rising EHE numbers and findings from the 2024 multi-agency audit, capacity has increased from 0.4 FTE to 1 FTE. This additional resource will strengthen oversight of home-educated children, improve the assessment of educational provision, and support the earlier identification of safeguarding concerns.

Children Missing Education

The CSCP continues to monitor Children Missing Education (CME) as an important safeguarding indicator. Although overall numbers remain low, 168 children were identified as CME during the academic year, a slight increase from 162 the previous year. Robust safeguarding arrangements ensure weekly contact with all CME cases, with 85% resolved within six weeks. The Partnership also receives assurance that schools are supported to comply with DfE guidance through ongoing advice on off-rolling and regular updates delivered via Camden Learning. This helps ensure timely identification, tracing and support for children who may be missing from education.

7.9 Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The CSCP has maintained oversight of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), recognising their increased vulnerability to harm and poorer long-term outcomes when needs are not identified and addressed effectively. This work has taken place against a backdrop of rising demand and increasing complexity across the local SEND system. As of January 2025, 1,607 children and young people aged 0–25 had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Camden, with a further 3,416 pupils receiving SEN support, including 289 children receiving an Exceptional Needs Grant. Demand for EHCPs continues to rise, with new plans increasing from 131 in 2019 to 202 in 2024.

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Challenges: The CSCP noted that children and young people with SEND remain disproportionately represented in serious safeguarding incidents. This highlights the need to embed safeguarding within wider SEND reform and improvement activity and to understand whether multi-agency investment and service development are improving outcomes, experiences and life chances.

Inclusion, Achievement and Belonging

A key area of CSCP scrutiny has been Camden's ambition to support more children with SEND in mainstream and community settings. With over half of children with EHCPs educated in mainstream schools, Camden continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion. The Partnership views this as important because children who feel included are more likely to engage in learning, sustain positive relationships, participate in school life and achieve better outcomes.

The introduction of the Meeting Predictable Needs Toolkit and additional support through Camden Learning has strengthened schools' ability to identify needs earlier and respond effectively. The CSCP has welcomed this progress while recognising that inclusion is becoming more challenging amid rising demand, workforce pressures, school sufficiency issues and wider financial constraints. Continued assurance is needed that financial pressures do not disproportionately affect children with SEND or restrict access to timely support.

Hearing the Voice of Children and Families

The CSCP has monitored how the SEND partnership is strengthening participation and ensuring children and families influence service development. This has included the Young Inspectors programme, engagement work on communication and SEND processes, targeted outreach with under-represented communities and a stronger focus on co-production. While encouraged by this progress, the Partnership continues to seek assurance that children's voices consistently influence decision-making and lead to demonstrable improvements in service quality, outcomes and family experience.

The Young Inspectors Programme enables young people with lived experience to review services and make recommendations for improvement. In 2025, a group of Young Inspectors, including young people with SEND, care experience and EHCPs, examined how effectively children and young people are involved in Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning.

Young Inspectors found that children and young people value being listened to, having achievements recognised and being involved in decisions about their support. However, some reported not understanding Annual Reviews, feeling unsure how to contribute or not being asked for their views. The findings underline the need for participation to be meaningful, accessible and tailored. Key recommendations included:

- Involve children and young people more actively in decisions about their support and help them understand meetings and reviews.
- Gather children's views throughout the year, not solely during annual reviews.
- Use a wider range of accessible and creative communication methods.
- Build trusting relationships through ongoing engagement and conversations.
- Ensure children's views are accurately represented and not overshadowed by adults.

Impact: Strengthening Early Identification and Service Quality

- The Partnership received assurance regarding improvements in the quality and responsiveness of SEND services.
- SEND surgeries, the duty line and strengthened quality assurance arrangements have improved access to advice, support and oversight.
- Revised arrangements for phase transfers have strengthened planning for children moving between education settings, reducing disruption at key transition points.
- Partners have continued to invest in workforce development, neurodevelopmental pathways and early intervention.

The CSCP views these developments positively but recognises that activity alone is not evidence of impact. The key test remains whether earlier identification and intervention are improving attendance, educational engagement, reducing vulnerability and delivering better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Preparation for Adulthood

The Partnership has welcomed the increased focus on preparation for adulthood through post-16 planning, careers support, employment initiatives and targeted

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transition activity. Assurance activity has focused on whether young people with SEND are developing the skills, confidence and opportunities needed for successful transitions into adulthood and full participation in their communities.

Safeguarding Children in Residential Settings

The CSCP has maintained oversight of progress made in response to the national Safeguarding Practice Review relating to children with disabilities and complex needs living in residential settings.

Impact: Partners have demonstrated progress through strengthened placement quality assurance arrangements, regular social work visits, improved advocacy provision and enhanced oversight of children's health and wellbeing.

- A dedicated policy for visiting children in residential settings and strengthened multi-agency monitoring arrangements have provided greater assurance regarding safety and welfare.
- The Partnership has seen stronger joint working between SEND, health and social care services.
- The introduction of the Designated Social Care Officer role, improved oversight of out-of-borough placements and greater coordination between professionals have strengthened multi-agency planning and safeguarding oversight for children with the most complex needs.

Next Steps: Challenges to Overcome

The CSCP has seen encouraging evidence of stronger partnership working across education, health and care, alongside greater focus on participation, inclusion and the voice of children and families. However, significant challenges remain.

Children and young people with SEND continue to be over-represented in serious safeguarding incidents, demand continues to increase and local systems remain under financial and sufficiency pressures. The Partnership will continue to focus on:

- Seeking assurance that SEND improvement activity is delivering measurable improvements in safety, achievement, attendance, participation, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.
- Understanding how effectively partners are addressing factors contributing to the over-representation of children with SEND in serious safeguarding incidents.
- Monitoring whether children with SEND experience a genuine sense of inclusion and belonging within schools and communities.
- Understanding the impact of school sufficiency pressures, workforce challenges and the wider MTFS context on outcomes.
- Maintaining oversight of children with complex needs, including those in residential settings, alternative provision and out-of-borough placements.
- Ensuring multi-agency arrangements remain effective in identifying need early, responding proportionately and improving long-term outcomes.
- Seeking assurance that preparation for adulthood pathways are leading to positive transitions into further education, employment, training and independence.

7.10 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Our safeguarding arrangements continue to recognise Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a form of child abuse and a serious criminal offence. FGc/M can also be referred to as Female Genital Cutting and Mutilation (FGCM). Throughout the year, partners have maintained a strong focus on prevention, identification and protection, promoting the use of FGc/M Protection Orders where there is a risk of girls being taken abroad or subjected to FGc/M.

Access to specialist support remains available through local NHS services, including UCLH's specialist Female Genital Mutilation (FGc/M) clinics for adults, children and young people. These services provide medical assessment, treatment, counselling and safeguarding support for those affected by or at risk of FGc/M. Camden's Children and Families Contact Service remains the main route for safeguarding referrals, enabling coordinated multi-agency responses where concerns are



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identified.

Scrutiny: Lead safeguarding partners recognise that, despite Camden's diverse population and the presence of communities where FGM is known to be practised, the number of cases identified through safeguarding assessments remains very low, this continues to be an area of scrutiny. Partners acknowledge that nationally FGM is often only identified in adulthood, frequently through maternity and obstetric services, highlighting the challenges associated with early identification. The partnership will therefore continue to seek assurance regarding the effectiveness of professional awareness, screening, information-sharing and safeguarding responses, maintaining a strong focus on professional curiosity, culturally informed practice and earlier identification of girls who may be at risk.

7.11 Approach to anti racist safeguarding practice

During 2025-26, the CSCP strengthened its whole-system commitment to anti-racist safeguarding, recognising the profound impact that racism, bias, discrimination and adultification can have on how children's experiences, vulnerability and needs are understood and responded to. Learning from **"It's Silent": Race, racism and safeguarding children** continued to shape partnership activity, reinforcing the need for practitioners and leaders to consciously and purposefully examine how race, culture, identity and power influence professional decision-making and children and families' experiences of services.

The partnership recognises that Global Majority children remain disproportionately represented across safeguarding and wider public service systems. Addressing this requires more than improving individual practice. It demands a deeper understanding of the structural and systemic factors that shape children's lives, including poverty, inequality, exclusion, discrimination, trauma, neurodiversity, disability, and other intersecting adversities. This reflects both national children's social care reform and Camden's locality-based approach, which seeks to understand and respond to the wider contextual drivers that influence risk, resilience and outcomes.

The CSCP's refreshed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements set clear expectations for compassionate, trauma-informed and anti-racist practice. Partners are expected to actively identify and challenge discrimination, disproportionality, stereotypes and bias throughout assessment, planning, intervention and review processes. Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and rapid reviews routinely consider the influence of race, racism, culture and identity, alongside other intersecting factors, to understand how systems, services and professional responses impact children's and families' experiences. This deliberate focus supports a culture of critical reflection, challenge and continuous learning.

Scrutiny: Multi-agency audit tools were strengthened to include explicit consideration of racial disproportionality, identity, culture, lived experience and trauma. The CSCP sought assurance from partners regarding how they support practitioners to recognise and challenge bias, both individually and organisationally. External inspections continue to provide assurance that Camden effectively considers children's identity, culture and lived experience within safeguarding practice.

Practitioners were encouraged to deepen their understanding of how children's experiences of race, identity, belonging and community influence their safety and wellbeing. Reviews highlighted the importance of professional curiosity, recognising that children who appear resilient, independent or high functioning may nonetheless experience unmet emotional needs, trauma or harm. Learning from It's Silent: Race, Racism and Safeguarding Children has informed work across schools, early help and safeguarding services, creating safer opportunities for children and young people to speak openly about their experiences and helping practitioners better understand the impact of racism, discrimination and identity. Camden Learning has further strengthened this work through the Global Majority Educators Network and Global Majority Governors Network, supporting a workforce that better reflects and understands the communities it serves.

Partnership Contributions and System Impact: The CSCP's anti-racist safeguarding approach is strengthened through partners' shared commitment to addressing the inequalities that contribute to unequal experiences and outcomes for children. This includes recognising how racism, poverty, exclusion, trauma, neurodiversity and other intersecting factors can influence children's lives, vulnerabilities and access to support.

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Metropolitan Police Service: Child First and Anti-Racist Reform

The Metropolitan Police Service has reported the following actions to strengthen its Child First and anti-racist approach:

- Embedded a **Child First approach**, ensuring all under-18s are recognised and responded to as children, with greater focus on vulnerability, safeguarding and children's voices.
- Delivered training on trauma-informed practice, adultification bias and neurodiversity, strengthening officers' understanding of how childhood experiences, identity and unmet need can shape vulnerability.
- Progressed its commitment to tackling disproportionality and rebuilding trust, particularly with Black children, young people and communities who have historically reported lower confidence in policing.
- Advanced anti-racist reform through implementation of the London Race Action Plan, alongside governance arrangements, including a local Culture Board, to strengthen accountability, challenge structural barriers and improve organisational culture.
- Strengthened multi-agency working with education, health, housing and safeguarding partners to address factors associated with increased police contact, including exclusion, exploitation, unmet need and wider inequalities affecting children and families.

NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB): Anti-Racist Safeguarding and Child Health

WNL ICB has prioritised reducing health inequalities and strengthening anti-racist safeguarding through:

- Strong safeguarding leadership and governance, providing oversight and accountability across West North London.
- Use of data and safeguarding intelligence to identify and respond to unequal outcomes, disproportionality and barriers to support for children and families.
- Routine sharing of learning from local and national safeguarding reviews to improve practice and strengthen understanding of bias, discrimination and inequality.
- Multi-agency safeguarding training that promotes consistent decision-making, reflective practice and equitable responses to children and families.
- Standardised safeguarding pathways and tools to support consistency and reduce variation in practice across health services.
- Close partnership working with local authorities, NHS providers and the voluntary and community sector to tackle health inequalities and strengthen anti-racist safeguarding.
- An intersectional approach that recognises the combined impact of race, poverty, disability, neurodiversity, trauma and wider disadvantage on children's experiences, wellbeing and outcomes.

Impact: Audit findings, learning reviews and reflective practice demonstrate improved consideration of children's identity, culture, lived experience and wider context within safeguarding practice. Practitioners report increased confidence in recognising and challenging bias and adultification, while applying a more nuanced understanding of how intersecting experiences, including racism, poverty, trauma, neurodiversity and cumulative disadvantage, can shape vulnerability and outcomes.

Learning from local reviews, national reform and **It's Silent** has encouraged practitioners to move beyond individualised explanations of risk and consider the broader systemic influences affecting children and families. This has strengthened more equitable, relationship-based and child-centred practice, while reinforcing the partnership's commitment to anti-racist safeguarding and addressing the drivers of disproportionality across the system.

7.12 Online Harm

Children and young people are increasingly exposed to a wide range of online risks, including harmful content, grooming, exploitation, cyberbullying, and the sharing of images. As more of their everyday lives are now spent online, through social media, gaming, communication, learning, and entertainment, their digital activity is not inherently harmful, but it does create new contexts in which risk can emerge. Partners report that online harms now feature in many safeguarding concerns. The Partnership has therefore focused on strengthening training, awareness, and multi agency responses in this area.

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Voice of the child

Children and young people described spending substantial amounts of time online and navigating digital spaces with limited adult oversight. This is reflected in Camden school pupil data (2024), which shows that 25% of secondary pupils spend more than four hours a day on social media on weekdays, rising to 42% at weekends, and 34% report that their phones are never monitored by parents or carers.

Impact: The MPS has strengthened its response to online child abuse through the implementation of a new operating model that makes better use of the collective expertise within online child abuse investigation teams. The model enhances the identification of offenders and the protection of children, while improving links with local communities and partner agencies to support a more coordinated safeguarding response. To further increase capacity and oversight, the MPS has also expanded its workforce through an increase in officer numbers and the creation of five new supervisory posts. These developments are intended to improve the effectiveness of investigations, strengthen safeguarding outcomes for children, and ensure greater resilience within specialist teams.

In response to the recommendation of the Section 11 Audit of Schools in 2025, an **Online Harm Task and Finish Group** has been created to provide strategic leadership and coordination for Camden's multi-agency response to online harms affecting children and young people. The aim of the task of finish group will be to:

- Develop a clear local understanding of online harm
- Strengthen workforce knowledge and safeguarding practice
- Improve multi-agency responses and information sharing
- Increase awareness and prevention for children and families
- Target support to the most vulnerable groups
- Enhance responses to online exploitation and abuse
- Embed the voice of children and young people in developing response to online harm

The work of the Online Harm Task and Finish group will also align with the development of the Adolescent Service re-design and the updated Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy, responding to rising complexity, risks outside the home, online harms, mental health pressures and the influence of the manosphere and social media on young people's attitudes, identity formation and peer relationships.

Impact: In 2025, A new MPS operating model has been implemented that better deploys online abuse teams' collective expertise in identifying offenders and protecting children and better links into local communities and services. An uplift in officer number and creation of 5 new supervisory posts was also agreed for the MPS Online Abuse Teams in the Central North London BCU.

NCL Online Harm Training

In February 2026, the five North London safeguarding partnerships (Camden, Islington, Haringey, Enfield and Barnet) jointly introduced the Online Harm 2026 training programme to broaden workforce knowledge and confidence in identifying and responding to digital harms. Across the three modules, there were 138 attendees, reflecting sustained interest and need across the partnerships.

7.13 Supporting children and young people exploring their gender identity

Lead safeguarding partners welcome the development of the Designated Local Specialist Services (DLSS) pilot, which has brought together health, education, social care and voluntary sector partners to provide earlier, community-based support for children and young people who are exploring or questioning their gender identity while awaiting specialist assessment.

From a safeguarding partnership perspective, the pilot demonstrates the value of a whole-child, multi-agency approach in ensuring that children and young people receive coordinated support that responds to their individual needs and circumstances. This has enabled earlier access to mental health, wellbeing, family, educational and safeguarding support, helping to reduce distress, strengthen protective family and community networks, and promote positive outcomes.

The CSCP recognises the importance of ensuring that children and young

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people receive timely, proportionate and person-centred support, particularly where there are complex and intersecting needs. Effective partnership working, clear communication with families, and a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities have been key to supporting children safely and appropriately.

As the DLSS model continues to evolve, lead safeguarding partners will maintain oversight of implementation and impact, including monitoring demand, waiting times, outcomes, and equitable access to services across different communities. The partnership will also seek assurance that information sharing arrangements, referral pathways and joint working processes remain effective, enabling agencies to identify and respond promptly to safeguarding concerns and to provide coordinated support for children and young people with complex needs.



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Safeguarding vulnerable adolescents

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8.1 Transformation of Adolescent Service

Throughout 2026-27 a prototype will be established to bring together previously separate services into a more coordinated and relationship-based model for young people aged 11–25 who are experiencing multiple vulnerabilities and risks outside the home. The transformation responds to increasing levels of exploitation, school exclusion, poor attendance, online harms and the disproportionate involvement of Black and Mixed Heritage young people in adolescent safeguarding services. Key changes include:

- One consistent worker model, reducing multiple handovers between services and ensuring young people build a trusted relationship with a single professional.
- A more joined-up service offer, bringing together youth support, exploitation and missing services, Connecting Families, family hubs and other specialist provision.
- Flexible, trauma-informed support delivered in homes, communities and networks rather than relying solely on office-based interventions.
- Wraparound multi-agency support, drawing together education, health, family support and safeguarding interventions around the needs of the young person and family.
- A stronger focus on prevention and earlier intervention, aiming to reduce escalation into crisis and statutory interventions.
- An extended age range up to 25, supporting smoother transitions into adulthood.

What difference will this make to children, young people and their families?

The changes aim to provide children, young people and families with a more coordinated, accessible and responsive service. Through a consistent trusted adult and better multi-agency working, young people should experience earlier identification of risk, quicker support and improved access to specialist services. The new approach is intended to strengthen engagement, reduce duplication, improve safety and stability, and help vulnerable adolescents feel more connected, supported and protected from harm.

Oversight and assurance required

The transformation of adolescent services represents a significant shift towards a more integrated, relational and trauma-informed model of support for vulnerable young people. Safeguarding partners will seek assurance that the approach is improving engagement, reducing harm and delivering better outcomes for adolescents experiencing multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities, while addressing disproportionality and strengthening transition arrangements into adulthood. A further update on progress and outcomes will be reported over the next year.

Connecting Families

Camden launched a six-month pilot in summer 2026 to test out an enhanced offer for vulnerable children and young people, which is an extension of Connecting Families and marks the next phase of Camden's Children's Services reform journey, in adolescent services. This will offer responsive support to children and young people aged 11–25 who are experiencing risk outside the home, with a focus on overrepresented groups and those experiencing multiple vulnerability factors.

The pilot is designed to improve outcomes for young people by offering consistent, relationship-based support through a trusted worker, reducing the need to repeat their story across services and providing help in community settings where they feel comfortable. By focusing on early intervention, the service aims to prevent issues from escalating into crisis. The adolescent worker will work alongside an existing lead professional rather than replacing them.

Young people benefit from tailored support around exploitation, serious violence, online harm, emotional wellbeing, education, peer relationships and family networks. Working alongside existing professionals, the new adolescent team helps strengthen safety, resilience and engagement with positive opportunities, while ensuring young people's voices remain central to planning and decision-making.

Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy

The partnership has continued to strengthen its joint response to adolescent risk through the Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy Group, bringing together intelligence, professional insight and learning from serious incidents to better understand the pressures young people are facing. Partners have focused on relational, community based practice, improving information sharing and aligning

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pathways so that risks (including those outside the home) are identified earlier and responses are coordinated across education, health, social care, police and the VCS. This work is helping to shape the 2026–28 strategy, ensuring the approach remains trauma informed, anti-racist and grounded in the lived experience of young people.

8.2 Child Exploitation

Strategic Oversight and Partnership Response

Child exploitation remained a key safeguarding priority across Camden during 2025-26. The partnership continued to respond to concerns relating to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), modern slavery and wider extra-familial harm. Strategic oversight was provided through the Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy Group, bringing together senior leaders, operational services and intelligence to coordinate a whole-system response.

Camden's approach is guided by the Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy and its five pillars of Prevent, Identify, Support, Disrupt and Enforce. Multi-agency arrangements are supported by established pathways and exploitation risk assessment tools, promoting more consistent identification of vulnerability and coordinated safeguarding responses. However, exploitation remains a complex and evolving area of harm, requiring continued vigilance and adaptation as patterns of risk change.

Building Professional Capability

Workforce development remains central to Camden's response. During 2025-26, multi-agency safeguarding training strengthened practitioner understanding of exploitation, contextual safeguarding, youth violence and the links between missing episodes and extra-familial harm. Targeted training was also delivered to social workers, youth workers, foster carers, youth hubs and Designated Safeguarding Leads. While this investment has strengthened awareness, continued focus is required to ensure learning translates into confident identification of risk, effective information sharing and timely intervention where indicators may be hidden or emerge gradually.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

During 2025-26, 97 children received a Child Criminal Exploitation risk assessment, demonstrating the continued identification of children vulnerable to exploitation. Analysis indicates that the most significant risks were linked to youth violence, drug-related offending and acquisitive crime. Of those assessed, 87% were male and 13% female, while 38% were identified as high risk. Positively, 49% of review assessments identified a reduction in risk. However, these outcomes require careful interpretation, as risk scores may increase as further intelligence emerges and a fuller picture of exploitation becomes known. This reinforces the importance of dynamic assessment and ongoing review.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

During 2025-26, 36 children received a Child Sexual Exploitation risk assessment. Of those identified, 83% were female and 17% male. The reduction in identified CSE cases reflects wider national trends. However, lower identification rates do not necessarily indicate lower prevalence. Barriers to disclosure, the increasing prominence of online harm and the normalisation of behaviours such as intimate image abuse mean risks may remain hidden. Children identified as vulnerable to CSE were most commonly exploited through relationship-based models, peer exploitation and online environments. While 60% of review assessments demonstrated reduced risk, further work is needed to strengthen identification across all genders and improve understanding of emerging forms of sexual exploitation.

