

CAMDEN YOUTH SAFETY TASKFORCE EVALUATION

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1. Executive Summary

The Youth Safety Taskforce was established in December 2018 in response to increased concerns around youth safety due to several serious incidents. The Youth Safety Taskforce Report set out an ambitious plan, building on the good work already taking place, to further embed a public health approach to youth safety through 17 comprehensive recommendations falling under five strands: Prevent, Identify, Support, Disrupt, and Enforce. The council resourced 12 local groups and organisations to help progress some of the recommendations through a £500,000 fund.

Since the Taskforce report, the national and local picture has shifted. Covid 19 has had serious consequences on young people's wellbeing, educational outcomes and employment opportunities. The disruption to education and social life had a disproportional impact on the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in our communities.

Yet despite the recent challenges, the borough's strong record on youth safety continues to improve. The lockdown periods mean that the Metropolitan Police do not make year on year comparisons for 2019 to 2021. However, between 2017 and 2020, there was a 20% reduction in weapons offences, and the Central North Basic Command Unit has reported a 30% reduction in knife crime with injury involving under 25s between February 2018 and February 2022. Comparing the three months before lockdown with August to October 2021, there has been a 36% reduction in knife offences. The data suggests that the downward trend in youth violence within Camden seen before the lockdown has continued during the post lockdown period.

Many young people participating in the evaluation expressed that Camden was getting safer. However, the recent survey conducted for the Youth Review showed that many young people still do not feel safe, and it is essential youth safety remains a key priority for the council.

In total, 62 young people, 13 parents and residents and 28 staff members working locally in Camden took part in this evaluation. This included representatives from youth organisations, the police and the local authority. Throughout, there was a sense of

partnership, urgency and a growing shared understanding of the direction of travel needed to keep young people safe. For young people, the picture was mixed. For some, safety concerns were something they were aware of but not necessarily something they felt affected them directly. This group seemed relatively free to move around the borough. For others, their own safety was more of a concern, with many linking their anxiety to who they 'hung around with' or what they did to make money. For this group, keeping safe was something they needed to take steps to achieve daily. This included predominately staying local and avoiding certain areas, only attending activities they know are safe and always being on alert. Unfortunately, many young people still regard carrying a knife as one of the most practical ways to keep themselves safe.

Nevertheless, there has been significant progress in embedding a public health approach local. This was reflected in the actions taken as a result of the Taskforce Report and in the approaches outlined in the council's wider strategies Education Strategy to 2030 'Building Back Stronger'; Health and Wellbeing Strategy (soon to be published); Holiday Activities and Food Programme Plan; Youth Review (currently in progress), and plans to address resident debt and financial insecurity. These have all been developed, in part, to mitigate the long-term impacts of the pandemic. This places the council in a far better position to support young people than two years ago.

Considering the implementation of the Taskforce recommendations specifically, substantial progress has been made. Trauma informed practice training is being mainstreamed, with more organisations aware of the impact of adverse childhood experiences on offending behaviour. Two parent champion groups have emerged, supported by the Violence Reduction Unit funded Parental Empowerment Project and the two local Somali community organisations. These groups are helping to train parents on topics designed to help them understand how to help their children stay safe.

Camden has robust structures to identify those at risk and provide effective support services for those needing early help. However, most referrals still come from statutory services despite voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and family members often being better placed to identify those at increased risk.

School exclusions are decreasing, and schools are developing trauma informed approaches to supporting young people. There has been increased support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those with additional needs to transition from primary to secondary school. This includes the Vulnerability Matrix, developed by William Ellis School and Camden Learning, to ensure that a consistent approach is taken across all schools in the borough. This allows schools to create bespoke pastoral support packages for pupils progressing through their school life based on information on the matrix. Inclusive education is a key component of the council's new Education Strategy, which will complement the cooperative refresh of the council's current SEND Strategy. Despite this progress, there is still evidence that support needs are not always picked up early enough, leading to unwarranted exclusions.

However, more services are available, such as the Camden Regeneration Base (CRiB), for those struggling with mainstream schooling. There is also clear evidence of a greater sense of partnership between schools and VCS organisations, which has resulted in more formal and informal interventions supporting those at risk of exclusion.

