

We Make Camden Missions: **Our Diversity Mission**



We Make Camden:
State of the Borough 2025

Our Diversity Mission

By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community – and the next generation is ready to follow



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| Why is this a Mission?

In Camden, we take pride in the diversity of our borough. However, we understand that the outcomes for good life are unequal for the diverse residents of Camden. The inequality is systemic and goes beyond just access to jobs or money. It's also about power. Some people have more say than others, and that's not right. We want to change that.

Our goal is to make sure everyone in Camden has a real opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. This means making sure the people in charge of local organisations, including Camden Council, reflect the diversity of our community. We want to see more people from diverse backgrounds taking up leadership roles and participating in decision-making forums.

We're also focused on the future. We're working with schools and other educational programs to give young people the skills and confidence they need to become leaders. We want to help them develop their talents and create opportunities for them to be a future leader. This includes supporting young entrepreneurs and helping them start their own businesses.

Ultimately, we want to build a Camden where everyone has a voice and a chance to lead, now and in the future.

| What are the Diversity Mission's key aims?

In 2024, we worked to re-frame the diversity mission – which meant going back to review the core purpose of the mission and re-articulating what this really means to us in Camden right now.

Our commitment to the mission as an organisation was evident, and we have been undertaking a variety of work and projects that felt relevant to the broad ambition, but we felt that the mission was not outward focused and the way it was presented and described wasn't helping us to engage the wider community of organisations and residents, therefore, we revisited the theory of change and created a new mission map, focussing in on 4 key outcomes:

- **Increasing leadership diversity in key institutions**
- **Opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices**
- **An education system that prepares young people for leadership**
- **A local economy that supports entrepreneurial diversity**

◆ Good Life Camden – measuring progress

The table below sets out the mission's current thinking about relevant outcome measures to track progress in achieving the mission over the longer term. These reflect both where data is already available and our ambition to develop new measures to better understand mission progress.

We have aligned the outcome measures to our Good Life Camden wellbeing framework. Good Life Camden sets out a range of themes and signals to enable us to understand what it means to live a good life in the borough.

This data will help us understand change at a system level, but we recognise that Camden is only one actor within this system. The change we hope to see – and which the mission can contribute to – will be dependent on national policy, private and third sector partners, economic circumstances, and more.

These outcomes cannot tell the whole story and will need to be complemented with qualitative data and project level learning over the life of the mission.

Mission Outcome	Key Measures	GLC theme
Increasing leadership diversity in key institutions	Percentage of key partners who publish their leadership diversity data (TBD)	Empowered citizenship / Equality
	Gap between borough population and leadership of key organisations across demographic characteristics (TBD)	Empowered citizenship / Equality
Opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices	Increasing percentage of residents who feel they have a say in decision-making	Empowered citizenship / Equality
An education system that prepares young people for leadership	Increased diversity of school leadership	Empowered citizenship / Equality
	Reduction in attainment gaps between different groups	Education and Lifelong Learning
A local economy that supports entrepreneurial diversity	Increasing diversity of SME business ownership	Empowered citizenship / Equality

| Increasing leadership diversity in key institutions

When we talk about positions of power, the most intuitive image that one conjures up is that of leadership positions of existing institutions, whether that be executive positions in private and public organisations or that of elected leaders or board members. People holding these positions indeed have great influence in the organisations that they lead and as a result in the local ecosystem and physical space in which these organisations operate. Hence, diversifying these positions of power in existing institutions is the cornerstone ambition of our diversity mission. As one resident stated:

“*I’m less likely to apply for a position of power if I don’t see people like me in these positions.*”

– Somerstown Researcher, A Blueprint for Change Research by Camden Giving

We believe we would be able to achieve this goal by targeting the following key outcomes:

- Increased representation of diverse groups in senior roles across all sectors
- Council as an employer is as diverse as its community and employs in an equitable way
- Boards and decision-making forums across the Borough are diverse

In this section, we explore the current state of diversity in the leadership positions of some of the largest employers in the borough, including the council.

Public disclosure of leadership diversity data varies across Camden organisations

We commissioned research on the diversity in the workforce and leadership of partner organisations to Camden Council. We used publicly available reports of a select group of partners to understand the diversity in leadership and across the wider workforce. We looked at diversity for protected characteristics where available (gender, ethnicity and disability).

A key finding was that many organisations do not publish information relating to diversity of their workforce, or else do not publish information for leadership diversity, or for all characteristics. This has informed our prioritisation within the mission of building a wider coalition of organisations that share our commitment to inclusion and diversity and to encourage greater transparency on leadership diversity across organisations in the borough.

We believe increasing transparency and access to data is a short-term measure of improvement in this space as it will improve our ability to understand the scale and nature of the challenge. Over time, and on an annual basis, we want to be able to publish an index of leadership diversity – not for individual organisations but for broad groups of representative organisations - so we are able to track change over time.

For those organisations that did publish data, we can see that in general leadership positions are not representative of wider Camden borough diversity. It should be noted that some of the organisations included are national and international companies and do not yet isolate and publish data specific to Camden. This is another area we want to explore in partnership with local organisations.

