



Annual Report 2024–2025

Health Champions for the People of Camden

healthwatch

Camden

Contents

<u>A message from our Chair</u>	3
<u>About us</u>	4
<u>Our year in numbers</u>	5
<u>Working together for change</u>	6
<u>Making a difference in the community</u>	7
<u>Listening to your experiences</u>	8
<u>Hearing from all communities</u>	13
<u>Information and signposting</u>	15
<u>Showcasing volunteer impact</u>	16
<u>Finance and future priorities</u>	18
<u>Statutory statements</u>	20



69

“The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They’re changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people’s views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities.”

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our Chair

Introduction

Our work in 2024/25 in Camden has focused on three key areas: women's experience of **endometriosis**, **young people's** health and helping to raise cancer early diagnosis rates with seldom-heard communities.

Our work on **endometriosis** has helped shine the spotlight locally and nationally on minority ethnic groups' experience of this condition, with Wes Streeting referring to our report as 'valuable research'.

Our work in listening and analysing the health experiences of those aged 13-24 has seen a number of positive outcomes for **young people** locally. Camden Council and the local ICB took on board several of our recommendations, including committing to undertake a review of their youth mental health services and to embed young people's views and experiences into their quality assurance models. Effectively putting young people more at the heart of the mental health services they use and know best.

Our report on vaping, amongst other positive outcomes, helped to raise the profile of **vaping harms** via the local media, reaching hundreds of thousands of residents. We have also been helping to raise awareness of the early signs of **cancer** working with people with a disability as well as those whose second language is English.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks and appreciation for Dr Louise Jones' tenure of Chair for the last five years. Lousie intends to step down towards the end of the year when we will be welcoming our new Chair. We would also like to offer our thanks to all the organisations we have worked with over the last year and of course above all, to the people of Camden who have trusted us with their experiences and views.



69

The team have listened to the experiences of residents and shone a light onto key areas of inequality in endometriosis care and in youth services. A big thank you to all our staff, directors and volunteers, and most importantly to the residents of Camden for sharing their views with us".

Dr Louise Jones, Chair of Healthwatch Camden

Healthwatch Camden is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.



Our vision

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



Our mission

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



Our values are:

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

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

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

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

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

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 1,700 people to have their say about their health and care. We currently employ 6 staff and our work is supported by 18 volunteers.

Reaching out:



- 1,746 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.
- We have reached 284,096 people through our campaigns such as on vaping, endometriosis and early signs of cancer.
- We carried out 158 in-person visits to community and other local groups.

Championing your voice:



We published reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like endometriosis care and what young people would like to see in the areas of vaping, sexual health and mental health. Our most popular reports were on Vaping and Endometriosis which can be found on our website, www.healthwatchcamden.co.uk under the reports section.

Statutory funding:



We are funded by the London Borough of Camden. In 2024/25 we received £187,000, which is the same as last year.

Working together for change

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

In addition, we have an ongoing relationship with our local Integrated Care Board, working across multiple areas to influence policy and practice.

Experiences of people with disabilities shared with ICB



The North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) cited our "expertise and trusted community relationships" as well as our "collaborative work with local people" as the reason we were chosen to work with them as part of a national public awareness campaign to raise cancer early diagnosis rates.

In Camden, rates currently sit at 61% with new data expected in 2026. Our work with people with physical and mental disabilities shone the spotlight on key inequalities affecting this group which the NCLCA will share with the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB).

Experiences of homeless people to help reshape sexual health services



Public Health Camden commissioned us to gather feedback on Sexual and Reproductive Health Services from a number of seldom-heard groups. These included residents experiencing homelessness and or drug/alcohol addiction.

They will be using these findings to mold and shape the future of sexual health services in Camden, making them more inclusive, appropriate and relevant to these often-excluded groups.

Camden Council to involve young people in their mental and sexual health service plans



As a result of our [reports into youth mental and sexual health services](#), Camden Council and the local Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB) have committed to ensuring all future engagement work hears from young people from diverse communities. This will mean that young people with specific cultural needs are more likely to get the tailored care and advice they need and deserve, improving health outcomes.

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time, for example:

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand the issues that people face.



As a result of our report into youth mental health ([Your Voice Your Health Camden Series: Mental Health Report](#)), the council and local commissioners agreed to work with the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB) to evaluate and develop their current digital platform app for young people's mental health, which is used by individuals and in schools. The experiences in our report were both impactful and poignant. For example, one young person shared how their bouts of depression left them isolated and without support: *"I was in a really bad spot...and I got like a bottle of mouthwash and like a bunch of pot noodles because it's like I'm not going to cook and I'm not going to want to brush my teeth".*

Getting services to involve the public

By involving local people, services help improve care for everyone.



Following the recommendations to come out of our report into youth mental health ([Your Voice Your Health Camden Series: Mental Health Report](#)) the council agreed to carry out a review into how they monitor and improve services, looking carefully at the role that young people play within this process.

Improving care over time

Change takes time. We work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.



After publishing our [Living with Endometriosis in Camden Report](#), we have been working with Camden Learning to try and bring about an inclusion of menstrual health-related conditions into the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum in all Camden schools.