Since 2018, more interventions have targeted 18-25 year olds, especially around access to employment and engaging wider support services. However, these are currently short-term projects, leaving this age group with very little help if projects are not continued or replaced.

The council has engaged in constructive dialogues with the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Home Office on the issue of youth vulnerability and exploitation. The Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel has also helped ensure a coordinated response for those at risk of criminal exploitation.

Stop and search remains problematic in the eyes of young people, with many explaining that the way stop and search was carried out left them feeling equally as worried about the police as they were about the actions of their peers.

Although Camden has become safer over the period of this evaluation, the implementation of the Taskforce recommendations and further embedding of a public health approach will have a greater impact on youth safety over the medium to long-term. Therefore, it is essential that the council continue to build on the good progress

made and see this as an ongoing issue. The local authority should build on the gains already made by establishing and resourcing a long-term approach. Therefore, the two-year period of Taskforce recommendation implementation needs to be supported with a longer-term cross cutting strategy that embeds youth safety into every aspect of council strategy going forward. To support this process, the following recommendations are suggested:

Evaluation Recommendation 1: The council should consider how it promotes organic resident leadership, which enhances the role of young people, parents, residents and other underrepresented voices in efforts to keep young people safe.

Evaluation Recommendation 2: Schools and the local authority should ensure that those with SEND and additional needs are supported effectively, particularly through the transition from primary to secondary school. This should include a commitment that assessments are made as early as possible, and parents and children are supported to understand the process.

Evaluation Recommendation 3: The council should work with local partners to review post 16 support. It should work collaboratively to ensure a greater level of support and opportunities are available to the most vulnerable when they leave school and enter young adulthood.

Evaluation Recommendation 4: The council should consider how it can use its influence to support organisations in gaining the long-term funding needed to establish supportive relationships with young people and families.

Evaluation Recommendation 5: The council should consider developing a systematic information sharing process between the council and voluntary sector; including exploring how to involve VCS organisations in multi-agency arrangements, and encouraging more information sharing between VCS organisations.

Evaluation Recommendation 6: Interventions such as mental health first aid training, domestic violence awareness and training, trauma informed approach training, and bereavement support in schools should be embedded in a long-term public health strategy that ensures they are made accessible for all.

Evaluation Recommendation 7: The council should explore how they can use their position and partnerships with trusted organisations and neighbouring boroughs to

both provide supported routes into careers and vocational training; and support businesses to foster ongoing supportive partnerships with youth organisations/young people.

Evaluation Recommendation 8: Additional support should be targeted at those who have an increased risk of being groomed; particularly those in care, care leavers and those who have been rehoused.

Evaluation Recommendation 9: Any future strategy around youth safety should ensure there isn't a sole focus on gang activity. It must be taken into consideration that incidents of youth violence are not just fuelled by gang involvement.

Evaluation Recommendation 10: Increased and continued effort should be made to ensure stop and searches are carried out within a trauma informed framework, which minimises the impact on those being stopped and searched.

Evaluation Recommendation 11: The work started on embedding a public health approach and trauma informed practices, should form part of a longer-term strategy that focuses on sustained change and securing ongoing long-term resources rather than short-term funding.

2. Introduction

In December 2018, the Youth Safety Taskforce was established in response to increased concerns around youth safety due to several serious incidents. The Youth Safety Taskforce Report set out an ambitious plan, building on the good work already taking place to further embed a public health approach to youth safety through 17 comprehensive recommendations. To support this, the council resourced 12 local groups, organisations and projects to help progress some of the recommendations through a £500,000 fund. Although Camden has become safer for young people over the past two years, this evaluation's primary focus has been to assess the progress made towards implementing the Taskforce recommendations and evaluate if continued progress will help make young people safer over the long term.

2.1 Local Policy Context

The council is committed to long term change, and by 2025, they hope to provide every young person with access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure.

Over the past two years, Covid 19 has had serious consequences for young people's wellbeing, educational outcomes and employment opportunities. The disruption to education and social life had a disproportional impact on the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in our communities. Mental ill-health has increased, social interaction and self-confidence have reduced, and youth unemployment has risen. This has the potential to increase concerns around youth safety.