Public availability of senior management data (2023)

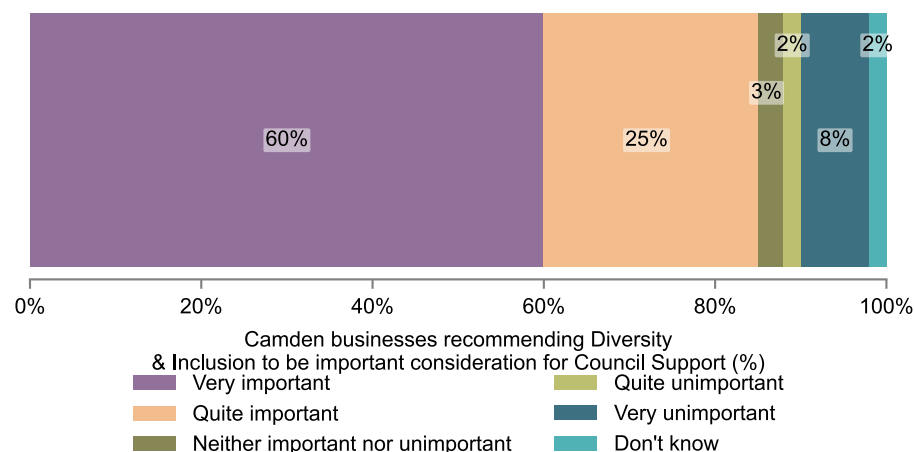
Organisation	Age	Disability	Ethnicity	Gender
Argent				
Arup				
AstraZeneca				
British Land				●
Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust				
Camden Council	●	●	●	●
Google				
Great Ormond Street Hospital	●	●	●	●
GSK				
Landsec			●	●
Meta				
Metropolitan Police			●	●
MSD				
Royal Free Hospital				
The Francis Crick Institute				●
UAL – Central Saint Martins				
University College London (UCL)			●	●
University College London Hospitals NHS Trust				●
Voluntary Action Camden				

● = data is publicly available

Camden businesses believe in diversity and inclusion to be a priority for workforce

The Diversity Mission aims to ensure that support available to start-up is equitably available to all the entrepreneurs in the borough. In offering support to businesses, 85% of the businesses, surveyed in Camden Business Survey 2022, believed that promoting diversity and inclusion should be a key consideration for the council.

Figure 11.1: Percentage of Camden Businesses recommending Diversity & Inclusion to be an important consideration for Council Support



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

Learning from: Veolia

In 2023, Veolia, one of Camden Council’s contractors, launched their inclusion strategy FIVE BY 2025. They have committed to conduct diversity audits and one of their measures of success is a year-on-year increase in diversity disclosure rates.

With an interest in diverse workforce in the borough, Veolia created a local baseline of diversity in workforce: 4.2% of their workforce in Camden identify as women and 62% of local workforce belongs to white ethnic groups, with a higher percentage of both women and white staff in managerial positions.

This baseline has informed a local diversity action plan for Veolia, which promotes inclusive physical space and provisions, encourages inclusion conversation among staff and policies to ensure equitable opportunities. This reinforces our belief in the willingness of our partners in the borough to take on this mission.

Camden council is on a journey to be an employer that represents the diversity of our community

The Camden Council wants to lead as an example in public disclosure of diversity data as well as striving to be more representative of the borough and the communities we serve.

The Council’s Annual Employment Profile offers an analysis of the workforce’s size, composition, and various recruitment and employment areas, including age, disability, ethnic background, gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation (where applicable data is accessible).

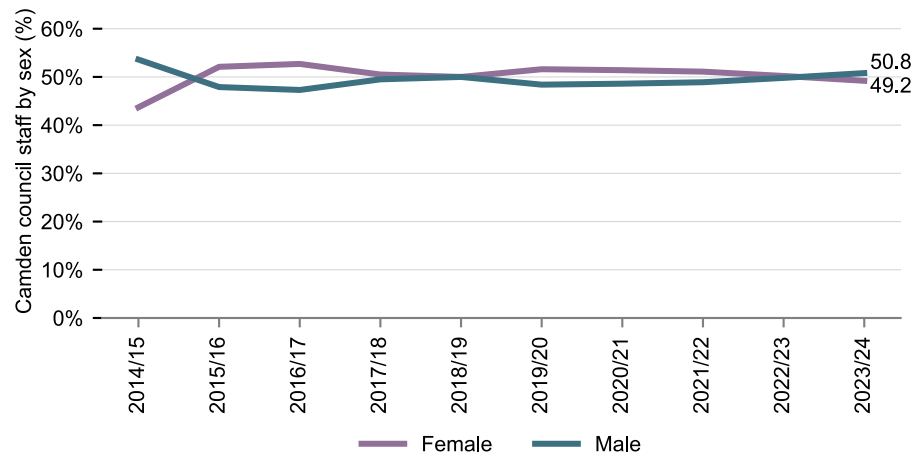
The Council is dedicated to achieving a workforce that is representative at all levels. To meet this objective, Camden’s employment profile is published, and the organisation has been voluntarily reporting its

gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gap since 2015. In 2022, Camden became the first local authority to publish its gender pension gap. Camden has implemented inclusive recruitment practices, such as “no all-white shortlists” for level 5 and above roles and hiring manager training.

Workforce figures provided in this report are taken from the most recent Annual Employment Profile and reflect the position as of 31 March 2024.

- Female staff constitute the majority (55.6%) of Camden’s workforce. Historically, local government tends to employ more women due to flexible work opportunities. Camden has the eighth-lowest proportion of female staff compared to other London Councils. As of 2024, 49.8% of the Council’s highest 5% earners are women, a slight decrease from previous years and the first time this has dropped below 50% since 2015.