Listening to your experiences

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

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community.

People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



Championing local women's experiences of endometriosis and improving care for patients

Across the UK, it is estimated that 1 in 10 women have endometriosis, yet only a tiny fraction are receiving secondary care for the condition. The vast majority of women are currently living without a diagnosis and without access to specialist care and treatment. There is also very little understanding of ethnically and culturally specific experiences of the condition.

What did we do?

We ran a programme of expert-led workshops involving 33 local women and carried out a series of in-depth patient journey interviews, to understand more about how endometriosis impacts women's lives. We particularly focused in on the experiences of women from Bengali, Sudanese, Black African, Chinese, and mixed British communities. We published a report of our findings [Living with Endometriosis in Camden](#).

Key things we heard:

- Menstruation and related pain are taboo subjects in many cultures. Individuals from different backgrounds are often left to manage their pain alone, potentially leading to feelings of stigma or shame.
- Women reported medical gaslighting at every stage of their disease journey.
- Period pain is frequently viewed as psychological and associated with stigma.

One woman told us...

"...in every Muslim household, you pray five times a day. And when it comes to fathers and brothers, they will only know that you're on your period because you've stopped praying now. So that's the way you tell them. Instead of actually going to them."

Shining a spotlight onto the challenges for women from specific cultural backgrounds who have endometriosis

What difference did this make locally?

Following our recommendations, the Council and ICB have agreed to four main actions which will help to support endometriosis patients, namely to:

1. Improve rates of endometriosis diagnosis by working with the Camden Training Hub to deliver a webinar to local GPs, co-designed with women with lived experience, and making it available as a training tool for primary care services.
2. Engage with PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) curriculum leads to feed back our recommendations and explore opportunities to promote relevant training and resources to improve menstrual health education through schools.
3. Consider a specific women's health steering group to take forward relevant actions related to reproductive health.
4. Including women's experience of accessing reproductive health information, as part of their Sexual Wellbeing and Reproductive Health Strategy work programme.

Any other local impact?

- The London newspaper, The Camden New Journal, ran a feature on our findings, featuring a case study we provided, with the headline 'Constant Pain Others Don't Believe'.
- With a reach of 109,000 people, we anticipate this will have helped to raise the profile of the disease locally and to have empowered women to speak up about seeking diagnosis.

What difference did this make nationally?

Our focus is always the health and wellbeing of the people of Camden. However, in some cases our work adds to a wider debate. We can record the following impact nationally:

- Our report was described as 'valuable research' in a registered letter from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting to the Prime Minister, Sir Kier Starmer.
- The Director of the research body, the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) issued a press release supporting our report, saying they hoped our '*recommendations...are adopted to ensure better care in Camden, and that they function as a catalyst for other boroughs to address this important issue*'.
- National charity, Endometriosis UK, issued a press release supporting our report which they said '*highlights...the stark inequalities often faced by under-represented groups*'. They also supported our findings with an online campaign, with their blog attaining over 7,500 views.



ENDOMETRIOSIS UK

WHAT IS ENDOMETRIOSIS » MAKE A DONATION »

INFORMATION GET SUPPORT GET INVOLVED RESEARCH NEWS BLOG SEARCH 

ENDOMETRIOSIS UK HOPE NEW HEALTHWATCH CAMDEN REPORT INSPIRES COUNCILS TO TAKE ACTION

A **new report** has been published by Healthwatch Camden that shines a light on the improvements that need to be made for those living with endometriosis in Camden. Whilst this report is for Camden specifically, we hope this will empower other Councils and Integrated Care Boards across the country to call for similar changes that would help improve the lives of those with endometriosis across the UK.

The report highlights the many challenges those with endometriosis face and what changes are needed within the NHS and in wider society to improve care. The recommendations in the report will soon be presented to the MPs for Camden,



Endometriosis UK
hope that new
Healthwatch Camden
report inspires other
councils to take action

Listening to your experiences

Action on vaping after young people speak out

According to our report into vaping ([Your Voice Your Health Camden Series: Vaping Report](#)), many young people do not realise the risks of vapes, thinking of them as a harmless way to relieve stress, with schools badly lacking experience-led instruction. Also, that over half of the young people who experimented with vapes had never smoked before.

Key things we heard:



Over 50%

of the young people who experimented with vapes had never smoked before

30%

of the young people said they did not associate nicotine with vaping or were not sure if it was associated

69

"I think (education in schools) should be less geared towards TELLING people (that) vaping (is) bad but SHOWING people instead. For example, having a person with lung damage come in and talk."

"(Vaping) helps from stress."

We listened to the experiences and views of local young people and together with them produced a series of recommendations, focused on increased surveillance of new vaping regulations and experience-led education in schools.

What difference did this make?

The council agreed with our recommendations including:

- That there should be a set timeframe for reviewing the effectiveness of the government ban on disposable vapes.
- To supplement Trading Standards' capacity to check and 'mystery shop' vape purchases.
- Working with ourselves and the young people who contributed to our report to further disseminate a new, tailored vaping leaflet.
- Formally recognising our recommendation that personal stories are a powerful way to communicate health harms and to aim to obtain more input from young people.