To help address this, several strategic pieces of work have been developed, all of which complement the approach of the Youth Safety Taskforce and support the implementation of the public health approach to youth safety. These strategic pieces of work include:

1. The Education Strategy to 2030 'Building Back Stronger'
2. The Youth Review
3. A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy (soon to be published)
4. The Local Area SEND Strategy Refresh (currently in progress)

Camden Learning and Camden Council's new Education Strategy to 2030 recognises education as a transformative power, enabling young people to thrive and helping individuals grow as good citizens, ambitious for change, and contribute positively to their communities and society. The Education Strategy ambition is for:

“...all young people leaving Camden schools to be ambitious, knowledgeable, good communicators, healthy individuals; creative and enterprising, socially and morally responsible change makers.”

The Education Strategy spans the 0-25 age range, taking a broad approach to education which includes maternity and early years and recognises young people's transition into the working world. The priorities will help ensure that the skills that employers want can be built into education and prepare young people to be lifelong agile learners. It reinforces key public health approaches adopted by the Youth Safety Taskforce, such as taking a trauma informed practise in schools and supporting young people through transitions. It is based on the premise that Camden “schools do not have to choose between achieving academic excellence or supporting children who start from a position of disadvantage - A system which is better for disadvantaged children is better for everyone.”

In 2022 Camden will refresh its Local Area SEND Strategy, supporting partners across education, health and social care to support the increasing number of SEND children in the borough. A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy is also due to be approved by leaders from across Camden's health and care system near the start of 2022. The strategy sets out the shared principles, long-term ambitions and short-term priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board, which brings together leaders from the Council, NHS and VCS. Working together to tackle health inequalities in Camden, the aim is to prioritise the prevention of ill-health and focus on support for the most disadvantaged people. The new strategy presents a population health approach and identifies how the local health system will respond to the disproportionate impact of Covid 19, working in close collaboration with residents.

Although many of these strategies were developed alongside or outside the implementation of the Youth Safety Taskforce recommendations, they address many of the same concerns. As a result, they will have a significant positive impact on improving young people's safety in the borough.

2.2 Local Youth Justice Context

It is important to note that although weapons offences increased in Camden by 200% from 2012-to 2017, there was a 20% reduction in these offences from 2017-to 2020. Since 2017/18, first time entrants into the criminal justice system have decreased by 25%. 2020/21 saw a 33% decrease in offences committed by young people and a 7% reduction in the numbers of young people charged compared to the year before. There have been yearly decreases in young people being charged with an offence (12% decrease in 2017/18, 24% d in 2018/19 and 25% decrease in 2019/20). However, a similar trend was seen in the youth justice statistics of neighbouring boroughs, suggesting this is part of a broader trend rather than simply due to changes in practice within Camden.

Regarding weapons offences in Camden, there was an 8% increase in reported knife crime offences in 2018/19 but a 25% decrease in knife offences with injury during the same period. Violence against the person and drug offences remain the two most common offence types young people are charged with (as they are regionally across London and England and Wales as a whole). In addition, since 2011, custodial sentences have reduced by 70%, with only three Camden young people sentenced to a custodial sentence in 2018/19 and two young people receiving a custodial sentence in 2020/21. Nevertheless, these were significantly serious offences. Remand episodes have dropped 80% since 2018/19, with only four young people remanded into custody in 2020/21, reflecting the court and CPS's confidence in the council's bail support proposals for young people.

The lockdown periods mean that the Metropolitan Police do not make year on year comparisons for 2019 to 2021. However, between 2017 and 2020, there was a 20% reduction in weapons offences, and the Central North Basic Command Unit has

reported a 30% reduction in knife crime with injury involving under 25s between February 2018 and February 2022. Comparing the three months before lockdown with August to October 2021, there has been a 36% reduction in knife offences. The data suggests that the downward trend in youth violence within Camden seen before the lockdown has continued during the post lockdown period

Despite a shooting incident where four people were injured in August 2021 and concerns that the use of guns is becoming more prevalent, since the easing of lockdown restrictions, gun discharges in the borough are down 47%, and knife crime is down 32%.