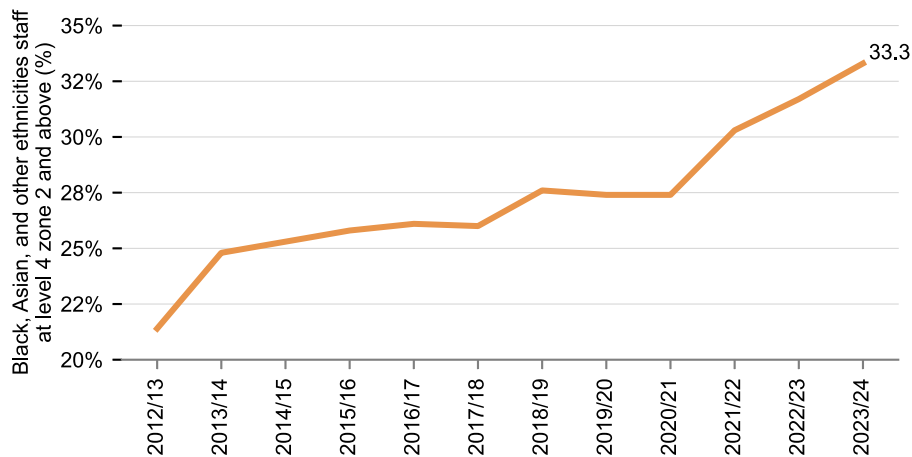
Figure 11.2: Camden council staff by sex, 2014-2023



Source: Camden Workforce Report, 2014/15-2023/24

- White staff form the largest ethnic group at 41.9%, though this is a 1.5% reduction from the previous year. Black staff comprise almost a quarter of the workforce, and the proportion of staff of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicities increased by 1.7% overall. The table below illustrates there continues to be an increase the proportion of staff of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicities working at Level 4 Zone 2 and above.

Figure 11.3: Share of staff of Black, Asian and other ethnicities at level 4 zone 2 and above



Source: Camden Council Staff Survey, 2012/13-2023/24

- The proportion of White staff at Levels 5 to 7 has decreased from 64.5% to 59.8%.
- 38.5% of Chief Officers (Level 7) are Black, Asian, or Other ethnicity and representative of Camden's population (40.5%).
- The Council reports continuing progress towards closing pay gaps. The number and proportion of Black, Asian, and Other ethnicity staff at senior grades (Level 5 to Level 7) has continued to increase.
- The Council is focused on creating a disability-inclusive workplace. However, there are significantly low declaration rates, with 31.2% of staff yet to make a disability declaration. 8.5% of staff have declared a disability, a 1.2% increase compared to last year.
- The workforce is balanced across the key working-age bands of 25 to 60 years. Only 2.9% of employees are within the 16-to-24-year age bracket, compared to the 15.9% of the population, but this is largely due to Camden hosting a large student population around its 11 higher education institutions.

Our recently concluded Employee Experience Survey 2024 indicates that it is not just a matter of diverse representation, but inclusivity is felt by our staff. 89% of our staff believes organisation is making progress in being anti-racist and there is commitment from leadership in creating an inclusive workplace culture. Overall, compared to 2023, a higher percentage (81%) of staff recognise fairness and respect for all backgrounds in the organisation.

Since publishing our ethnicity and disability pay gap for the first time in 2015, we have come a long way, but inclusion will continue to be our active priority. We will continue to build a clearer picture of the state of diversity and inclusion in organisations through data and staff feedback and adapt our approach to inclusion to maintain our lead.

Black on Board

Olmec and Camden Council partnered to deliver a customised Black on Board programme to address under-representation on boards. The goal of the programme is to prepare participants to serve on boards by developing their skills and confidence to take up a governing position.

The program delivers professional training that prepares people to become effective board members for range of organisation across private, public and third sectors including social enterprises, charities, unincorporated associations, membership associations, governing bodies, housing associations and regulators and so on.

The participants reported increased self-confidence, improved performance at work and resulting mental health benefits. It has resulted in placement on boards or promotions for 50% of the participants.

Opening up power structures and amplifying civic voices

Beyond leadership positions, another way the mission is looking at positions of power is by ensuring we open up power structures and amplify the voices of our diverse community. This amplification has to take place across all areas of the public realm and as a starting point, we have identified the following outcomes that would help create more equitable power in public realm:

- The council's policies and services are co-designed with the community
- The voice of community is represented in local decision-making
- Local area developments (public or private) are undertaken in alignment with community voices

Investment in participation infrastructure and community capacity is the foundation for amplifying civic voices

Camden wants to shift from a transactional consultative model of involvement to a more meaningful, relational way of working with citizens, which brings together lived, learned, and laboured experiences and expertise as part of their everyday way of working. The council has been on a journey to catalyse civic engagement in the borough through multiple layers of consistent investment into the civic capacity and infrastructure.

- Firstly, by investing in building community capacity to engage in decision-making in the borough through a '*learning by doing*' model. There has been active creation of opportunities for residents who wouldn't have been engaged otherwise through programs such as Community Champions and We Make Camden Kit.
- Secondly, for this increased community capacity to have meaningful engagement with council's decision-making, there has been investment in creating different engagement mechanisms such as Citizen Assemblies and Housing Panels. For service design, we adopt a data-led approach to ensure that the diversity of our borough is represented in the design process, and we are working on being able to report on this data as part of the mission.
- Thirdly, these investments have been catalytic in promoting neighbourhood level participatory initiatives such as Kentish Town Connects which enables local community organisations and residents to collaborate for the better of neighbourhood.

Residents' ideas, energy, and creativity are one of Camden's biggest strengths, and the council needs to work alongside residents, sharing power with them and being led by what matters most to them and doing so equitably across our Camden residents. The value of these investments is not always in the outputs that are delivered but more in the outcomes and experiences of people. It is in the opportunity to share experiences amongst each other and being able to meet

each other in a safe space that this process changes the way Camden Council can begin working with citizens.