Understanding Vulnerability and Risk

Local analysis continues to show that exploitation rarely occurs in isolation. Common vulnerability factors include substance misuse, poor school attendance, mental health needs, neurodiversity and missing episodes. These factors often interact and compound risk, reinforcing the importance of early help, contextual safeguarding and coordinated intervention that addresses underlying needs as well as presenting concerns.

Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE)

The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel remains a critical component of Camden's safeguarding arrangements. The panel enables agencies to share intelligence, coordinate disruption activity, identify people of concern and develop safety plans for children at risk. Using the VOLT (Victim, Offender, Location, Theme) framework, MACE supports contextual action planning and promotes a shared understanding of emerging threats and locations of concern.

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Scrutiny: While MACE provides effective oversight of known risks, assurance is needed that intelligence consistently translates into disruption activity and improved safety outcomes. Ongoing scrutiny should examine the effectiveness of contextual interventions at both an individual and community level.

A Whole-System Exploitation Response

Camden's response extends beyond MACE and is embedded across Children's Social Care, Youth Justice, Youth Services, Police and Public Protection arrangements. The partnership combines contextual safeguarding, public protection activity, intelligence from missing episodes and Return Home Conversations, and direct work with children and families. Importantly, the response recognises that exploitation is often linked to wider vulnerabilities and seeks to address these through relational and strengths-based practice. However, sustaining a whole-system approach requires continued alignment across services and consistent recognition of exploitation as a safeguarding issue rather than solely a behavioural or criminal justice concern.

Community Safety and Contextual Safeguarding

Creating safer communities remains central to preventing exploitation. The Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy works alongside Camden's Youth Safety Steering Group and Community Safety Partnership to strengthen community-based responses to harm. The CSCP recognises that children, families and communities are experts in their own lived experiences. Embedding community voices within contextual safeguarding approaches is essential to understanding local risks, strengthening protective factors and driving sustainable change.

Online Exploitation and Emerging Risks

Online exploitation continues to represent a significant and evolving threat. Increasingly, children are groomed, manipulated and controlled through digital platforms, creating new challenges for safeguarding professionals and families. The emergence of generative AI has added further complexity, increasing concerns regarding online coercion, image-based abuse, impersonation and the growing digital knowledge gap between children and adults. In response, the CSCP established an Online Harm Task and Finish Group to strengthen understanding of emerging digital risks and coordinate preventative activity across schools, services and communities.

Scrutiny: While progress has been made in strengthening exploitation pathways, workforce capability and partnership coordination, risks continue to evolve. The CSCP must continue to assess whether current arrangements are sufficiently responsive to emerging online harms, hidden exploitation and changing patterns of extra-familial risk. Future assurance should focus on the effectiveness of disruption activity, preventative interventions and whether children whose experiences are less visible are being identified and supported early.

Voice of the child

Children affected by exploitation often do not identify themselves as victims. During 2025–26, engagement highlighted strong pull factors linked to friendship groups and belonging, alongside pressures including coercion, manipulation and fear. Some describe exploitation occurring within peer groups or online spaces where harmful behaviour is normalised. These insights reinforce the importance of trusted relationships and responses grounded in lived experience.

Scrutiny: Scrutiny and oversight is supported by audit activity and performance monitoring focusing on risk identification, safety planning and impact over time. HMICFRS findings have also informed scrutiny, with local assurance confirming continued progress in police responses, workforce training and public protection arrangements. Together, these mechanisms provide a robust framework to understand risk, test effectiveness and ensure safeguarding responses continue to improve.

8.3 Missing Children

Missing as a Safeguarding Indicator

Children going missing remains a significant safeguarding concern for Camden. The partnership recognises that missing episodes are rarely isolated incidents and are more often indicators of wider vulnerability, harm or unmet need. Missing is understood not only as a safeguarding risk in itself, but as a potential sign of difficulties within a child's family, peer networks, placement, emotional wellbeing or sense of belonging.

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The CSCP's approach is therefore focused on understanding and responding to the factors driving missing episodes, rather than viewing the event in isolation. This requires agencies to maintain professional curiosity, explore the child's lived experience and identify the underlying causes of absence at the earliest opportunity.

Partnership Response and Multi-Agency Coordination

Camden continues to develop a coordinated, relationship-based response to children who go missing. The Exploitation and Missing Team works alongside Children's Social Care, Police, education settings and wider partners to ensure timely information sharing, joint decision-making and proportionate safeguarding responses.

Partnership arrangements focus on identifying repeat missing episodes, recognising patterns of behaviour and responding to emerging risks before concerns escalate. While progress has been made in strengthening multi-agency working, continued vigilance is required to ensure that information is consistently shared, risks are understood within the wider context of a child's life and opportunities for early intervention are not missed.

The introduction of Metropolitan Police Local Missing Hubs (LMHs) during 2025-26 has strengthened operational coordination through a dedicated 24/7 response. This has improved communication between agencies, families and placements and supported more timely safeguarding activity. The CSCP will continue to monitor the impact of these arrangements to ensure they deliver improved outcomes for children.

Learning from Return Home Conversations

A key strength within Camden's safeguarding response is the consistent use of Return Home Conversations (RHCs). Delivered independently by Missing Outreach Workers, these conversations provide valuable insight into the experiences, motivations and circumstances that contribute to children going missing. Learning from RHCs enables practitioners to better understand the push and pull factors influencing a child's behaviour and supports more informed care planning and risk assessment. Importantly, these conversations provide children with an opportunity to be heard and ensure that safeguarding responses are informed by their experiences rather than professional assumptions.

Scrutiny: However, the CSCP recognises that the value of RHCs is dependent on how effectively learning is translated into practice. Continued focus is therefore required to ensure intelligence gathered through RHCs consistently informs planning, intervention and wider strategic understanding of vulnerability.

Learning from Practice and Review Activity

Learning from local review and reflective practice activity has reinforced that missing episodes frequently form part of a broader pattern of cumulative harm. Evidence continues to demonstrate that vulnerability often develops over time through a combination of instability, disrupted relationships, trauma, reduced support networks and other interconnected experiences. This learning highlights the importance of recognising early warning signs and avoiding responses that become crisis-driven. The partnership must remain alert to escalating concerns, particularly where lower-level indicators may, when viewed collectively, point to increasing risk. Effective safeguarding relies upon timely intervention, coordinated planning and a clear understanding of the child's lived experience.

Strengthening Prevention

Preventing children from going missing remains a key partnership priority. During 2025-26 Camden secured additional Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) funding to strengthen preventative activity and increase engagement with children in community settings, including those placed outside of the borough. Additional resources have enhanced the partnership's ability to engage children who are vulnerable to repeat missing episodes, including those who may be less likely to be reported missing by family members. This work is underpinned by a relational and strengths-based approach, which recognises that children may go missing for a variety of reasons, including family conflict, placement instability, relationship difficulties, a desire for independence, social connections or emotional distress. Whilst this preventative work represents positive progress, the partnership acknowledges the need to continue evaluating its impact and ensuring that interventions reach those children most at risk of harm.

Performance and Emerging Themes

In 2025-26, Camden received 690 missing reports for children, a 20% reduction on the previous year. However, Camden saw a small increase in the number of children reported missing, 138 in 2025-26 compared to 127 in 2024-25, and 75

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children with multiple missing episodes compared to 71 in the previous year. Overall, alongside the context of improved partnership working and targeted interventions for missing prevention, this indicates that Camden saw fewer repeat missing episodes for children reported missing from home or care.

Addressing Disproportionality

Analysis continues to identify disproportionality within the missing cohort. Children Looked After and unaccompanied children remain overrepresented in missing data, reflecting the additional vulnerabilities experienced by these groups. Children from Black ethnic backgrounds also continue to be disproportionately represented among those reported missing. The CSCP recognises the importance of understanding the factors contributing to this disparity and ensuring that responses are culturally informed, trauma-aware and responsive to individual needs. Addressing safeguarding inequalities remains a priority, with ongoing work focused on building trusted relationships, improving stability and ensuring that services are accessible, equitable and effective for all children.

Voice of the child

Children describe a range of reasons for going missing, including wanting to spend time with friends, returning to familiar places or managing conflict and difficult emotions. Some express a need for independence or control, while others reflect feelings of disconnection or not being listened to. Children also share challenges with navigating relationships or being drawn into situations where they may feel less safe. These experiences highlight the importance of trust, communication and stability. Children consistently emphasise the value of having someone who understands their situation and takes the time to listen without judgement.



Scrutiny: The CSCP receives assurance through its Vulnerable Adolescents multi-agency governance arrangements, performance oversight, thematic audits, Return Home Conversation findings and ongoing partnership review activity. Strategic forums provide regular opportunities to consider patterns, emerging themes and the effectiveness of responses, ensuring that safeguarding arrangements remain responsive and proportionate. Learning from Return Home Conversations, audits and partnership discussions is used to inform ongoing improvements in practice, including strengthening early identification, improving coordination and ensuring that responses are grounded in lived experience. Together, these processes provide assurance that Camden continues to take a reflective, evidence-informed and child-centred approach to safeguarding children who go missing.

8.4 Youth Early Help

Youth Early Help (YEH) provides early intervention and prevention support for adolescents through Camden's three youth hubs, offering positive activities, targeted support and opportunities to improve outcomes for young people. These services promote and support delivery of the **Youth Matters – Your National Youth Strategy** launched in December 2025.

During 2025-26, 4,446 young people accessed youth services and YEH received 887 referrals via MASH. Of these, 301 young people received targeted interventions. Support included substance misuse treatment (33%), youth diversion (30%), targeted early help (23%), referrals to other youth services (13%) and step-down support from children's social care (2%).

Impact: A Year 6 transition pilot was introduced to support vulnerable children moving into secondary education, with plans for wider rollout across all youth hubs. CAMHS Crisis Services are now co-located at Highgate Youth Hub, improving access to mental health support.

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Scrutiny: While referral numbers demonstrate demand, outcomes for those who did not engage remain less clear. Reasons for non-engagement included families declining support, transfers to internal or external services such as School Inclusion and the Youth Justice Service (YJS), and provision of information, advice or universal services. The data presented relates to referrals received through the YEH front door. Additional information on the wider youth offer will be requested to support a fuller understanding of the service's overall reach and impact.

Impact: ENGAGE provides support to young people at risk of offending following police contact. In 2025-26, 189 young people and 60 parents/carers were supported. Of the young people who completed the programme and were tracked for 12 months, 93% did not reoffend, demonstrating a strong positive impact.

Substance Misuse Support (FWD)

FWD provides specialist drug and alcohol support for young people aged 8 to 25. During 2025-26, the service received 283 referrals and 92 young people completed structured treatment programmes. Assurance has been provided that 94% of care-experienced children identified with substance misuse needs received support.

Treatment outcomes remain positive, with 74% of young people recorded as either drug-free or occasional users at treatment exit. Importantly, there have been no re-presentations within the last 12 months, suggesting that the interventions delivered by FWD is effective in supporting sustainable recovery and reducing the need for further treatment. Further more, 86% of young people reported that they are satisfied with the support they received.