Disproportionality remains a concern with Black young people over-represented in youth justice statistics. In 2013, 42% of Camden young people who received a caution or a sentence were Black, against an estimated 14% Black youth population. Although disproportionality has decreased, in 2019/20, 32% of those receiving a caution or a court sentence were Black. For the past four years, this disproportionality has been driven by arrests of 15–17-year-olds. Concerningly in 2020/21, 59% of first-time entrants receiving triage were Black, Asian or from another minority ethnic group. Black young men are also still disproportionately overrepresented as victims of knife crime in the borough. However, the council is working to address this, encouraging safeguarding leads to evaluate and report on their disproportionality action plans, which has led to operational and cultural changes. For example, through the Safer Camden Network, the council has worked with and helped resource representatives of the Camden Somali Community to identify and address areas of local concern. Initiatives like this proactively engage representative groups seeking to find co-produced and co-owned solutions to identified issues.

2.3 Evaluation Structure

This evaluation is divided into eight sections. Section 3 outlines the evaluation team's methodological approach, including the research methods used, the data source, and how the information collected was analysed.

Section 4 outlines the dominant views that young people expressed throughout the evaluation, some of which are not covered elsewhere in the report. Most notably, the section identifies that although many young people feel that Camden is safe or getting safer, there is still a cohort of young people who struggle to identify actions that can make them feel safe. It was also concerning that many young people identified that they were equally as afraid of the police as they were of the actions of their peers.

Section 5 outlines the work done by the Taskforce funded groups, detailing who the funded groups reached and the activities undertaken. The work undertaken by these organisations provided at least 1,850 additional sessions and engaged 2,121 young people and 61 parents¹ over a two year period. As the delivery of these activities was often integral to meeting the Taskforce recommendations, the outcomes of such interventions are integrated into the analysis contained within Section 6.

Section 6 analyses the progress towards each of the five strands (Prevent, Identify, Support, Disrupt, Enforce) under which these recommendations fall. The section shows that there has been significant progress in implementing the recommendations relating to the Prevent strand, and Camden is further along in embedding a public health approach to youth safety than before. The council and its partners are mainstreaming a trauma informed approach, supported by trauma training coordinated by Camden Learning, with many organisations now aware of the impact of adverse childhood experiences on offending behaviour. However, the council's more intensive approach of providing training and ongoing support needs ongoing commitment to ensure all organisations working with young people embed a trauma informed approach within their work.

Although Covid 19 significantly impacted local organisations' ability to develop their volunteering opportunities, two parent champion groups have emerged, and 1,774 young people accessed a youth project in the borough in 2020/21. Many young people and youth workers who contributed to the evaluation identified long term relational support as the most effective way to provide support.

¹ This is a rough estimation based on information from the Year 2 funded group reports. However, some reports were incomplete.

The evaluation identified that Camden has robust structures to identify those at risk and effective support services for those needing early help. However, most referrals are still coming from the police and schools.

The support offered to those with SEND or additional educational needs remains a significant concern for many, especially regarding the transition from primary to secondary school. To help address this, the local authority has partnered with Islington Council on a transition support programme and is also engaging in a co-produced refresh of its current SEND strategy. The transition from school to post 16 education and training was also highlighted as a concern for those with SEND and should form part of any policy refresh.

The council's Education Strategy to 2030 recognises the need to provide an excellent education for every child and envisions the provision of: 'A Fair Start; An Excellent School Experience; and Flourishing Lives'. This will be achieved by creating a more inclusive education system that removes the barriers limiting participation and achievement, respecting diverse needs, abilities, and characteristics and eliminating discrimination in the learning environment. Although this is an ambitious vision, actions to achieve these aims are making progress by implementing Taskforce recommendations.

More services are available for those struggling with mainstream schooling, such as the Camden Regeneration Base (CRiB). There is also evidence of a greater sense of partnership between schools and VCS organisations, resulting in more formal and informal interventions for young people at risk of exclusion.

Since 2018, more interventions have targeted 18 to 25 year-olds, especially around access to employment and engaging wider support services. However, these are currently short-term projects, which will leave this age group with very little help if they are not continued or replaced.

