

Camden Challenge Prize 2025: Information Document

This document contains all the information you need to know to apply to Camden Challenge Prize 2025. It's the same information available online at [Camden Challenge Prize – We Make Camden](#). Reach out to camdenchallengeprize@camden.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Contents

Overview	2
The Camden Challenge Prize 2025	2
The Prize pot	2
Why this matters	3
Why you should apply for the challenge prize	3
Challenge briefs	4
Eligibility criteria	5
How to apply	7
Timeline	7
Judging criteria	9
Partnerships	10
Glossary	11
Contact us	12

Overview

The Camden Challenge Prize is a recurring innovation competition that tackles a different Camden mission each time. There's a financial prize for whoever can first or most effectively solve a problem.

The [Camden Challenge Prize 2025](#) is open for applications now – find all the information you need to know to apply here.

The Camden Challenge Prize 2025

This year, the first ever Camden Challenge Prize aims to spark new ideas and bring fresh perspectives to [our Food Mission](#). Join the movement to create a more sustainable Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) Sector.

Food waste is a growing issue within the HaFS Sector, but we believe that through innovation and creativity, we can transform how food waste is prevented and managed. We invite everyone – individuals, startups, chefs, innovators, and organisations – to propose new business ideas and innovations to help reduce and manage food waste across the HaFS Sector.

This is your chance to make a difference.

The Prize pot

The winner and one runner-up will be awarded funds to continue developing their ideas, implement and scale their work.

£75,000

The winner of the [Camden Challenge Prize 2025](#) will be awarded £75,000.

£25,000

The runner-up of the [Camden Challenge Prize 2025](#) will be awarded £25,000.

£5,000

During the 'prototyping phase' of the program, 4 finalists will each receive £5,000 to prototype and test their ideas.

Payment will be made in one lump sum within 30 days of winning the Camden Challenge Prize award and the winners will be required to meet with us quarterly to provide impact and budget updates.

Why this matters

Every year, 285,600 tonnes of food is wasted by the Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) Sector in London.

With more than 4,200 registered food businesses in Camden, there's a critical opportunity to reduce food surplus, preserve edible food and properly recycle unavoidable waste. Innovative solutions could unlock environmental, economic, and social benefits for the borough.

Why you should apply for the challenge prize

- **Funding**
Receive a one-off investment to bring your idea to life or accelerate the growth of an existing solution. Whether you're at the concept stage or ready to scale, the financial support is designed to help you move from ambition to action.
- **Mentorship and strategic collaboration**
Gain access to a network of experts, innovators and industry leaders who'll work with you to sharpen your strategy, overcome barriers and unlock new opportunities. Our mentorship program offers hands-on guidance and meaningful connections.
- **Industry exposure and influence**
Present your solution to influential people in the Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) Sector. You could benefit from media coverage, spotlight opportunities and the chance to raise your profile within the growing sector.
- **Create meaningful, measurable impact**
Your innovation could reduce waste, cut carbon emissions, improve supply chains or inspire lasting change—making a real difference to communities and for the planet.

Challenge briefs

Applications should respond to at least one of the Challenges. [Find our research insights that inspired each Challenge.](#)

1. Reducing food surplus



The challenge: Enable Hospitality and Food Service businesses to reduce surplus by getting a grasp on how much surplus and waste is created, addressing overproduction or helping them respond more effectively to consumer trends.

Each year in the UK, 18% of food purchased by the Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) Sector is thrown away – this is 1 million tonnes of food waste at a cost of £3.2 billion. Of this waste, 75% could have been eaten. This means that in the UK alone, approximately 375 million meals a year could have been saved from this sector.

The first step in minimising food waste from the HaFS Sector starts with reducing the amount of food surplus created. Food businesses often don't know how much surplus they create and they can find it hard to predict customer demand, which leads to overordering and preparing too much food. Factors like the drive for operational efficiency, unpredictable customer footfall and changing dietary trends can often leave businesses with excess food they can't use or sell. A big indicator of the problem is that businesses can opt into redistribution services. It's imperative that they reduce the surplus created in the first place.