Scrutiny: Emerging trends identified by FWD include increasing ketamine use, opioid-containing substances such as lean, vaping and nitrous oxide. Concerns also remain regarding the potential impact of the cost-of-living crisis on substance use patterns. Continued scrutiny is required to understand the scale of these risks, the profile of affected young people and the effectiveness of preventative interventions. Future priorities include prevention, education, harm reduction and earlier identification of need.

8.5 Reducing Youth Violence, Peer and Group Harm

Reducing violence and its impact on children and young people remains a key priority in Camden. Recognising that harms are often complex, interconnected and constantly evolving, Camden takes a child-first, child-centred approach tailored to individual needs and circumstances. Partnership discussions have highlighted increasing concerns around adolescent risk, particularly the growing influence of online harm, where peer conflict, coercion and the encouragement of violence often begin in digital spaces before escalating offline. The causes and contexts of violence remain varied:

- Cost-of-living pressures can increase vulnerability to exploitation and offending, including theft and robbery
- Bullying, victimisation and perceptions of safety are important factors in understanding children's risk
- Organised criminality, such as drug supply, impacts the nature of community-based violence
- The night-time economy continues to be a driver of violence

Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) knife injury (excluding domestic abuse) data is used to measure community-based violence against children and young people. In 2025-26, there were 47 victims of knife-injury offences in Camden, compared with 30 in 2024-25. This increase continues to be an area of scrutiny for lead safeguarding partners. Whilst the data is not directly comparable, this recent increase is still well below the peak of violence Camden saw in 2017-18.

Partnership Working

Partnership working across all teams, agencies and organisations is vital to the success of Camden's approach. Day-to-day multi-agency working is supported by formal partnership arrangements such as the MACE Panel, which focuses on Child Exploitation, and the Camden Gangs Partnership, which refers to the joint working arrangements between MPS, Probation Service and Camden Council with governance oversight through the Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy Group.

Responding to incidents of youth violence is led by the Reducing Youth Violence and Exploitation Service. This service also provides crucial analytical support to understand the contexts of youth violence. The service also delivers key

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prevention activities through the Detached Youthwork Team and offers support to young adults a risk of violence through the Evolve Team.

Scrutiny: While strong partnership arrangements are established, the partnership recognises the need to continue evaluating their impact on reducing violence and improving outcomes for children and young people. Ongoing scrutiny will focus on whether intelligence is effectively translated into preventative action, how successfully services engage those at greatest risk, and the extent to which partnership activity is disrupting the underlying causes of youth violence rather than responding solely to incidents after they occur.

Evolve

The Evolve Team provides a specialist transitional safeguarding service for young people aged 17½ to 25 who are affected by, or vulnerable to, serious youth violence, exploitation, gang association and offending. The service adopts a holistic approach, recognising that vulnerability is often driven by a combination of factors including education and employment, emotional wellbeing, relationships, housing stability and personal safety. Support also extends to young people in custody, with a particular focus on resettlement and reducing the risk of re-engagement in harmful behaviours.

In addition to direct intervention, the Evolve Team provides advice, consultation and challenge to professionals across Camden, strengthening the wider partnership response to serious youth violence and exploitation. This role is particularly important in supporting agencies to recognise emerging risks, coordinate safeguarding responses and improve access to appropriate support and interventions.

Analysis of the current cohort highlights a number of important considerations for the partnership. Young people engaged with the service are predominantly male (97%) and largely Black or Black British (65%), with an average age of 20.5 years. While most are living within Camden, 23% are in custody and 16% reside outside the borough. These trends reinforce the close relationship between youth violence, criminal justice involvement and wider structural inequalities.



Scrutiny: The profile of young people supported by Evolve continues to demonstrate the concentration of risk among a relatively small but highly vulnerable cohort. The disproportional representation of Black young men, alongside significant levels of custody and out-of-borough placement, highlights the need for ongoing scrutiny of transition pathways, resettlement support and safeguarding outcomes. The partnership must continue to test whether services are effectively addressing the underlying drivers of violence and exploitation and whether young adults remain visible within safeguarding arrangements as they move beyond children's services.

Impact - Young person working with Evolve case study: Lily was referred to Evolve due to concerns about criminal exploitation, gang-related risks, trauma, and vulnerability following her arrest for serious offences. She had experienced significant bereavement after her father's death, lived in a gang-affected area, witnessed serious violence, and was assessed as being at very high risk of exploitation.

Initially, she had little trust in services and was largely disengaged from support. Evolve maintained patient, consistent contact for over two years through texts, WhatsApp messages, letters and home visits, using a trauma-informed approach that respected Lily's choices and worked at her pace.

Over time, Lily developed a trusting relationship with her Evolve worker and began engaging with support. Evolve helped her access employment services, prepare for interviews, complete pre-employment checks and engage with professionals.

As a result, Lily became more receptive to support, built positive relationships with services, secured a Level 3 Business Administration apprenticeship, and increased her confidence and future prospects. The key factor in her progress was Evolve's long-term, relationship-based support and persistence in building trust.

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Detached Youth Team (DYT):

The Detached Youth Team delivers street-based youth work for young people aged 10-19 (up to 25 where appropriate) who may be less likely to engage with traditional services. Using a relationship-based approach, youth workers engage young people in community settings, including streets, parks, housing estates and shopping areas, building trusted relationships and improving access to support.

The team provides prevention, early intervention and targeted support through detached outreach, group work, youth participation, school-based programmes, community engagement and partnership projects with voluntary sector organisations. Targeted interventions focus on young people affected by exploitation, violence, peer conflict and emotional wellbeing concerns.

A key component of the offer is the Choices Weapons Awareness Programme, which supports young people to understand the risks and consequences of carrying weapons. Through facilitated discussions, the programme explores perceptions of safety, fear, violence and the impact of weapon-related harm on individuals, families and communities.

Scrutiny: The Detached Youth Team's community-based approach provides opportunities to identify emerging risks at an early stage and strengthen protective relationships. However, continued evaluation is needed to understand the longer-term impact of engagement on reducing violence, exploitation and weapon carrying, and to ensure resources are targeted towards those young people most vulnerable to harm.

Impact: Outcomes indicate that young people engaging with the Detached Youth Team (DYT) are making positive progress. Although overall contacts declined during the year, accredited achievements increased, suggesting the team is effectively building trusted relationships and supporting meaningful development.

This indicates DYT is successfully engaging young people facing complex risks and barriers, helping them develop skills, build resilience and access opportunities that improve wellbeing and future prospects. For children and families, this provides access to trusted early support that promotes positive development and reduces the likelihood of poorer outcomes.

Police Stop and Search and Safeguarding

The MPS has continued to strengthen its safeguarding approach through participation in a pan-London pilot focused on identifying safeguarding opportunities during stop and search encounters involving children and young people. The pilot aims to ensure that children subject to stop and search are considered through a safeguarding lens, enabling officers to identify vulnerabilities, assess risk and make appropriate referrals for early help and support. As part of the latest phase, all London local authorities were asked to audit a sample of referrals relating to children who had been stopped and searched. The findings are currently undergoing independent evaluation and are expected to inform future practice, strengthen safeguarding responses and improve consistency across London. This work supports the commitments within the Stop and Search Charter and reflects a broader shift towards recognising stop and search encounters as potential opportunities to identify unmet need, intervene early and divert children and young people away from harm.



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8.6 Safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism

The Prevent Duty

Prevent remains a statutory safeguarding duty for local authorities, education, health, police and probation services. During 2025-26, safeguarding children and young people from radicalisation remained a key partnership priority as local and national threats continued to evolve, particularly online. Under-25s continue to account for a significant proportion of Prevent referrals in Camden, highlighting the importance of effective multi-agency arrangements to identify vulnerability early, assess risk appropriately and provide timely intervention before concerns escalate.

The Southport Inquiry

This year, Prevent arrangements were subject to significant national scrutiny following the publication of Phase One of the **Southport Inquiry**. The Inquiry highlighted concerns about fragmented multi-agency responses and the need to strengthen risk identification through better information sharing, professional curiosity and workforce development. It reinforced the importance of robust safeguarding oversight, clear accountability and coordinated responses when children and young people present with complex vulnerabilities or emerging risks.

Lead safeguarding partners recognised that the Inquiry findings align closely with Camden's safeguarding priorities. The report reinforced the need for early identification of vulnerability, robust assessment of online harms and potential radicalisation, and effective multi-agency responses to escalating risk. It also highlighted the links between trauma, mental health, neurodiversity, social isolation, exploitation and susceptibility to harmful online content.

Partnership and Early Intervention

Throughout the year, partnership activity focused on strengthening early intervention, raising awareness of radicalisation risks and improving professionals' understanding of vulnerability. Local intelligence continues to demonstrate the growing influence of online content in pathways to radicalisation, while neurodivergence and co-occurring vulnerabilities remain recurring features within referrals. As a result, partners have prioritised learning on online harms, evolving ideologies, trauma-informed practice, permissive environments and neurodiversity.

Impact: Projects supported children and young people to develop critical thinking skills, resilience and positive community engagement. During the year, 100 children and young people participated in Prevent-funded programmes. Evaluation showed positive outcomes, with 92% reporting increased confidence in challenging intolerant views and 89% feeling better equipped to take on leadership roles within their communities.

The Partnership continued to work closely with schools and community organisations to embed safeguarding against radicalisation into everyday practice. The Schools Section 11 Safeguarding Audit found that 100% of schools were aware of their Prevent Duty responsibilities and had measures in place to reduce radicalisation risks. Safeguarding against radicalisation has also been embedded within Camden's Supplementary Education Partnership governance arrangements, strengthening safeguarding across community-based educational provision.

Mis/Dis and Mal information workshops in community settings and schools helped develop better understanding of online manipulation. Evaluation showed that 100% of participants reported increased understanding of these issues following attendance.

Impact: Recognising the nuanced relationship between neurodiversity and co existing vulnerabilities and radicalisation, specialist training was delivered, this has improved understanding or pathways and exploitation into radicalisation This has improved identification of vulnerability and informed safeguarding responses. Learning will continue in 2026-27 through a multi-agency professional focus group.

Scrutiny and Next Steps: **Phase Two of the Southport Inquiry** will consider national changes needed to improve identification, assessment and management of individuals who demonstrate a fixation on extreme violence, including risks linked to online harms and access to weapons. The CSCP will ensure emerging learning is considered through the multi-agency Online Harm Task and Finish Group and the Strategic Risk Outside the Home (STROTH) Group.

The CSCP will continue strengthening local responses through enhanced safeguarding training for Designated Safeguarding Leads in community organisations, and closer integration of radicalisation risks within wider work on online harms, exploitation and adolescent vulnerability. This will support coordinated, informed and proportionate multi-agency safeguarding responses.