Changing the narrative around youth safety has been difficult to achieve within the Disrupt Strand. However, the council has engaged in constructive dialogues with the police, CPS and the Home Office on the issue of youth vulnerability and exploitation.

Evolving the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel into the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel has helped ensure a coordinated response for those at risk of criminal exploitation. However, contextual safeguarding responses, such as relocating young people away from harm, remain challenging due to the availability of suitable accommodation and isolation experienced by those who are rehoused.

When considering the Enforce recommendations, it was evident that many young people fear rather than trust the police, often due to their direct experience of stop and search.

Section 7 draws out some of the other concerns raised by evaluation respondents not necessarily covered in the analysis of the implementation of the recommendations. Most notably, there was a concern around the longevity of the work described in the evaluation, which will need resourcing over the long term.

Section 8 offers some conclusions and recommendations for Camden Council to consider when developing future youth safety focused strategies. These include:

- Enhancing parent and underrepresented group engagement through improvement actions,
- Developing multi-agency arrangements that give more status to VCS organisations,
- Ensuring earlier identification of SEND needs,
- Establishing long-term support for those transitioning into post 16 education and work,
- Supporting Camden Learning to further its work on embedding a trauma informed approach within schools and organisations working with children,
- Furthering its facilitation of engagement between the police and young people,
- Continuing work to address young people's negative experiences of stop and search.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Question

This report employed a mixed methods approach, conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups with young people, parents, residents and key staff across Camden. The report also drew on existing monitoring data from Camden Learning, the Youth Offending Team and the Youth Safety Taskforce. Although there could have been several avenues of exploration, the evaluation report focused on the following question:

How have the interventions implemented, as part of the council's response to the Youth Safety Taskforce recommendations, enhanced the safety of young people within Camden and positively contributed to attempts to address youth crime and violence?

3.2 Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

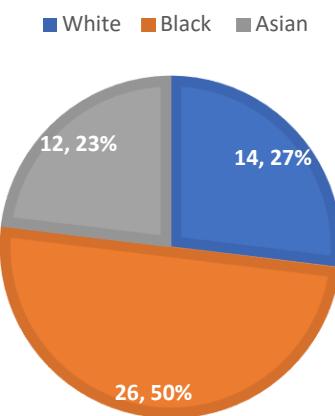
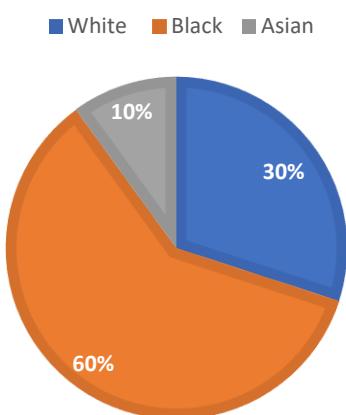
The interviews and focus groups lasted 45 minutes to 1 hour and were conducted mainly via Microsoft Teams due to Covid 19 restrictions. However, once restrictions were allowed, most focus groups and interviews with young people were conducted face to face. The interviews and focus groups were recorded with the participants' permission and transcribed by a third party. The data was deductively and thematically analysed using NVIVO, a qualitative data analysis computer programme. The deductive coding structure mirrored the Youth Safety Taskforce recommendations. The thematic codes were identified during the analysis of the data itself. This approach has enabled this report to comment on how well the council has implemented the Taskforce Recommendations and understand how Taskforce support has better equipped professionals to help young people stay safe.

Table 1 identifies the number of participants who took part in the qualitative research.

Table 1: Research Participants

No	Participants	Method
52	Young people	Focus groups x 8
10	Young People	Interviews
8	Parents	Focus group
5	Residents	Interviews
12	Local organisation staff	Interviews
10	Council Staff	Interviews
6	Police	Interviews

Chart 1 and 2 below detail the ethnicity of the young people who took part in the qualitative research.

CHART 1. ETHNICITY OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**CHART 2. ETHNICITY OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS (YOUNG PEOPLE)**

3.3 Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

Existing council reports and open-source data were analysed to understand local trends. Where appropriate, this was compared to comparable data from other boroughs to know whether these trends were a Camden phenomenon or part of something seen more widely. In addition, data from the funded groups were analysed to understand participation and reach.