2. Influencing workplace cultures and practices



The challenge: Shift workplace culture and practices so that reducing food surplus and waste becomes a natural part of daily routines and decisions.

There are many different reasons for food waste in the HaFS Sector - 34% of the waste is from consumer plates, 21% from spoilage and 45% from food preparation. Our research has found that the workplace culture in businesses within this sector is a significant contributor to food spoilage and preparation.

In busy food businesses where margins are tight, reducing the creation of food waste can be a low priority. If a business believes that reducing food waste won't lead to real savings and, without a clear understanding of the scale and impact of food waste, it can be hard to motivate them to take action. Staff, especially new employees, tend to adopt existing habits in workplaces where waste isn't taken seriously and everyday practices - like how stock is ordered and managed - often go unquestioned, leading to food being unnecessarily spoiled.

3. Managing food waste



The challenge: Reduce the amount of food waste from Hospitality and Food Service businesses that ends up at landfill, either by supporting businesses to effectively manage their food waste or providing alternative opportunities for utilising food waste.

Only 17% of London's food waste and food loss is processed into renewable energy (by the process of anaerobic digestion). If all of it were, it would save enough carbon to power all the homes in Camden for nearly 3 years.

For businesses, food waste collection is 33% cheaper than general waste services, yet only 34% of food businesses make use of them. Barriers like lack of space, time and effort make separating waste out feel difficult and unrewarding. However, since April 2025, businesses with more than 10 employees are now required by law to segregate their food waste from their other waste. Any food waste that ends up at landfill is a lost opportunity to create value through renewable energy, composting or upcycled products.

Eligibility criteria

The [Camden Challenge Prize 2025](#) is open to individuals, groups, start-ups and organisations across the UK. They can be students, professionals, startups, non-profits or for-profits, based anywhere in the UK. Whether you're a seasoned professional or an emerging innovator, your ideas matter.

1. Open to all: the prize is open to anyone based in the UK. We welcome ideas from individuals, groups, organisations and businesses across all sectors. They can be students, professionals, startups, non-profits, for-profits. If you're entering as a team, members can be based internationally but the lead applicant must be based in the UK. You can be on more than one team initially but if you're on more than one team that moves forward to the second stage, then you must choose one. The only exception is that London Borough of Camden employees, Councillors, MPs and their immediate family members are not eligible to enter this prize.
2. English- All applications must be submitted in English.
3. Local applicability: though the prize is national in its search for innovators and ideas, the solutions must be tested in and applicable to the London Borough of Camden.
4. Willingness to share learning: all applicants must be willing to share their experience of developing their solutions publicly if they're chosen as a finalist. This could include preparing a regular blog to be hosted on the website and contributing to the social media profiles of the Camden Challenge Prize programme.
5. Late entries: entries received after 11:59 pm on Tuesday 30 September 2025 will not be accepted.
6. Prototyping: applicants must ensure that they have the capacity to develop and test a prototype of their solution during the [Challenge Prize timeframe](#). If your solution is selected, we'll provide £5,000 for development costs and business support from our partner Impact Hub.
7. Intellectual property: any intellectual property in the application must belong to the applicant. Applicants will retain the intellectual property rights to their entry to the Prize. Such intellectual property must be clearly marked as proprietary. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they're not infringing on the intellectual property rights of others.
8. Applications in English: all applications must be submitted in English.
9. Minimum age: all applicants must be over the age of 18.