As one of the participants from citizen assembly expressed,

“ I just felt like, I wasn’t intellectual. But [when I eased myself into the Assembly] I thought, oh, no, actually, I have good things to say. So I was quite surprised – [I found that I could] speak out loud. I don’t know it kind of put a bit of salt back into my life.”

After a Citizen Assembly, a participant expressed its value as:

“ It was a gamechanger being part of something like this. It didn’t matter what class you were from...”

Working closely with diverse Voluntary & Community Sector organisations helps us understand issues closer to our community

Camden has a diverse, active, and vibrant voluntary and community sector, comprising over 2,400 local groups.

The Community Partnership Fund is supporting equality-led organisations representing Camden’s diverse communities, advocating for their needs, and working to dismantle structural barriers. More than 50% of leaders identify as female and more than 40% belong to black and minority ethnic groups.

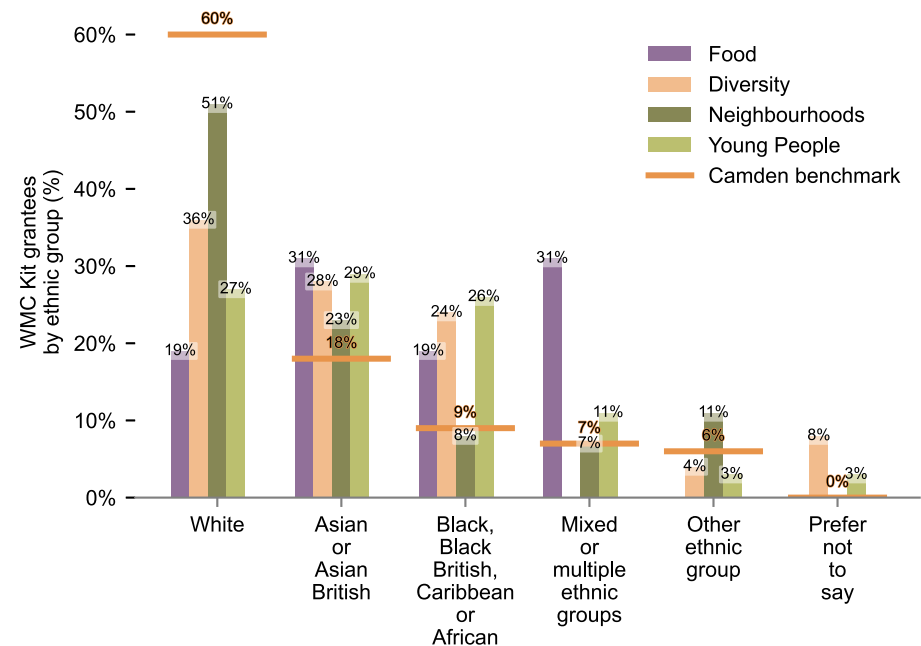
At a smaller scale, the We make Camden Kit, a participatory grant making program jointly delivered by Camden Citizens, Camden Council, Camden Giving and Camden businesses, pursues similar goals by supporting mission-aligned community initiatives led by diverse grantees. Since 2021, the kit has sponsored community projects, led by residents and organisations, to contribute towards achieving our missions. As of August 2024, the kit had distributed £646,908 among 365 mission-oriented projects, with 60% of them being led by residents.

One of the ambitions of delivering the kit as a participatory grant

making program is to make sure the grant is more equitably distributed across our community. Looking at data over last 3 years, we note that:

- The highest percentage of grants (28%) is awarded to grantees in 35 – 44-year bracket; the average age in Camden is 37.2 years.
- The highest percentage of grants (55%) is awarded to grantees who are women.
- The highest percentage of grants (38%) is awarded to grantees from white ethnic group, followed by 26% from Asian or Asian British ethnic groups and 17% from Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ethnic groups.

Figure 11.4: Distribution of WMC Kit Grantees by Ethnic Groups



Source: WeMakeCamden kit data, 2024

The mechanism of kit is central to how we believe our missions contribute to wellbeing in the borough.

Firstly, they directly contribute to achieving our missions (which are priorities for the borough agreed with our community) by using their embeddedness in the community to impact outcomes and pulling levers closest to our community.

Secondly, these hyperlocal and small-scale projects act as a portfolio of mission-aligned experiments and contribute to our collective learning of missions in the community.

Thirdly, for the residents involved either as grantees or with grant making panels, the ambition is to empower community to actively shape decision-making in the borough, which is a key signal of wellbeing we have identified with residents as part of Good Life Camden framework.

From Sep 2024 to Feb 2025, we gathered insights from our grantees on the impact of the kit on them and their communities. For many of our grantees, this is one of the first grants for a community project they have received. They report a positive impact on their confidence, increased ability to make changes in the community and an overall improvement in their wellbeing. Our learning from some of the projects for respective missions is shared further in each mission's chapter.

Participation rates in civic engagement are much higher in Camden than the London average but this doesn't translate to feeling an ability to influence decisions

Data from the Community Life Survey – though it cannot tell us about the diversity of viewpoints on these topics due to sample size – points to a mixed picture for people's engagement in decision making for Camden as a whole.

Broadly, answers to questions about engagement, activism, consultation and social actions showed higher (though statistically similar) levels than the London average. Participation in civic consultation, which includes completing a paper or online questionnaire, attended a public meeting or being involved in a face-to-face or online group, was significantly higher than the London average. Questions about the importance of having influence over local decisions, and wanting to be involved in local decisions, were statistically similar to the London average. But the question about people's perception about the actual level of influence they had over decisions that affected them was significantly lower than the London average.