4. Views and Experiences of Young People

In total, 62 young people between the ages of 13 and 25 took part in this evaluation. Although the views of young people are central to this evaluation, this section pulls out some narratives which may not be fully covered in the rest of the evaluation. Throughout the research, we heard both from young people who have had less disruptive backgrounds and those who have had to overcome many significant barriers in their lives. This includes being young carers, young people in care and dealing with trauma. The resilience of these young people is remarkable and a testament to their character.

It was very clear from talking to young people that the experiences of those caught up in violence and exploitation were very different to those on the periphery or not 'involved'. **It was also clear that most of the organisations that took part in the study, and those funded as part of the Taskforce recommendations' implementation, only really engaged with those not involved or on the periphery of such issues within Camden.** This would suggest that those most involved in youth violence will not be reached through mainstream youth projects. There were a few examples of organisations that were able to offer the support this more involved group needed, but due to the specialist nature of this work, their reach is small. However, it should be recognised that mainstream organisations do provide a vital support structure for vulnerable young people. **For example, all the young people exposed to violence as victims or perpetrators and who took part in the evaluation experienced multiple risk factors,** with all participants experiencing at least five of these issues:

- SEND or were neurodiverse, often with a late diagnosis,
- Struggled at school,
- Strained relationships with parents and family led to some living in care,
- Felt that their behaviour at home was a significant factor in a breakdown of supportive familial relationships,
- Saw peer associations as a significant influence in their criminal activities,
- Having lost someone close due to youth violence,
- Had parents or siblings in prison.

4.1 Risk Factors Impacting Youth Safety

Notwithstanding the broader risk factors outlined above, **young people involved in violent street cultures identified ‘hanging out with friends’ and ‘needing money’ as two key factors impacting their safety.** In addition, there was a clear sense that those involved in violent street cultures recognised that what they were doing was putting a strain on their family relationships. This strain further added to their motivations to be involved in violence. One respondent explained:

“My mum used to buy me everything, but only when I was good. But then me and my brother realised we could buy things for ourselves, and that was easier than listening to my mum.”

Another commented:

“It's all about money, you see someone with something, and you think, how can I get that? When you're young, there isn't many options if your mum can't buy it.”

Those who commented that money was a significant driver, including those currently involved in street culture, saw being able to earn legitimate money as crucial to prevent young people from becoming involved in drug dealing and robberies. Some who were starting to transition to more mainstream earning explained that there is little difference in the amount you make on the streets compared to a legitimate job. The main barrier was waiting until the end of the month to get paid, compared to the instant payment of robberies and drug dealing.

4.2 Safety on the Streets

The recent council survey of 488 young Camden residents, as part of their Youth Review, found that 59% of young people believed that Camden is a safe place to live. However, interestingly only 50% of 12–15-year-olds felt Camden was safe compared to 70% of 16+ respondents. Only 52% of Black respondents felt Camden was safe, whilst 73% of White respondents believed Camden was a safe place to live. This

difference may reflect young people's life experiences, with Black young men more likely to be victims of knife crime in the borough. However, the converse was true when considering the influence that gender has on feelings of safety, with young women significantly less likely to be a victim of youth violence. Yet, only 52% of female respondents felt safe in Camden, compared to 64% of males. This backed up comments made in focus groups where young women regularly commented that they did not think that there was a way for them to feel safer. Young women's concerns around safety differed from that of young men. Those we spoke to tended to discuss harassment and potential sexual violence concerns rather than knife crime. Although incidents such as the murder of Sarah Everard have made young women more aware of the threat posed by strangers and those in authority, there was some recognition that peers also posed a danger. However, the risks of sexual violence and broader youth violence are related. Young women who have experienced sexual abuse are 2.3 times more likely to be involved in gang or CCE activity². Although almost eighty per cent of exploited young people are male³, forty per cent of young women involved in gangs or criminal exploitation will go on to experience sexual exploitation⁴. Young women's focus on the high profile violence perpetrated against Sarah Everard suggests that more support may be needed to help young women understand the dangers of peer violence child sexual exploitation.