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10. Residency status and visas: holding a visa does not exclude you from applying. However, the type and duration of your visa may affect your application. If necessary, the Camden Challenge Prize team may contact you for further information. Ensure that your visa is valid through the entire duration of the Camden Challenge Prize 2025, which ends in February 2026.
 11. Originality and ownership: proposed solutions must be original work by the applicants.
 12. The solutions proposed can be early-stage concepts, prototypes or fully tested solutions.
 13. There are no restrictions on previously commercialised or published work; however, we're seeking fresh, innovative ideas that bring new thinking or approaches to the challenge. Innovation may involve applying existing solutions in novel ways, using emerging technologies, or addressing unmet needs in a more effective or inclusive manner.
 14. Legal and ethical compliance: applicants' solutions should include ethical considerations, especially if solutions involve human data, medical interventions, or AI.
 15. Focus area: proposed solutions should address at least 1 of the Challenge Briefs. You can submit more than one proposed solution.
 16. Terms and conditions: all applicants must agree to the terms and conditions to be eligible to apply.

How to apply

Applications are open now until Tuesday 30 September 2025. Applications received after 5pm BST on Tuesday 30 September 2025 will not be accepted.

Apply now using this application form: [Camden Challenge Prize 2025 - Application Form](#).

Note that only the project lead (whether individual or on a team) should submit the project proposal. If you have any questions or need help filling out the application form, email us at camdenchallengeprize@camden.gov.uk.

Timeline

Application window is open

The application window is open from now until Tuesday 30 September 2025. All applications must be submitted [through this form](#). You can make more than one submission. Each submitted proposal should include a detailed description of your idea, how it addresses food waste, and any prototype or pilot data if available.

During this window we'll host online monthly webinars to answer any questions you may have.

You can withdraw your application at any point by contacting us on camdenchallengeprize@camden.gov.uk.

Finalists announced

Judging will take place in October 2025, and the finalists will be announced in November 2025 by email and on this page.

Prototyping

Up to 4 finalists will be shortlisted and given £5,000 each to prototype their idea and create a proof of concept.

During this phase, finalists will receive support from our partners Impact Hub and Nesta.

Pitching

February 2026

Finalists will be invited to pitch their solutions to our panel of expert judges and industry leaders in February 2026, either online or in-person.

Winner and runner-up announced

February 2026

The winner and runner-up will be announced in February 2026 by email and on this page.

Implementation and funding

The winning entrant will be given equity-free funding to pilot the idea. We'll ask the winner and runner-up to share regular updates on how the money is being used and what progress is being made.

Judging criteria

We're looking for solutions that can make a real, measurable difference in reducing and managing food waste. Applications will be judged based on:

- innovation
- desirability
- feasibility
- viability

We're seeking bold, practical, and thoughtful ideas that can make a meaningful impact on food waste and surplus in Camden. Your solution should be:

1. **Innovative**

Innovation simply means doing something in a new, creative, or more effective way. Your idea could be a physical product, a digital tool like an app or website, a service model, a new way of working, or even a clever adaptation of something that already exists. What matters most is that it brings a fresh approach to tackling the problem of food waste and surplus. If your idea involves an existing solution then it should improve on or reimagine it in a meaningful way. Whether it's high-tech, low-tech, or no-tech, if your solution has fresh thinking with purpose, we want to see it.

2. **Desirable**

Your idea should be grounded in real-world needs and designed with the people it serves in mind, whether that's customers, communities, or workers in the food sector. It should have a positive social impact and demonstrate strong potential to be embraced by the intended audience.

3. **Feasible**

Your idea should be able to be implemented in the real world. It needs to fit well within the current food ecosystem, leverage suitable technologies, and be supported by a team, partners, or a clear plan for securing the necessary skills and expertise to successfully bring it to life.

4. **Viable**

Applicants must present a realistic and actionable business model that demonstrates the potential for long-term sustainability and growth. The solution should not be a one-off project or initiative but instead be designed to operate independently and continue to generate value over time. We're looking for solutions that can sustain themselves and scale effectively, without relying on

grant funding in the longer term. These could include offshoots, strategic partnerships, monetisation plans, a clear pathway to profitability, or a well-structured not-for-profit model focused on achieving lasting social or environmental impact. The business model should reflect a commitment to long-term sustainability, adaptability to changing market conditions, and an ongoing ability to meet evolving needs.