Data from a local survey commissioned by Camden Giving which asked about people's perception of their ability to influence local decision making found variation across ethnic and age groups i.e. white respondents were slightly more likely to agree that they could influence decision making than black respondents, and older respondents were more likely to agree than younger respondents. However, the sample size for the survey was small, and from a group of heavily engaged residents. There is a need to gather more data on residents' perception of their influence.

Qualitative research conducted by Camden Giving with residents in Kilburn and Somerstown, showed some frustration amongst residents and community researchers. One resident noted that,

“*Kilburn is full of different ethnic minorities. Sometimes it feels great, but sometimes it feels like we're put in a box.*”

– Kilburn Resident, A Blueprint for Change Research by Camden Giving

Measure / comparison to London	Worse	Similar	Better
Participated in civic engagement in the last year		39.7%	
Participated in civic activism in last year		12.4%	
Participated in civic consultation			29.3%
Involvement in social action		18.2%	
Importance of influence over decisions		58.2%	
Want to be involved in local decisions		38.2%	
Influence on decisions	22.2%		

An education system that prepares young people for leadership

While we work toward greater diversity in leadership positions and the public realm today, we do not want the challenge to persist for the next generation. In the diversity mission, we strive to ensure equitable opportunity for all young people to be a future leader. As a Kilburn resident said:

“Addressing inequality often involves investing in the younger generation to break the cycle of disadvantage.”

We believe in following outcomes to be fundamental to developing an education system that prepares young people for leadership:

- All young people have good levels of educational attainment
- All young people have skills for leadership development
- All young people in the borough participate in decision-making

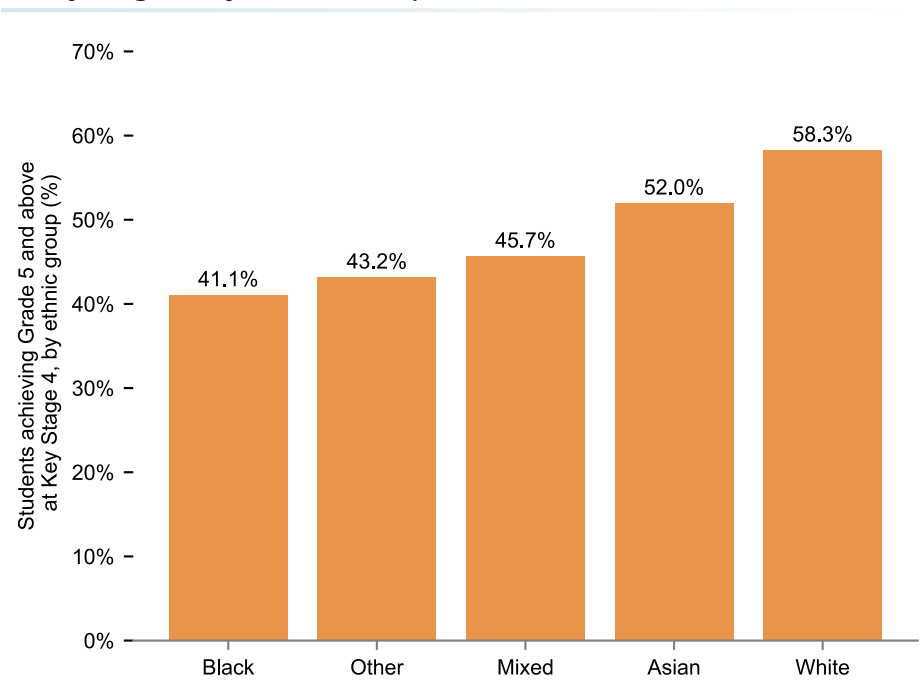
In this section, we further discuss our understanding based on public data and our engagement in the borough.

At Key Stage 4, a higher percentage of girls in Camden achieve Grade 5 and above, and the differences are consistent across ethnic groups

Comparing the educational attainment of girls and boys, we see girls outperforming boys similar to the national trend. A higher percentage of girls in Camden achieve Grade 5 and above in their GCSEs.

Across the ethnic groups in Camden, we see the percentage of students achieving Grade 5 and above are lower than Camden average for all major ethnic groups apart from White and Asian pupils, with pupils from Black and Mixed ethnic groups at the lowest end. However, even within the ethnic groups, the girls consistently outperform boys, albeit to varying extent.

Figure 11.5: Percentage of Students achieving by Grade 5 and above at Key Stage 4 (by Ethnic Groups)

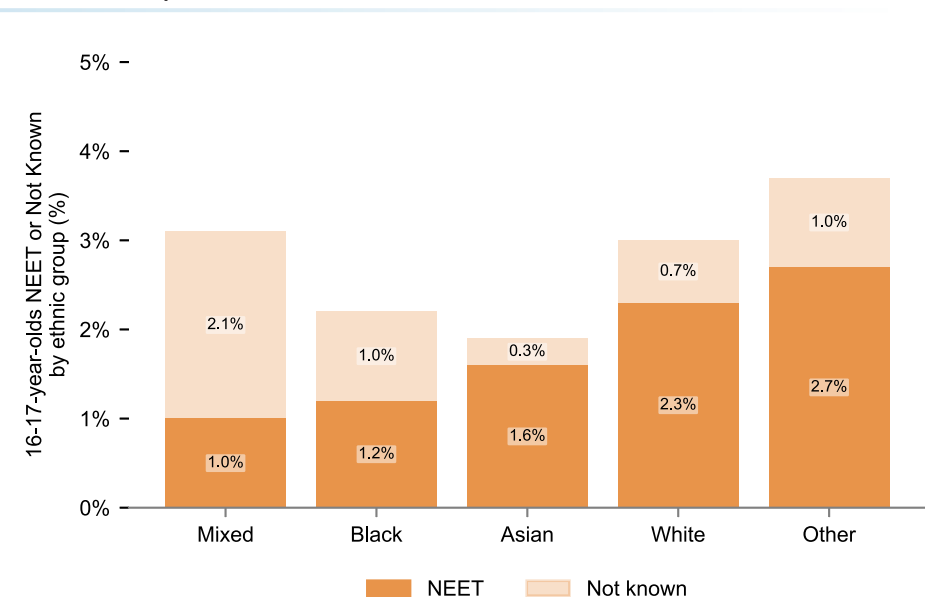


Source: Department for Education, 2023/2024

Camden has a low percentage of 16-17-year-olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) but we don't know if they are developing leadership skills