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8.7 Transitional Safeguarding

Developing a Whole-System Approach:

The CSCP continues to strengthen its whole system approach to transitional safeguarding, building on work that began in 2024, partners have developed a more joined-up, person-centred approach to help young people move safely into adulthood, ensuring they have the right support, relationships and protections as their needs change. Camden's approach is shaped by three identified priority groups which were prioritised following extensive cross-directorate leadership discussions and reflect both national research and local learning around vulnerability during transitions:

1. Young people with disabilities or Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs
2. Care-experienced young people
3. Young people known to youth justice or affected by extra-familial harm

Strengthening Strategic Oversight

The Transitional Safeguarding Forum acted as a key strategic, multi-agency space, enabling joint planning for young people experiencing extra-familial harm, exploitation, disability-related vulnerabilities or complex social factors. The forum's work has strengthened communication and reinforced the importance of early planning, decision-making and collaborative responses between children's and adults' services.

Testing the Effectiveness of Transitional Arrangements

Throughout 2025-26, the CSCP and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) have continued to scrutinise how effectively services identify and respond to young people who require ongoing support into adulthood.

This has included reviewing:

- The quality and timeliness of referrals between children's and adults' services.
- The effectiveness of early transition planning.
- The use of mental capacity assessments.
- Consistency of practice across directorates.
- Young people's experiences of transition and support.

Safe & Secure Transitions - Camden's definition:
"a Person-centred approach to ensuring that young people have the foundations, protections from harm and relationships they need to positively move into adulthood and independence."

Partnership oversight has also focused on implementation of the Transitional Safeguarding Protocol and the extent to which its principles of personalisation, independence, early planning, seamless transition and multi-agency collaboration are embedded within operational practice.

Partnership Challenge and Continuous improvement

The Boards welcomed evidence of strong cross-directorate working and positive feedback regarding partnership collaboration. However, scrutiny activity also identified areas requiring further development.

CSCP and SAB Scrutiny: While strategic commitment to transitional safeguarding is well established, further work is needed to strengthen the evidence base demonstrating impact on young people's outcomes. The partnership has challenged itself to improve data collection, strengthen representation and attendance within the Transitional Safeguarding Forum, and enhance system-wide accountability to ensure decision-making is consistent, transparent and effective across agencies.

In July 2025, the forum introduced a regular test-and-learn process involving both adults' and children's services to better understand how transitional safeguarding arrangements operate in practice. This reflective approach has enabled partners to identify barriers, share learning and explore opportunities for improvement.

Impact: An outcome of the Transitional Safeguarding Forum is the development of joint Care Act and Children Act training, which will be delivered by Principal Social Workers from both services in 2026. This will strengthen practitioners' understanding of transition pathways, improve cross-service working, and support exploration of enhanced access to Mosaic records to enable more coordinated and effective support for young people.

Voice of the child

Young people told us that approaching adulthood feels like a moment when 'everything changes at once', and that they valued professionals who checked in regularly, explained what to expect and remained alongside them beyond their 18th birthday. Young people with disabilities or long-term health needs highlighted the importance of early planning and being fully included in decisions about their future. Young adults who had previously disengaged said that knowing the "door stayed open" helped them feel safe enough to re-engage, reinforcing the importance of relational, trauma-informed practice across the 16–25 pathway.

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Learning from local safeguarding reviews

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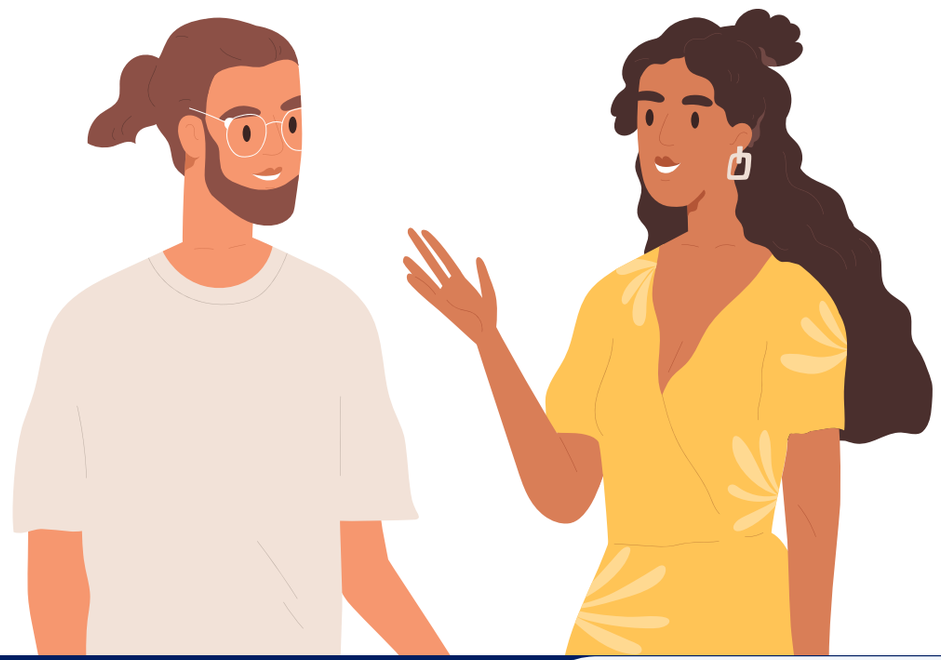
9.1 Learning from local Rapid Reviews and Practice Reviews

Shared leadership and accountability: Lead Safeguarding Partners and their deputies exercise shared strategic oversight of all Serious Incident Notifications (SINs) and Rapid Reviews. Together, they determine the required statutory response, including the commissioning of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs). Lead partners provide regular assurance to the wider Partnership, ensuring that all agencies maintain clear visibility of emerging practice strengths, risks, and early learning.

Oversight and Governance: The LCSPR Oversight Panel and LCSPR Subgroup provides structured oversight of all reviews, assuring the quality, rigour, and timeliness of activity. Independent scrutiny is embedded throughout the process to promote transparency, strengthen challenge, and ensure robust accountability across the safeguarding system.

Quality Assurance: Multi-agency working groups analyse the learning from SINs, Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs, evidencing the impact of changes across the partnership. Key themes, insights, and priority actions are distilled into 'Learning from Review' summaries, enabling strategic leaders and practitioners to drive and embed sustained improvement.

In 2025-26 Camden submitted three Serious Incident Notifications, leading to two Rapid Reviews and one new LCSPR. The aggregated themes below are shared for strategic scrutiny to support systemic and practice improvement.



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Serious Incident	Local strengths in practice	Local learning	National context and recommendations
1) Camden Child who was looked after in semi-independent residential provision in Kent sustained serious harm due to a drugs overdose.	**Consistent multi agency collaboration and flexible, persistent support.** Services worked jointly, shared information effectively, and coordinated care through professional meetings, demonstrating strong safeguarding practice and adaptable responses despite challenges. **Clear recognition of CLA status and strong corporate parenting practice.** Agencies upheld legal responsibilities, maintained continuity of care across boroughs, ensured the child remained on roll at school, and prioritised dignity, wellbeing, and relational stability. **Child centred and family focused engagement.** Practitioners listened to the child's voice, responded to his concerns about ADHD and mental health, and ensured their family remained informed and involved in planning and decision making.	• Impact of Complex Trauma, Abuse, and Neglect on Identity and Emotional Wellbeing. • Relational loss, and placement sufficiency for children with complex needs. • Young fatherhood and intergenerational care experience. • Cognitive development, mental health and neurodiversity. • Education, substance misuse and risk-taking behaviours. • Sustaining a relational approach for holistic care planning.	• **The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations** • **Guide to the supported accommodation regulations including quality standards** • **promoting_health_of_looked_after_children.pdf** • **Child Substance Misuse | Safeguarding Network**

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Serious Incident	Summary and Key Themes of the Review
2) Operation Lanark – Child Sexual Abuse Offences against children in early years and school setting.	Operation Lanark was a major Metropolitan Police investigation into serious child sexual abuse committed by a former nursery worker. A Serious Incident Notification was submitted to the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in November 2025, and a full Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) is underway. Affected families are being supported through specialist services including The Lighthouse, the NSPCC and local multi agency professionals. The LCSPR is examining safeguarding arrangements across early years and school settings where the perpetrator worked. Key lines of enquiry include safer recruitment and employment history, the application of safeguarding policies, regulatory oversight, early years quality assurance, and the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The review also explores how agencies communicated, shared information and responded collectively. Family involvement is being managed with great care through a trauma informed, flexible approach led by the Independent Reviewer. Parents and carers will be able to share their experiences of early years, educational and community settings, focusing on issues such as safeguarding culture, communication, digital device use, staffing stability, and their confidence in raising concerns. Emerging themes for system learning include: • **Safeguarding culture and oversight** in early years and education settings, including gaps between written policies and practice. • **Staff turnover and reliance on a small number of long standing staff**, and how this affects challenge and professional curiosity. • **Historical employment checks and safer** recruitment processes. • **Whistleblowing and "speak up" culture,** including the potential value of models like the NHS Freedom to Speak Up approach. • **Digital device management** and the adequacy of policies and oversight. • **The LADO process,** including timeliness, decision making, and multi agency roles. • **Regulation and inspection,** exploring how external oversight can be strengthened. • **Use of local intelligence to support safer practice,** beyond formal inspection routes. The LCSPR is scheduled to run from January 2026 to Autumn 2026, with ongoing support to children and families throughout the process.

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Serious Incident	Summary and Key Themes
3) Orthopaedic Review at Great Ormond Street Hospital	The Orthopaedic Review at Great Ormond Street Hospital follows concerns relating to care provided within a specialist paediatric lower limb service by a former consultant orthopaedic surgeon. The Trust initiated a comprehensive review of patients treated by the surgeon, alongside consideration of governance, safeguarding and oversight arrangements. The review process involved engagement with relevant regulatory and statutory agencies, with ongoing support provided to affected children, young people and families The review is examining safeguarding arrangements, including the identification, escalation and management of concerns. Areas of focus include safeguarding oversight, information sharing, multi-agency decision-making, escalation processes, and the interface between safeguarding, patient safety and statutory safeguarding responsibilities. Emerging themes for system learning include: • **Consent, information sharing and record keeping,** including how concerns, risks and decisions were communicated and documented. • **Safeguarding oversight and escalation,** including how concerns were identified, assessed and responded to across agencies. • **Clinical governance and professional accountability** within safeguarding and decision-making processes. • **Multi-agency coordination,** particularly where children received care across multiple organisations. • **Organisational culture,** including professional curiosity, challenge and staff confidence to raise concerns. • **Support and communication for children, families and staff** during review and investigation processes Family engagement during the review was undertaken using a structured, trauma informed approach. Families were supported with a complex case manager to provide opportunities for families access holistic support and advice including the appropriate psychological support. They were given opportunities to share their experiences of communication, consent, and decision making. Further quality improvement activity is underway, with continued multi agency and national oversight and ongoing support to affected children and families.

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9.2 Learning and Improvement from the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) helps partners across North Central London understand why children die and identify opportunities to prevent future deaths. It reviews all deaths of children aged 0–18 who are normally resident in Camden, Islington, Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey, ensuring learning informs safer systems, environments, and support for children and families.