As well as representatives of the Food Mission team and the our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), the judging panel will include experts in:

- the subject matter
- design and innovation
- venture building
- technology
- environmental service

Partnerships

During the Prototyping Stage, the 4 finalists will receive tailored support from Impact Hub London, in partnership with the London Borough of Camden, to help refine and advance their innovations. This includes up to 8 hours of one-to-one mentorship, access to an online learning platform with 8 practical modules, business skills resources, and industry connections. Finalists will also benefit from drop-in clinics, progress check-ins, a pitching workshop, and opportunities to network and present their ideas at key events. The program is delivered through a flexible mix of online and in person activities to support accessible participation.

We're looking for more meaningful partnerships to support the [Camden Challenge Prize 2025](#). We're open to new ideas for engagement and involvement, so if you have a suggestion then let us know. Here are some ways you could get involved:

1. Testbed Partnership

During the prototyping phase, shortlisted teams will develop early-stage ideas. You can help by connecting teams with relevant experts, offering space for early, low-tech experiments, assisting with user testing and providing feedback.

2. Knowledge Partnership

Share your expertise with shortlisted applicants, offering guidance and insights that will drive innovation forward

3. Judging Panel

Help us judge the shortlisted applicants to ensure ideas are not only innovative, but also viable and impactful

To register your interest in partnering with us, fill out this form or email us on camdenchallengeprize@camden.gov.uk.

Glossary

The [Camden Challenge Prize 2025](#) uses some terms that you might not be familiar with. Here you can find explanations specific to the Challenge Prize. If there is anything else you do not understand, get in touch with us by email at camdenchallengeprize@camden.gov.uk and we'll be happy to explain more.

- Camden's Missions: Missions are the long-term goals for the future of our borough that were developed in collaboration with people across Camden. Camden has identified 10 big issues facing the borough, which include 4 Camden Missions and 6 Camden Challenges.
- Challenge Prize: A Challenge Prize, also known as an innovation prize or inducement prize, is a reward offered to individuals or teams who solve a specific problem or achieve a defined goal, usually in fields like science, technology, public policy or social innovation. Unlike traditional grants or contracts, a challenge prize does not fund the process of research or development up front; it incentivizes innovation by offering a prize only upon successful completion of the challenge.
- Food Mission: This is one of 4 Camden Missions. It sets out that by 2030, everyone will eat well every day with nutritious, affordable and sustainable food.
- Food surplus: This primarily refers to edible food that becomes available for redistribution or other beneficial uses, rather than being discarded as waste.
- Food waste:
- This predominantly refers to edible food that's discarded. Spoilage is a common reason for food waste, but it can also result from an excessive supply of food due to fluctuating market trends and changes in consumer eating habits.
- Hospitality and Food Service Sector: The Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) sector is defined by the activities related to serving food and beverages to people consuming them outside of the household. Examples of businesses in this sector include restaurants, cafés, catering services, canteens, takeaways, hotels, pubs and market traders.
- Innovation: Innovation simply means doing something in a new, creative, or more effective way.
- Offshoot: This is a company or activity that has developed from one that already existed.

Terms and conditions

Read these terms and conditions carefully in conjunction with the Eligibility Criteria, Judging Criteria and Challenge Briefs before submitting an entry. By submitting an entry, you accept these terms and conditions.

The Camden Challenge Prize (**‘Challenge’**) is being run by [Camden Council](#). The 2025-2026 round is focused on innovative solutions to food waste in the hospitality and food waste sector.

1. The Challenge

We're seeking bold, practical, and thoughtful ideas that can make a meaningful impact on food waste and surplus in Camden. Your solution should be:

- **People-centric**

Grounded in real-world needs and designed with the people it serves in mind, whether that's customers, communities, or workers in the food sector.