Beyond KS4, more than 90% of 16 – 17-year-olds go on to sustained education, employment and apprenticeship destinations across gender and ethnic backgrounds. Among the rest, 1.9% are not in education, employment or training (NEET), which is lower than national average,¹ and destinations are unknown for the remaining 1.2%. The percentage of boys is marginally higher than girls in both NEET and Not Known categories. Comparing across ethnic groups, a lower percentage of 16-17-year-olds belonging to Asian, Black and Mixed ethnic groups are identified as NEET.

Figure 11.6: Percentage of 16-17-year-olds NEET or Not Known (by Ethnic Groups)



Source: Department for Education, 2024

Future Leaders Program

Future Leaders UK and Camden Council partnered to deliver a development programme for 100 16–18-year-olds from diverse backgrounds. The objective of the program was to prepare young people to be the future leaders by developing skills, building confidence, raising aspirations and empowering them to be an advocate for equality and diversity in their local community.

The tailored program was delivered across a 12-month period covering a range of different formats such as workshops, career fairs, field visits, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, 1:1 mentoring and application support and guest lectures. They were empowered to deliver social action projects to contribute to their local community.

They led initiatives such as assemblies on issues important to their schools, social awareness campaigns, community cleaning projects, and sporting/creative events to bring their community together.

Based on the demographic data, 57.3% of the participants identified as female, 88% of the participants belonged to a minority ethnic group, 38% were eligible for free school meals. In the first instance, the programme was offered to young people facing compounding barriers such as refugee or asylum seeker, Special Education Needs, first in their family to attend universities, care-experiences and young carers.

While it is still early to assess if the program enables them to take up leadership positions in future, the post-program surveys an increase in confidence in applying for apprenticeships, in developing more ambitious career aspirations and reaching them.

We need more data about the voice of young people in decision-making

In addition to formal work and employment opportunities, we believe participation of young people in local community and decision-making is a key step to prepare them as a future leader. The participation can range from voting in local and general elections to participating in civic consultations and leading community initiatives.

Our partner, Camden Giving, who also administers the We Make Camden Kit, surveyed the alumni of their participatory grant making panels on their participation levels. Among the 16–25-year-olds of this highly engaged group, the participation in civic consultations varied and we notice the ones who strongly believe in their ability to influence local decisions is less than 20%.

These results are not representative of Camden’s young people overall; however, these are the questions we would like to ask young people in the borough, through the work of the mission going forward.

Figure 11.7: Percentage of alumni of Camden Giving’s participatory grant making panels (16–25-year-olds) participating in civic consultations

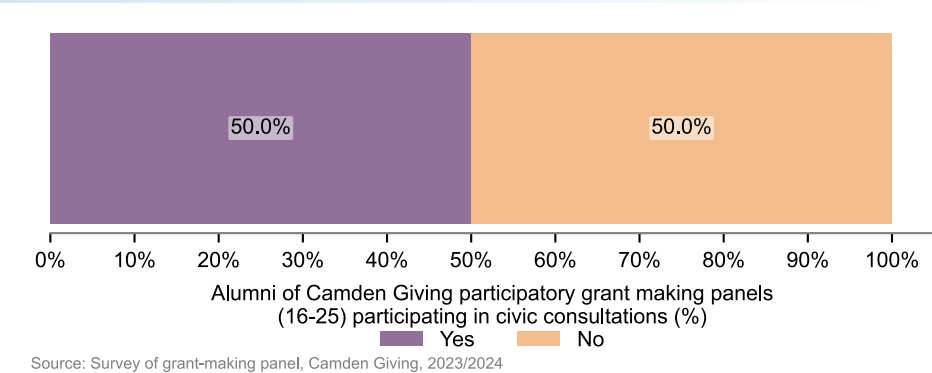
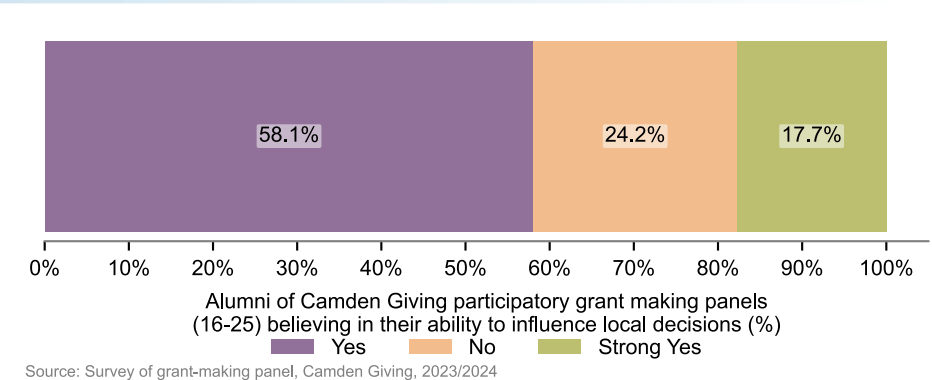