Analysis of the North Central London Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Annual Report 2024-25

The North Central London Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Annual Report 2024-25 provides important insight into the experiences of bereaved families. While many child deaths reviewed involved complex medical conditions that were unlikely to be preventable, the report highlights the impact of poverty, deprivation, inequality and poor health on children's outcomes. More than a quarter of child deaths occurred among children living in the most deprived areas of North Central London, reinforcing the link between deprivation and increased vulnerability. These findings emphasise the importance of safeguarding partners continuing to tackle inequalities and address the wider determinants of health through coordinated multi-agency support.

Scrutiny: Of the 145 child deaths reviewed across North Central London, including 16 involving Camden children, almost 60% occurred during the first year of life.

These findings highlight the importance of effective support during pregnancy, throughout the early years, and across the first 1,001 days of life, underpinned by strong collaboration between maternity services, health visiting, Family Hubs, and safeguarding services.

Among older young people, 87.5% of deaths from suicide or deliberate self-harm involved modifiable factors, highlighting opportunities for earlier intervention and prevention. It is also importance to recognise that children from Black, Asian and White Other families experienced higher mortality rates compared with children from White British and Irish backgrounds, with particularly stark disparities evident in neonatal and infant mortality data. The partnership will continue to monitor and scrutinise this data to identify trends, risks, and learning opportunities in support of its strategic priorities of safeguarding vulnerable babies and families and strengthening the multi-agency response to safeguarding adolescents.

The CDOP process identified many examples of compassionate, family-centred practice and effective multi-agency support and recognised the importance of early help, whole-family approaches and co-ordinated services during pregnancy, infancy and adolescence to improve outcomes for children and families.

Challenges identified relate to health inequalities, communication with families, culturally responsive practice and engagement with vulnerable communities. It also reinforced the need for continued partnership focus on children experiencing multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities, including poverty, domestic abuse, mental ill-health and disability. Learning reinforces the value of relational practice and highlights the importance of ensuring that families feel listened to, understood and actively involved in decisions affecting them.

Findings will inform continued work with safeguarding partners to reduce health inequalities, improve outcomes in the first 1,001 days of life, strengthen support for children with disabilities and complex needs, expand Family Hub and housing-health partnerships, and embed anti-racist and equity-focused practice across safeguarding services. The CSCP will continue to promote the National Child Mortality Database training videos on Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) and preventable accidents across partner agencies, helping practitioners provide clear, practical advice to families as part of the CSCP's safeguarding resources for babies and children under two.

Impact: The CSCP held a Suicide Prevention learning event in September 2025, delivered by Children's Safeguarding & Family Help, Public Health and Papyrus. The event brought together practitioners from across North Central London to share learning from local serious incidents and practice reviews. Attendees also completed Papyrus SPEAK suicide prevention training, increasing their confidence to recognise warning signs, have direct conversations about suicide, and support children and young people to stay safe.



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Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)



The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role was established in 2006 to ensure that allegations or concerns about adults who work or volunteer with children are managed fairly, consistently and promptly, safeguarding children while supporting appropriate and proportionate responses to concerns raised. Camden has Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns about staff and volunteers who work with children in Camden.

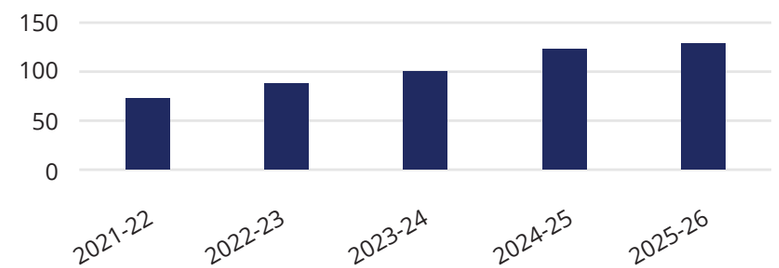
Camden also has a named detective sergeant responsible for LADO which ensures that information sharing across agencies is effective, and prompt decisions are made following referrals. The operational LADO continues to participate in the London LADO network meetings and maintains close links with neighboring boroughs. The CSCP webpage provides advice and information on managing allegations about staff and volunteers including policies for local partners and referral details.

Engagement in safeguarding arrangements: Consultation and referrals from agencies

Camden's local arrangements enable informal consultations to take place prior to making a formal LADO referral to enable advice to be sought. In 2025-26, 130 consultations took place with 4.7% progressing to a formal LADO referral. Most consultations were carried out with schools, nurseries and health settings.

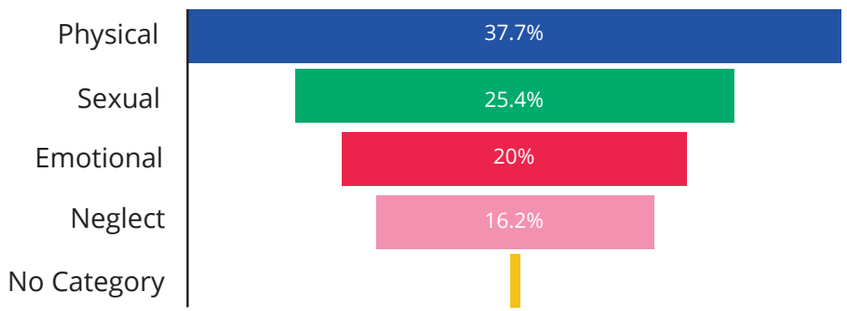
In 2025-26 LADO referrals continued to steadily increase with 130 referrals compared to 125 the year prior.

Number of allegations referred to the LADO



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Primary alleged abuse category for LADO referrals



The primary alleged abuse categories in LADO referrals remained broadly consistent between 2024-25 and 2025-26, with physical abuse continuing to account for the largest proportion of referrals (37.7%), followed by sexual abuse (25.4%). While referrals relating to sexual abuse decreased from 32.0% to 25.4%, concerns relating to neglect increased from 10.4% to 16.2%, indicating a shift in the nature of referrals received.

Most cases are resolved within three months of referral, except when there are ongoing police investigations, with 76% of cases that progressed to Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) being closed within 3 months and 80% of referrals being closed within 5 days.

Outcomes of the 125 referrals made to the LADO in the period include (*some referrals had multiple outcomes*):

- 34 cases escalated to an Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) meeting.
- 30 cases resulted in referrals to the Police
- 43 cases resulted in disciplinary proceedings/ referrals to relevant professional bodies.
- 1 case was found to be a complaint and referred to other services
- 6 cases were referred to children social care
- 12 cases were referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service
- 49 cases resulted in no further action

Scrutiny: As part of Operation Lanark, the Partnership is considering how concerns relating to adults working with children were identified, recorded, shared and managed across organisations. The review is exploring the role of governance, leadership oversight, information sharing and decision-making arrangements in supporting safeguarding responses. Emerging learning is helping to inform local improvements and contribute to wider discussions regarding allegations management, safeguarding accountability and organisational oversight.

Impact: Camden's LADO has begun to develop feedback forms for multi-agency parters to strengthen quality assurance and promote continuous improvement. The forms have been developed for agencies to complete at case closure, providing an opportunity to capture their experiences of the service and the effectiveness of the allegations management process.

The feedback gathered will offer valuable insight to inform learning, identify areas of good practice and development, and support ongoing service improvement activity, ensuring the service remains responsive to the needs of partner agencies and the children and young people it seeks to safeguard.



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Communication Strategy



11. Communication Strategy

As a partnership, we recognise that effective communication is essential to delivering our shared vision and strengthening our multi-agency safeguarding response. It ensures that strategic leaders, frontline practitioners and volunteers working with children, young people and families are connected by a common understanding of our priorities, values and responsibilities.

We continue to share learning from inspections, serious safeguarding incidents and quality assurance activity across the partnership. This learning is communicated through our multi-agency training programme, as well as briefings, workshops, forums and digital communications, helping practitioners strengthen safeguarding practice and stay informed about changes to legislation, policy and guidance. This approach has also supported the partnership to continue to share updates to legislation which impacts the wider safeguarding system including the National Social Care Reform programme, updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together 2026, Metropolitan Police Service's revised Children's Strategy for London, the New Ofsted Inspection Framework, DfE Alternative Provision Guidance and DfE Guidance on Restrictive Interventions & Reasonable Force.

Delivery of key messages to frontline leaders, middle managers, and the wider workforce is embedded through a continuous cycle of review, dissemination and evaluation. Insights from audits, inspections, serious incidents, feedback and data analysis are used to inform practice, while impact is monitored through performance data, practitioner feedback and evidence of improved outcomes for children and families.

Insights from Website Analytics (April 2025– March 2026): www.cscp.org.uk

Website Reach & Usage

- **12,293 Active Users**
- **60,000+ Page Views**
- **Growing Reach**
- **12,000+ New Users**

Engagement

- **81% New Users**
- **19% Returning Users**
- **Opportunities for Repeat Engagement**

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Professional Audience

GB 76% UK Users
77% Desktop Access
Professional Workplace Use

Search Visibility

Google Search
Top Rankings
Local Safeguarding Searches
Easy Access to Information

The Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) website remained a well-used professional resource during 2025–26, generating over **60,000 page views from 12,293 active users**. Usage was strongly aligned with the academic and professional calendar, with peaks during autumn and January and lower activity during school holiday periods. The site continues to attract predominantly UK-based practitioners, with **76% of users located in the UK** and **77% accessing the site via desktop devices,** indicating that the website is largely being used in professional settings.

The website demonstrates **strong reach and visibility**, attracting almost **12,000 new users** during the year, suggesting that professionals continue to discover and rely on CSCP resources.

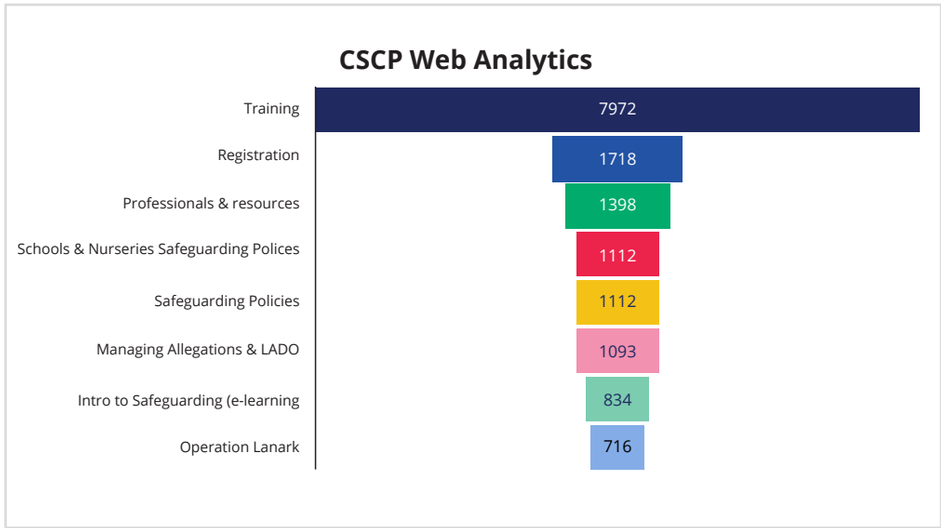
Training content remains the site's strongest asset, with training-related pages attracting nearly 8,000 views and registration activity remaining high. This indicates sustained demand for safeguarding learning and development opportunities.