- **Commercially viable**

Applicants must present a realistic and actionable business model that demonstrates the potential for long-term sustainability and growth. The initiative should not be a one-off project but instead be designed to operate independently and continue to generate value over time. We are looking for initiatives that can sustain themselves and scale effectively. These could include offshoots, strategic partnerships, monetization plans, a clear pathway to profitability, or a well-structured not-for-profit model focused on achieving lasting social or environmental impact. Whether for-profit or not-for-profit, the business model should reflect a commitment to long-term sustainability, adaptability to changing market conditions, and an ongoing ability to meet evolving user or community needs.

- **Thoughtfully technology-enabled**

We welcome ideas that use technology as a tool, not as the solution itself. Whether low-tech or digitally enhanced, your approach should make responsible, ethical use of data and digital tools to support its impact and effectiveness in a changing world.

- **Innovative**

We're looking for fresh-thinking ideas that go beyond what's already being done. Camden is already home to creative changemakers tackling food waste,

especially in the realm of food redistribution. We're excited to see what new approaches can build on this work or take it in entirely new directions.

Some examples of work that's already been done in the space are [Lifeafterhummus](#), [Neighbourly](#).

- **Scalable**

Your idea should have the potential to grow, whether that means expanding locally, adapting to new contexts, or influencing broader change.

2. Eligibility to participate

2.1 Entries must be received by 5pm on Tuesday 30 September 2025 . We are not responsible for entries which are lost, damaged or late due to computer, network or telecommunications failure. When we receive an entry we will send a confirmation email.

2.2 You may submit more than one entry per Challenge and be named as a partner in more than one entry. Each idea must be submitted on a separate entry. If you are chosen as a prototyping finalist, you will have to pick one to move forward with.

2.3 Elected Members and employees of Camden Council who are banded at level 5.1 and above are not eligible to enter.

2.5 Unless otherwise stated, entrants must bear all costs of entering and participating in the Challenge, including travel costs.

2.6 A Prototyping Finalist may not serve as a Judge on our panel or as a Partner in any capacity.

2.7 Individuals from the same organisation as a Judge or Partner are permitted to enter the competition. However, all parties are required to declare their affiliation at the time it is identified. A Judge or Partner must be able to demonstrate that they have treated all applicants fairly and without prejudice.

3. Withdrawal

3.1 You will be deemed to withdraw from the Challenge if you:

- give us written notice that you are withdrawing, or
- do not participate in any challenge or test or other activities that we ask you to participate in, or
- have been shortlisted and do not submit a final bid by the notified deadline, or
- do not reply to correspondence within 14 days

3.2 If a shortlisted entrant withdraws then the:

- shortlisted entrant must repay any development funding paid by the Council, and
- Council may but, need not, shortlist another entry in their place.

4. Shortlisted entries - Prototyping Finalists

4.1 Eligible entries will be assessed against the eligibility and judging criteria and a shortlist will be produced. Prototyping finalists will be notified and will be awarded a grant of £5,000 to develop and test their idea. Prototyping finalists will be required to engage and work with our partner Impact Hub. Prototyping finalists may be asked to complete further tasks as part of the final assessment as a condition of participation in the Challenge. Any funding paid under this paragraph must only be used for the development and refinement of the entry. Prototyping finalists will be required to submit a final proposal by a deadline notified to them.

4.2 Where any user testing of any ideas takes place, the user testing must adhere to the relevant national and local guidance on Safeguarding (if appropriate) and [Information Governance](#)

4.3 The judges' decision about eligibility, shortlisting and selection, including the measurement and validity of any claims and data submitted, and about the provision of support and financial support, is final and correspondence will not be entered into.

5. Winning entry

5.1 The winner of the Challenge must use the prize grant in ways that will further develop and refine the winning solution in Camden, as outlined in the final Business Case.