Hearing from all communities

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

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

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

- Holding a workshop to find out how people with physical and mental disabilities feel about cancer messaging and feeding this back to the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA).
- Making sure more vulnerable young people can access sexual health services in ways that work for them.



Running an event on the early signs of cancer

We spoke to people with physical and mental disabilities about the early signs of cancer. This work shone the spotlight on key inequalities, specifically concerning people who are hard of hearing or deaf and are from ethnically diverse communities. In these cases, British Sign Language (BSL) is the first language, followed by the spoken language at home, with spoken English as a third or sometimes a fourth language; and written English as fourth or fifth.

This highlighted the insufficiency of written public health (specifically cancer) messaging for these groups. The North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) will be sharing this information data with the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCLICB).

What difference did this make?

We have passed on this information to the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) who will work with the local Integrated Commissioning Board to highlight areas for improvement.

Making sure more young people can access sexual health services in ways that work for them

Following our report into young people's experience of sexual health services ([Your Voice Your Health Camden Series: Sexual Health](#)) we recommended that Camden Council make services accessible via schools in Relationships and Sex Education lessons.

This echoes the successful example of Bracknell Forest Council where lessons are delivered by trained health workers, backed up with a sexual health drop-in and one-on-one information service.

What difference did this make?

In response to our recommendation, the Camden School Nurse Team have agreed to support and provide advice on Relationships and Sex Education subjects and to welcome individual school referrals. Camden Council will also contact Bracknell Council to better understand this model and see what else might be replicable within Camden.

Information and signposting

This year we are proud to say that we have reached out to over 284,000 people to share advice or public health messages. We recorded that our website alone had 53,000 searches for information, and our (and our partner) social media sites received over 14,500 views.

We have helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust.
- Helping people access the services they need.
- Supporting people to look after their health.
- Signposting people to additional support services.



Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 40 days to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote our work.
- Collected experiences and supported communities to share their views.
- Gave advice and help on individual concerns.



Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

Volunteering as part of her degree in health studies, Emma Phelps says she loved her time volunteering for Healthwatch Camden. She particularly enjoyed connecting with local people.

"It allowed me to get to know this community as a whole and see the friendships, support networks, and kindness that are behind every Camden resident. I hope to take the lessons that HWC taught me about trust and community to all my future positions, to better serve the communities I work with. I cannot recommend this position enough!"

Emma



Habibur is a qualified medical doctor with a Master's in Public Health.

"I have gained valuable experience working with Healthwatch Camden's outreach officer, engaging with diverse communities and distributing multilingual resources. This role strengthened my communication skills, deepened my understanding of healthcare and volunteering, and enhanced my English proficiency. I truly value contributing to meaningful work that empowers people and fosters connections."

Habibur



Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



www.healthwatchcamden.co.uk/

[volunteer/](#)



0207 383 2407



info@healthwatchcamden.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

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

Our income and expenditure:

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

Additional income is broken down into:

- £15,000 received from London Catalyst for work on the Endometriosis Project which spanned across the 23/24 and was completed at the beginning of the 24/25 financial year.
- £12,000 received from the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) for work on cancer awareness to be delivered across 2024/2025.
- £8,800 received from North Central London Integrated Care Board for Hypertension and heart health awareness campaigns to be delivered across 24/25.

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

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding

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

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

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

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

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. To understand the factors which influence Bengali women to interact or not interact with diabetes initiatives and messages. To feed back our findings and analysis to our local health commissioners and service providers.
2. To work alongside the North Central London Cancer Alliance to raise screening take up amongst those aged 50-74 in the clinical areas of Bowel Cancer and Lung Cancer, particularly focusing on those groups whose second or third language is English.
3. To carry out further recruitment initiatives and projects to work alongside local academic partners to fill the roles of Enter and View volunteers so that we can progress with our programme of Enter and View work, which has been hampered by challenges in securing appropriate volunteers.

Statutory statements

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

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

The way we work

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

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

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

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met four times and made decisions on matters such as working with the North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) on a cancer awareness campaign. Also working with Public Health Camden to complete a specialist piece of listening work on views and experiences of local Sexual Health Services.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

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

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

During 2024/25, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and forums. We also operate interactive computer feedback pods.

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

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

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

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

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

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

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

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

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

Healthwatch representatives

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

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

Statutory statements

Enter and view

We are committed and keen to progress with our Enter and View workstream. We successfully carried out multiple recruitment advertising campaigns over the last six months across our social media platforms, also in our newsletter and partner newsletters, as well as reaching out to specific local groups, and working alongside the local job centre.

Following several rounds of interviews, two candidates were appointed in May 2025. However, for different reasons both candidates were unable to take up the positions.

We are now currently exploring working with local academic institutions to secure appropriate volunteers to carry out Enter and View work in 2025 and 2026.

Healthwatch Camden
85-87 Bayham Street
London NW1 0AG

 www.healthwatchcamden.co.uk

 0207 383 2407

 info@healthwatchcamden.co.uk

 @healthwatchcam

 @healthwatchencamden

 @healthwatchcamden