Key safeguarding information, including the **Children & Families Contact Service, LADO** guidance, and safeguarding policies, remains among the most frequently accessed content, demonstrating that the website is meeting core practitioner information needs. The website performs exceptionally well in search results for local safeguarding-related terms, with many Camden-specific searches ranking at or near the top of Google results, supporting easy access to critical safeguarding information.

While user numbers are strong, the website has a relatively high proportion of **new users (81%) compared with returning users (19%)**, which may indicate further opportunities to strengthen ongoing engagement and encourage repeat visits.

Analytics currently cannot measure **downloads of policies, procedures, and safeguarding resources**, limiting the Partnership's ability to assess the true impact and use of its published materials. Several high-volume safeguarding search terms generate thousands of impressions but very few clicks, suggesting there may be opportunities to improve search engine visibility and content optimisation for broader safeguarding topics

Overall, the CSCP website continues to provide an effective and valued information, training and safeguarding resource for multi-agency professionals across Camden. The strong uptake of training content, high visibility in local search results and sustained levels of engagement demonstrate its importance within the local safeguarding system. Future improvements to analytics tracking and content optimisation would provide a clearer understanding of impact and help maximise the value of the website.



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CSCP Multi-agency Training 2025-26



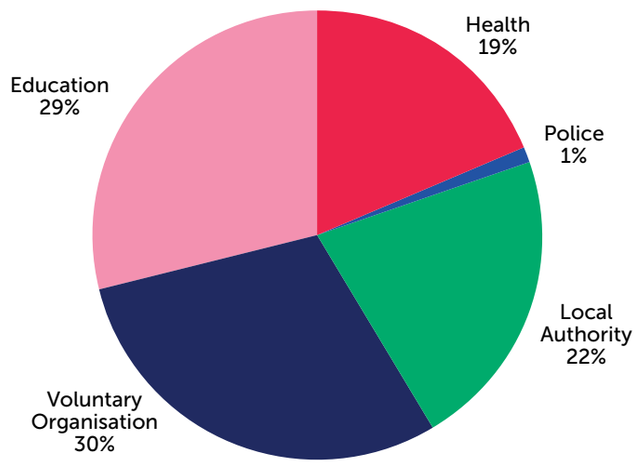
Leadership: Inter-connectivity between quality assurance and training

The impact of the CSCP's safeguarding training programme is strengthened by the close alignment between the Learning and Improvement Framework and the training strategy. This ensures that learning from reviews, audits, performance data and practitioner feedback is translated into meaningful workforce development activities that improve safeguarding practice across the partnership.

The programme aims to strengthen the quality of safeguarding practice across the partnership by improving practitioners' ability to recognise and analyse risk, exercise professional judgement, and respond effectively to emerging concerns. Its impact is reflected not simply in attendance or learner feedback, but in the extent to which learning translates into improved decision-making, stronger multi-agency collaboration, and better outcomes for children and families.

The CSCP held 23 safeguarding children training courses and 3 learning events in 2025–26. 392 attended multi-agency training courses and 160 attended learning events detailed below. In total the CSCP's training reached 552 multi-agency workers.

Multigency attendance at CSCP Training



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CSCP multi-agency safeguarding training attendance by course 2025-26



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Scrutiny: This year, the reach of the CSCP safeguarding children training programme has decreased by 18%. Our lead safeguarding partners will continue to encourage frontline practitioners to participate in multi-agency training and build capacity across the frontline to enable a culture of continuous learning and development. Assurance has been provided through the Learning & Development Subgroup that although multi-agency attendance has declined, agencies have a robust single agency safeguarding children training programme to ensure that practitioners have access to suitable training to fulfil their role and support vulnerable children and their families.

Area of challenge: Scrutiny of CSCP training data has identified low attendance at multi-agency training from Police partners as an area of ongoing development. However, joint commitment from lead safeguarding partners to strengthen engagement and build capacity across partners is underway. The Partnership continues to ensure that the training offer is well advertised, accessible, and responsive to the needs of agencies.

2025-26 saw an increase in practitioners registering for multi-agency training but not attending on the day (168 practitioners did not attend pre-booked training in 2025-26). While workforce pressures, competing priorities and capacity challenges are likely contributing factors, further analysis is required to understand barriers to attendance. Lead safeguarding partners through our Learning & Development Subgroup will continue to monitor attendance trends and seek assurance from agencies on actions to support participation. Future improvements will include strengthening reminder processes, increasing managerial accountability and engaging with non-attendees to maximise the reach and impact of the CSCP's highly valued multi-agency training programme.

The CSCP has seen an encouraging increase in attendance from Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations across its multi-agency training programme. This reflects growing engagement from the sector and a shared commitment to strengthening safeguarding knowledge, promoting consistent practice and enhancing partnership working across Camden. The increased participation of VCS partners brings valuable perspectives to multi-agency learning and supports a more comprehensive safeguarding response for children and families.

ensuring that VCS organisations have sufficient capacity and resources to maintain safeguarding competence within their workforce. Lead safeguarding partners recognise that attendance can be challenging for smaller organisations with limited staffing and funding. As such, there is an opportunity for VCS organisations to strengthen the sustainability of their safeguarding arrangements by explicitly considering safeguarding training and workforce development requirements within funding bids, commissioning arrangements and organisational procedures. This will help ensure that safeguarding training is planned, resourced and prioritised, enabling continued participation in partnership learning and supporting high-quality safeguarding practice across the sector.

Impact of our training offer: Delivering against our Training Needs Analysis

The **Learning and Development Subgroup** plays a critical role in identifying emerging learning needs, analysing training requirements, and ensuring that training remains responsive, relevant and informed by the findings of the Training Needs Analysis. This approach helps to embed learning into practice, strengthen multi-agency working, and support continuous improvement across the safeguarding system.

Throughout this report, each section outlines key information on the range of safeguarding children training opportunities provided and the impact these have on frontline practice. The CSCP's safeguarding training programme is regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure it remains responsive to local priorities and emerging needs. A core offer of training is commissioned annually and forms a consistent part of the programme.

Impact: Workshops are delivered throughout the year to ensure frontline professionals remain informed about emerging themes and issues identified through serious safeguarding incidents. This supports practitioners to apply learning in practice, strengthen decision-making, and improve outcomes for children and families.

Reflecting evolving training needs, the following section highlights examples of learning opportunities identified through the Training Needs Analysis and delivered during 2025–26:

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Learning from	Commissioning CSCP multi-agency training:	Outcome
Learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review	CSCP lunch & learn: *Bruising in pre-mobile babies*	This event was attended by **35 frontline practitioners** to strengthen their understanding of bruising in pre-mobile babies and to reflect on learning from a recent serious incident involving non-accidental injury. The session reinforced the significance of bruising in non-mobile infants as a key safeguarding indicator, explored patterns and risk factors, and highlighted the importance of professional curiosity, timely medical assessment, and clear referral pathways. It also supported practitioners to understand their role within a multi-agency response and to apply learning to improve identification and safeguarding of vulnerable infants.
Learning from Serious Safeguarding Incidents	CSCP multi-agency learning event: *Suicide prevention*	This event was attended by **25 frontline practitioners** to strengthen their understanding of suicide prevention and to reflect on learning from local serious incidents involving self harm and suicide, alongside broader themes identified through reviews. The session explored key risk factors, protective approaches, and multi agency responsibilities in identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals.
Learning from Serious Safeguarding Incidents	Practice focused session: *Neglect*	This event was attended by over **100 frontline practitioners** and senior managers. Learning from this session strengthened practitioners' ability to identify and respond to children whose needs may be hidden or overlooked in relation to child neglect. By reinforcing the importance of professional curiosity, child-centred decision-making and early information sharing, the event supported effective multi-agency practice, helping to ensure that children and families receive timely support and that emerging risks are identified early



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Evidencing impact on safeguarding practice

The CSCP evaluation model consists of a three-stage process to evidence impact on practice.

Stage 1

A baseline for each participant's level of knowledge pre-attendance

Stage 2

End of course evaluation form demonstrates what the participant has learnt from the training session

Stage 3

To ascertain whether the course has had impact on their work

Impact: Evidence from the three-stage evaluation demonstrates that a high proportion of delegates retain strong levels of knowledge and confidence 6–8 weeks after attending training. Delegates are also able to provide clear examples of how the training has positively influenced their practice when working with children and families. Overall, 93% of CSCP training courses are rated as good or excellent, highlighting that the safeguarding training delivered to multi-agency professionals is of a consistently high standard and reflects both local priorities and national learning.

Where a course receives a 'satisfactory' or 'poor' rating, the Learning and Development Subgroup reviews delegate feedback and works with trainers to identify and implement improvements for future delivery. This approach ensures that all CSCP safeguarding training:

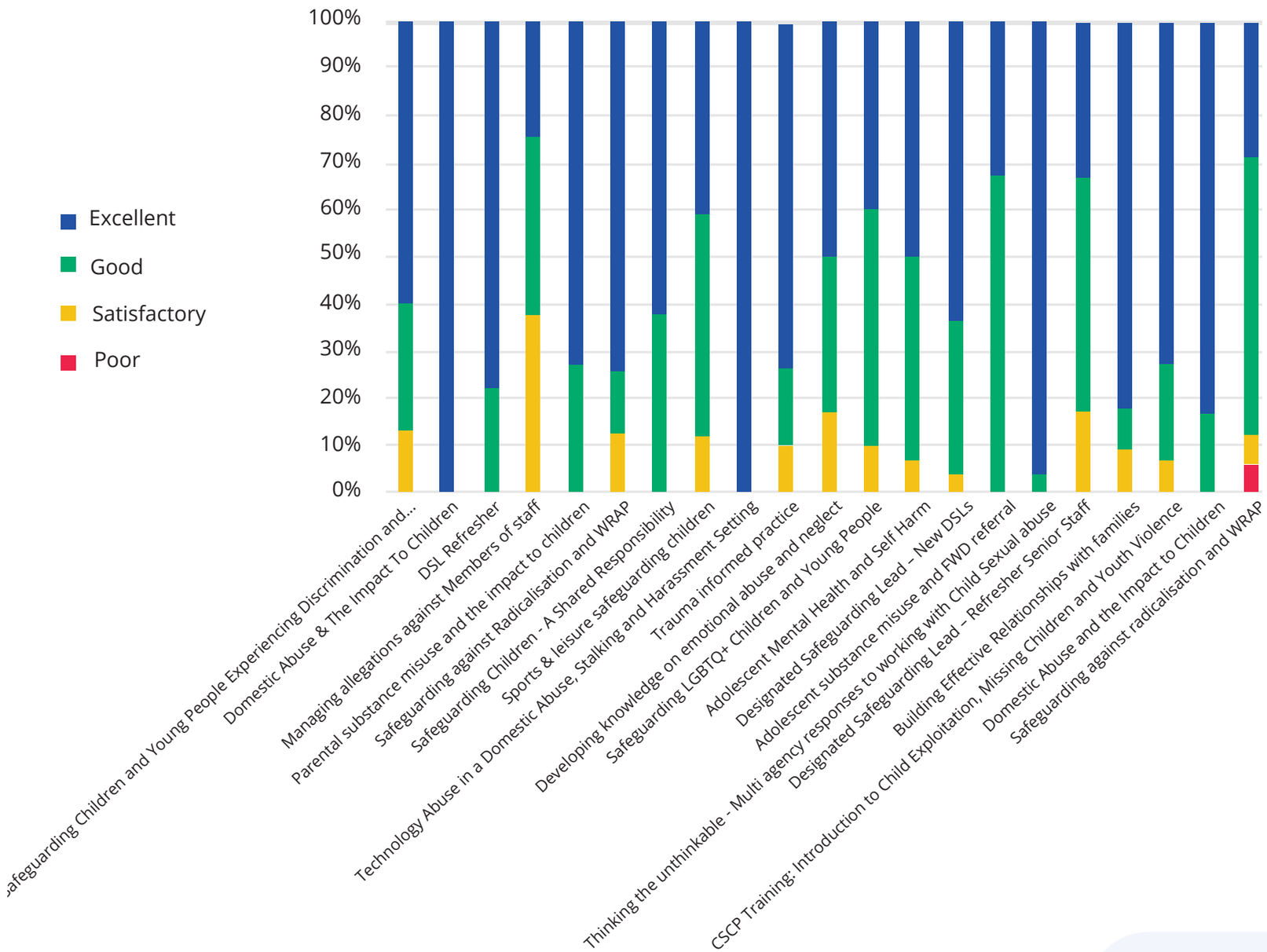
- is aligned with best practice, current research, and local learning
- meets required standards and responds effectively to local need
- supports the objectives and priorities set out in the CSCP Business Plan
- contributes to the development of a skilled and competent multi-agency children's workforce