5.2 The Winner, Runner Up and Prototyping Finalists may be required to participate in publicity, blog posts and events.

5.3 Camden Council has the right to use the winning entry for its business purposes.

6. General

6.1 The Council reserves the right to refuse any entry or to make no award if none of the entries meet our required standards. We may also vary the form or substance of the Challenge (including deadlines, event dates and the number of entries selected for each phase) as we deem appropriate in the circumstances to ensure the success of the Challenge. We may also suspend or withdraw the Challenge if funding is withdrawn, if we judge that the Challenge will no longer achieve its aims or in the event of changes outside our control. The Council will give reasonable notice of any variations.

6.2 The Council reserves the right at its sole discretion to remove you from the Challenge if you do not comply with these terms and conditions, if you cheat or behave in a way which is disruptive, inappropriate or potentially dangerous, if you fail to

participate fully or do anything to damage the reputation of Camden Council or its partners.

6.3 The prize winners are responsible for payment of tax and other charges in relation to the award of the prize.

6.4 The Council reserves the right to vary these terms and conditions at any time. Variations will take effect from the date they are posted on our website so please check regularly to see the current version.

6.5 These terms and conditions shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of England and Wales and you hereby submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

7. Your promise to us

7.1 By participating in the Challenges, you confirm that:

- you satisfy the relevant eligibility criteria and all information submitted by you is true, accurate and complete. The Council reserves the right to ask for additional evidence of claims made by you, to validate claims by any means we see fit and/or to reject claims at our sole discretion.
- your proposal is your own original idea and is not copied from anyone else.
- your application will not infringe any intellectual property or other third party rights or breach any contractual obligation.
- you have, or will obtain, all authorisations, consents and permissions necessary to submit your entry, carry out your proposal and comply with these terms and conditions and to the best of your knowledge, your entry will not infringe any intellectual property or other third party rights or breach any contractual obligation.
- you will act lawfully, ethically and in good faith and comply with the rules of the Challenge and any relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and codes of practice. You will comply with our reasonable instructions while participating in the Challenge, including in relation to health and safety and security.

7.2 If you are entering as part of a group or team, the person completing the entry form is responsible for ensuring that other members of the group or team comply with these terms & conditions.

8. Information and publicity

8.1 Camden Council will use information which you provide, including your personal details, to administer the Challenge and may share it with our partners and anyone helping us to run the Challenge, subject to appropriate obligations of confidentiality and data protection.

8.2 We may carry out publicity and promotion for the Challenge and publish our research and evaluation in relation to the Challenge. You agree to participate in publicity

for the Challenge and consent to the use of your name and a summary of your proposal in promotion and publications in any media and online. Before publication, we will take into account your concerns about confidentiality and intellectual property rights in your entry. Any public statements which you make in relation to the Challenge must acknowledge Camden Council and be approved by us in advance.

8.3 Any intellectual property rights in your entry will be retained by you but Camden Council will have the right to use information about the solutions for prize and publicity purposes and for the purposes of its business.

8.4 The Council may receive multiple submissions containing similar ideas, concepts or solutions, and nothing in Terms and Conditions or the Challenge process shall prevent the Council from developing, commissioning, or funding similar initiatives independently, provided no confidential or proprietary information is misused.

8.5 Applicants not selected for award shall have no right to compensation or other remedy against the Council in connection with their application.

9. Limitation of Liability

9.1 Camden Council is not liable for any direct or indirect loss or liability, costs, claims, taxes, charges or expenses resulting from your participation in the Challenges or your reliance on statements made or advice given by us, our partners or contractors.

9.2 Without prejudice to Clause 9.1, our maximum liability to you in connection with the Challenges (if any) is limited to £500. Nothing in these terms and conditions excludes or limits our liability for death or personal injury caused by negligence or fraudulent misrepresentation made by us.

Contact us

If you have any questions, contact us by email on camdenchallengeprize@camden.gov.uk. If any of the terms used here are unfamiliar to you, our glossary might help to explain.

[View our privacy notice.](#)