Figure 11.8: Percentage of alumni of Camden Giving’s participatory grant making panels (16–25-year-olds) believing in their ability to influence local decisions



Young Governors Programme

In 2024, Camden Learning started delivering a Young Governors' programme. The programme has placed a cohort of 13 young adults (18-30) on participating governing bodies on a year's placement as Associate Members, with a dedicated programme of support prior to and during the year. Early indications show that this group is more representative of the schools' population than the overall governor cohort. Still in nascent stages, we expect early insights to emerge by the time we write our next report. In Camden at present, governing boards are on average older than borough population. Specifically, we know that only 7.3% of the governors are below the age of 34, which reflects lower representation of young people's voices in decision-making in an ecosystem that predominantly impacts them.

| A Local Economy that Supports Entrepreneurial Diversity

This is a new outcome within the Diversity Mission, after a process of learning, reflection, and reframing in mid-2024 identified that the Mission did not sufficiently extend to Camden's business community. This rethinking highlighted the transformative potential of extending access to entrepreneurship and business opportunities more equitably. We already have a strong track record of offering support to residents to start and grow businesses such as financial support through Future Camden Fund and support to develop entrepreneurial skills through Rebel Business School, but we know we can go further. Our immediate priority is to establish an evidence-based for the diversity of entrepreneurs in Camden so that we can focus our attention and target investments to overcome the most significant barriers.

Over time we want to catalyse an ecosystem that has reduced barriers and increased support for entrepreneurs from all backgrounds at the point of entry. Specifically, we believe in achieving following outcomes equitably across our business community:

- Camden's businesses have equal access to start-up and risk capital
- Camden's entrepreneurs have access to resources and networks to support growth
- Camden's businesses can access local markets and procurement

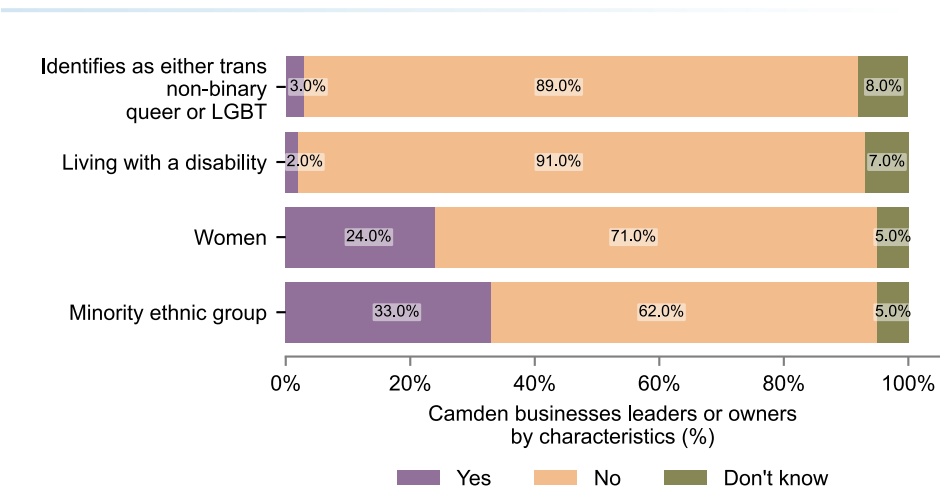
In this section, we further discuss our understanding, primarily based on Camden Business Survey 2022.²

While we have some insight into the diversity of business owners in Camden, we have limited understanding of the diversity of our entrepreneurs

More than 80% of the businesses surveyed by the Camden Business Survey were micro-businesses with less than 10 employees. When we look at the ownership of businesses by protected characteristics (Fig. 10), we find that,

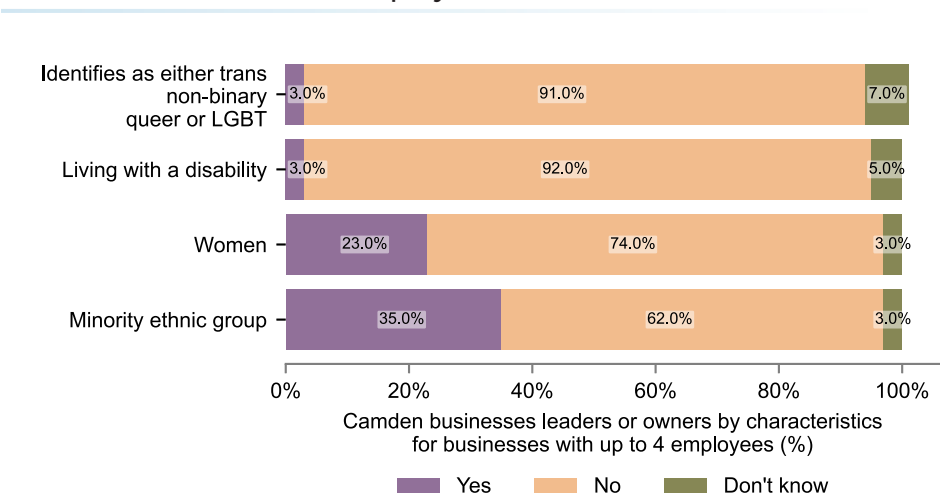
- 33% of businesses are led or owned by someone from a minority ethnic background.
- 24% of businesses are led or owned by women.
- 3% of businesses are led or owned by a person who identify as either trans, non-binary, queer or LGBT.
- 2% of businesses led or owned by a person living with a disability.