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CSCP training - overall score 2025-26



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Impact: The work of the CSCP adopts an intersectional approach, recognising that individuals and communities have diverse, fluid identities and experiences. This includes actively **addressing racism, embedding anti-racist safeguarding practice within partnership working**, promoting relational approaches, and responding to the underlying factors that contribute to family vulnerability.

To support this, local demographic information is shared with CSCP trainers to ensure that training content and case studies accurately reflect Camden's population. Evaluation evidence demonstrates that CSCP training is strengthening practitioners' ability to recognise and address inequality, bias and discrimination in their work with children and families.

In 2025–26, 95% of delegates agreed that training effectively promoted equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Impact: The wide range of safeguarding children training opportunities delivered aims to ensure that staff and volunteers working with Camden children are equipped to identify safeguarding concerns, respond appropriately, and work effectively with children and their families.

CSCP training is making a tangible contribution to frontline practice, equipping practitioners with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.

In 2025–26, 92% of delegates agreed that the training strengthened their ability to safeguard children and young people effectively.

Feedback from frontline practitioners on the impact of CSCP training:

> ***I really found doing the case studies useful and helped identify areas of abuse and concerns. It allowed me to think about various services available and which ones will be beneficial for the families..***

> ***Excellent experienced trainers who recognised the anxieties inherent in this area while providing clarity and reassurance.***

> ***The facilitator was wonderful, engaging, meeting all of us with our various levels of knowledge and supporting the flow and output of statutory knowledge with humour, professionalism, kindness and clarity.***

> ***The training has immensely enlightened me … and it has broadened my understanding in what to look for in supporting the young people or their family in a wider context.***

> ***Made me more confident with how to deal with safeguarding concerns, more knowledgeable about the processes surrounding safeguarding and I'm more aware of the role of the authorities once safeguarding has been raised.***

> ***Enhanced my knowledge and understanding so I can better support the families we work with.***

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Impact: To maintain connectivity with Camden schools and ensure a consistent level of safeguarding awareness, CSCP commissions Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training. This includes both refresher courses for those DSLs requiring a biannual training update and a full session to provide new DSLs with the skills and knowledge to become an effective safeguarding lead within their setting. By providing this unique offer, the CSCP is assured that education settings understand local needs, trends and learning from incidents are widely shared. In 2025-26, the CSCP trained 112 education professionals ranging from early years providers to further education settings. Impact of this training is evidence in 100% of delegates agreeing that the training has helped them to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Impact: In 2025, the Metropolitan Police Service delivered face-to-face Child First training to approximately 21,900 police officers and staff. The training focused on key areas including adultification bias, with particular emphasis on the disproportionate impact on Black children, victim-blaming language, empathy, effective communication and listening skills, and trauma-informed approaches to working with children. Learning will be reinforced through five e-learning modules available on the Met's Learning Management System. In addition, First Line and Mid-Level leaders will receive further training in 2026 as part of the organisation's ongoing programme of continuous professional development, helping to embed child-centred practice across the workforce.

Engaging the community and VCS organisations in safeguarding training

Over the past year, the community-based safeguarding project has strengthened safeguarding capacity across Camden's voluntary and community sector by providing child-focused, culturally responsive support rooted in lived community experiences. Working with charities, faith groups, community organisations, and supplementary education settings, the project delivered customised training, policy support, workshops, consultations, and safeguarding advice.

Over 2025-26, 33 safeguarding training sessions reaching 254 VCS learners, including 51 community volunteers. It engaged 32 new organisations and provided further support to 43 existing organisations, demonstrating strong ongoing demand for safeguarding development.

The project also expanded its digital learning offer through four safeguarding-themed podcast episodes covering women and girls' safety, drug and alcohol awareness, social prescribing, and community mental health support. This blended approach increased accessibility while maintaining strong partnerships across the sector.

- **Women and Girls Personal Safety**
- **Safeguarding Communities Drug and Alcohol Awareness**
- **Safeguarding through Social Prescribing**
- **Reach Out Camden – a mental health project**

Key reflections from Camden's voluntary and community sector to the safeguarding system, highlights growing tension between increasing demand, the complexity of safeguarding concerns, and the capacity of organisations operating within constrained resources. Several strategic priorities have been identified, including:

- **strengthening understanding and application of contextual safeguarding**
- **improving the consistency and accessibility of safeguarding policies and procedures**
- **enhancing early help and prevention approaches**
- **embedding culturally responsive practice across community settings.**

Importantly, the VCS sector underlines the need for a whole-system approach that recognises community organisations as key safeguarding partners and invests in their capability to identify, respond to, and mitigate emerging risks.

The project has provided a stronger evidence base for future commissioning, workforce development, and partnership activity, ensuring support is targeted, equitable, and responsive to the evolving needs of children, young people, and families.

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CSCP financial arrangements



Partnership funding from the Local Authority, Health, Police and National Probation Service remained stable during 2025–26. Camden Council continued to provide the majority of funding (£277,561), with the North Central London Integrated Care Board contributing £33,450 and contributions from MOPAC and the National Probation Service of £5,000 each.

In addition to financial contributions, safeguarding partners and relevant agencies continued to provide resources through their participation in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This included leadership and practitioner involvement in partnership governance, safeguarding subgroups, quality assurance activity, multi-agency audits, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), learning reviews, training delivery and partnership events, supporting the effective delivery of safeguarding responsibilities across Camden.

During the year, the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB) underwent significant organisational change as part of wider NHS reforms. Following completion of these reforms, NCL ICB merged with North West London ICB on 1 April 2026 to form NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB). Throughout this period, health partners remained fully engaged in the work of the CSCP and continued to support safeguarding priorities.

The CSCP is committed to ensuring that resources are used efficiently, effectively and transparently to improve outcomes for children and families. Expenditure during 2025–26 reflected the partnership's statutory responsibilities, quality assurance programme, multi-agency learning and development offer, and delivery of local and national safeguarding priorities.

Expenditure increased during the year to support the significant demands associated with a complex CSPR, including additional project support capacity, independent review expertise and associated partnership activity.

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Breakdown of partner contributions and expenditure: Description £	
Description	Expenditure
Staffing cost: 1 CSCP Manager, 1.6 CSCP Development Officer, including maternity costs, 1 FTE Agency x 4 months to support Review and CSCP Young Advisors	£244, 493
Fees for Professional Services: LCSPR Independent Reviewers, Independent Multi-Agency Auditors and Independent Scrutineer. Additional pressure due to Op Lanark	£41,723
Multi-agency safeguarding training	£15, 720
Other: Provisions for website hosting, development, membership to TASP maintenance, digital publications and IT software/ hardware purchases – including one-off NIHR funded project.	£19, 275
Total Expenditure	**£321, 211**

CSCP Funding (Contribution from partners)	
Camden Local Authority	£277,761
NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB)	£33,450
MOPAC	£5,000
National Probation Service	£5,000
Total	**£321, 211**

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Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership membership 2025-26

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Lead safeguarding partner representatives	
Agency	**Job title**
Camden Council	DCS and Exec Director for Children and Learning
NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB)	Director of Safeguarding and Looked After Children
MPS Central North – Camden & Islington	Chief Superintendent
Camden Learning	Chief Executive Officer

Delegated safeguarding partners and designates	
Camden Council	Director of Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding
Camden Council	Director of Relational Practice
NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB)	Designated Nurse for Safeguarding
MPS Central North – Camden & Islington	Detective Superintendent
Camden Learning	Senior Adviser Safeguarding & Inclusion, Camden Learning

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Relevant agencies	
Camden Local Authority Departments	
Agency	**Job title**
Camden Council	Head of Violence Against Women and Girls Lead
Camden Council	Director of Public Safety
Camden Council	Head of Integrated Youth Services
Camden Council	Head of Neighbourhoods
Camden Council	Head of Children's Quality Assurance
Camden Council	Head of SEND and Inclusion
Camden Public Health	Director of Health and Wellbeing
Camden Public Health	Consultant

Schools	
Agency	**Job title**
Fleet & Rhyl Primary School	Executive Headteacher
William Ellis Secondary School	Headteacher

National Probation Service	
Agency	**Job title**
National Probation Service	Head of Service

Independent Scrutiny	
Agency	**Job title**
Independent	Independent Scrutineer
Independent	Young Advisors x 2
Independent	Lay Members x 1
Camden Council Cabinet Member	Councillor for Best Start for Children and Families
NSPCC Local Services - London and Southeast	Assistant Director

Camden Health NHS Trusts and Services	
Agency	**Job title**
NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB)	Designated Doctor for Safeguarding
NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB)	Named GP Child Safeguarding
North London Mental Health Trust (Camden and Islington)	Named Doctor
North London Mental Health Trust (Camden and Islington)	Deputy Associate Director
Central North-West London NHS Trust	Head of Safeguarding Children
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust	Chief Nurse
Central North-West London NHS Trust	Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust	Named Nurse
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust	Nurse Consultant Safeguarding & Named Nurse
Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust	Interim Safeguarding Children Lead
Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust	Named Doctor, Consultant Child Psychiatrist
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Lead for Children & Young People's Safeguarding
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Named Doctor for Child Safeguarding

Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership Team	
Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership	Service Manager
Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership	Development Officers

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