Figure 11.9: Percentage of Camden businesses ‘led or owned by’ for all businesses



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

Figure 11.10: Percentage of Camden businesses ‘led or owned by’ for businesses with 0 – 4 employees



Source: Camden Business Survey, 2022/2023

If we look at smallest segment of businesses with 0 – 4 employees, the distribution across these characteristics doesn’t change significantly. However, it is to note, the small businesses are not an indication of new businesses.

Based on the Inter-Departmental Business Register, we understand that 3,445 new businesses were started in Camden in 2024, however, we do not have reliable insights into demographic of their owners. As a first step in the diversity mission, we want to develop a baseline of the diversity of entrepreneurs and new business founders in the borough.

Future Camden Fund

The Future Camden Fund, a grant and loan fund for small businesses which deliver social impact in Camden, was launched in 2022. The fund aimed to improve funding for underrepresented owners, with a focus on Black and female-owned businesses responding to UK-wide evidence that these groups are disproportionately disadvantaged in starting and growing their businesses³. They face specific barriers such as access to finance, deprivation, education, and under-representation in senior workforce positions.

100% of the applicants to the fund self-identified with underrepresented groups in business relating to disability, ethnicity, sexuality and gender. Over two rounds of funding, the fund has awarded £500,000 to 22 businesses. The broad range of sector-agnostic priority areas made the funding more accessible to a variety of businesses. 73% of the projects receiving grants and loans focused on opportunities for young people, support to small businesses, food security etc. and directly contributed to We Make Camden missions.

Rebel Business School

Camden have commissioned Rebel Business School to deliver a number of pre-enterprise and start-up support programmes. The most recent, starting in September 2024, is a 12-month programme, combining in-person sessions across Camden's neighbourhoods with virtual workshops to ensure broad accessibility. The focus is on building capabilities of budding entrepreneurs with sessions on business start-up essentials, growth strategies, and sustainable business practices.

The sessions have promoted participation from underrepresented entrepreneurs such as those who identify as female, belonging to ethnic minorities, all age groups, or as having a disability. They also support people who have other barriers such as a lack of home ownership or for people depending on benefits. A majority of the participants report some positive impact on their confidence and business network, and they report a higher confidence in being able to find support in their local neighborhood / area after the programme.

Learning from: Bloomsbury Beginnings – a We Make Camden Kit Grantee:

Bloomsbury Beginnings had already been working with female entrepreneurs for 9 years when they applied for the We Make Camden kit. Since 2014, they have worked with 500+ women from diverse backgrounds and offering them solutions such as incubators, flexible childcare and coaching.

The grant was specifically for a video project to amplify and celebrate the achievements of women founders in Camden. Driven by the life experience of a career shift with motherhood and determination to "put economic powers back in the hands of women", the project specifically wants to build awareness about the disproportionate effects of becoming a parent on women and their careers.

They took a more personal and relational approach to filming as she explains,

“ We filmed people in the places that were important to them, that meant having a kind of special meaning for them. So that sometimes meant in their homes... on people's business premises.”

The videos in themselves were not the end but became an opportunity for change and

“ for women to change their way of thinking about themselves, evaluating their future while they are caring for their children.”

Bloomsbury Beginnings founder would have liked to engage with and amplify voices of many women beyond her immediate network which has been difficult because of the need to develop personal trust first and fear of judgement. Reflection on her personal experience and years of engaging with other entrepreneurs who are mothers, she emphasises the need to reframe

“ how we view motherhood”

and that

“ being a mother is not a liability.”

| Our priorities for the coming year

Over the coming year we want to:

- Share our inclusion journey and plans with other Camden organisations and build a coalition willing to continue to champion the importance and value of diversity across their workforce and in leadership. We hope to improve conversation, collaboration and learning across the borough and encourage others to, at the minimum, share their inclusion work and data more transparently. This will help us build a clearer picture of leadership diversity in the borough and to galvanise collective action to create a borough with equitable power structures.
- Continue to articulate our journey and philosophy around participation and power sharing with residents and communities, and find ways to take this further and beyond our existing work in their area through the mission. We want to gather more comprehensive data on the diversity of residents engaging in all forms with the Council – whether that is via service design co-production activities, participation activities, local area development consultation etc.
- Build an even stronger partnership with schools and find ways to add value and amplify the work already being done across the borough – in particular through bringing together a range of leadership initiatives for young people under the umbrella of a Camden leadership programme – providing more structure, clearer entry and exit points, opportunities for progression and looking for gaps in our offer of support.
- Deliver two pilots in participatory investment (£2M each) for the Community Wealth Fund. One pilot will feature a small scale approach with a diverse group of young people. Our second pilot will engage over a 1000+ diverse residents to help distribute capital to diverse entrepreneurs working in Camden. Through these pilots our aim is to understand the best approaches to working with

residents in an investment process, including learning about what is the best type of content to offer residents, where they feel the most engaged and excited, and how all of this interacts with council and investment regulations.

Endnotes

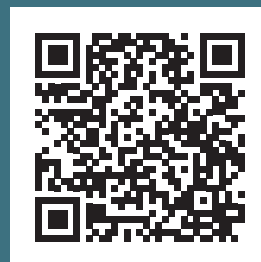
- 1 NEETS <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-neet-age-16-to-17-by-local-authority/2023-24>
- 2 The Camden Business survey was commissioned by Camden Council covering a representative sample of 1,000+ businesses across sectors and sizes. The maximum sample error is +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence level, i.e. we can be 95% confident that if the entire population of businesses was surveyed, the responses would be within 3.1 percentage points.
- 3 Alone together: Entrepreneurship and diversity in the UK | British Business Bank

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We Make Camden Missions:
Our Diversity Mission



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