Young people told the Taskforce in 2018 that most people who carry knives do so out of fear. They also said that 'postcode war' type rivalries existed in Camden, which limited some people's movement. Young people and parents were also concerned over the lack of affordable local services and activities in their locality, believing that they affected the safety of young people in the borough.

Three years on, local rivalries are still a concern and many young people aged 16+ discussed not feeling safe whilst out on the streets, although there was also the belief that some areas had become safer. Kings Cross, St Pancras and Somers Town were

² The Children's Commissioner (2019) The Characteristics of Gang-Associated Children and Young People

³ Office for National Statistics (2022) Child Victims of Modern Slavery in the UK: March 2022

⁴ The Children's Commissioner (2019) The Characteristics of Gang-Associated Children and Young People

singled out as places that young people thought had improved. Interestingly, they put this down to additional policing in the area. Young people also felt that Camden was safer than some other areas of London.

It was also apparent that although those around the ages of 12 to 14 did not feel an immediate risk, they were acutely aware of the risks around them. Many of this group spoke of knowing older peers caught up in knife crime, gangs, drug dealing, or seeing it in their neighbourhood. **The challenge going forward is to ensure that this secondary exposure does not lead to further involvement as they grow up.**

Generally, most young people aged 13 or under had experienced very little direct concern for their safety, although many were aware of potential risks. Their discussion of these risks was often in the abstract of what might happen or what they have heard happen. However, this apparent naivety was put into context by an older focus group member who stated:

“The youngers, they are not at risk yet, as no one is going to trouble them. But, in a couple of years, they will know what it is like.”

For most respondents, concerns about safety are part and parcel of living in Camden, and if some of the younger respondents were not that concerned at present, it was only a matter of time before they would be.

Again, comments were mixed when asked about what young people do or could do to make themselves safer. Some were aware of potential risks others faced but felt that they were not affected. These young people were generally involved in positive activities, such as sports clubs. It was noticeable that their time out of the family home and their movements across the borough were influenced mainly by attending these activities. For this group keeping safe meant travelling on busy public transport and not drawing attention to themselves.

For others, including many young people who had no criminal record or gang affiliation, concerns around safety were at the forefront of their minds. A common viewpoint was captured in this comment:

“I’m not involved in anything, that’s not me, but I tend to just stay around here, but yeah, when you walk home, you always know that something might happen.”

Young people spoke about always needing to be on alert and taking measures like constantly checking their surroundings, only using one headphone, or only having their music on low and never posting where they will be on social media. However, more worryingly and a typical response, when asked about what they could do to feel safer, can be summed up with the following comment from a young person:

“There is nothing we can do apart from run. If we move around on our own, it’s not safe; if we go in groups, we will attract attention. That’s why so many people carry knives, coz you never know what might happen. **Most people don’t want violence; knives are a way to make you feel safer.**”

Carrying a knife for protection was a typical response to how young people keep themselves safe. This seemed to fuel their antagonistic views towards the police, who they saw as not doing anything to keep young people safe and at the same time targeting those who carry a knife to feel safe.

Although those who did not feel safe identified areas they avoided, most also commented that where they lived and hung out was unsafe. Young people also commented that they were at risk of being robbed and attacked by people they considered their friends and rivals or strangers.

However, young people expressed some tangible actions that could make them feel safer. These included:

- Areas where adults take responsibility for their security and safety, such as a youth club or organised sports activities. Some locations were considered safer due to strict entry policies that were monitored by staff.
- Street lighting was highlighted as a concern in some areas, which would feel safer if alleyways were lit up more.
- Police presence. Although the police were viewed as problematic (discussed below), young people commented about certain areas being safer due to a high police presence.

As such, the thoughts of many young people echoed the findings of the Youth Safety Taskforce. Although this is not to say that things have not changed, many of the Taskforce recommendations have long-term benefits that will take time to bed in and bear fruit.

4.3 Young People's Views of the Police

There were mixed views about the police. Younger respondents were more likely to have balanced views of the police, believing that some do their job well and others abuse their position. However, older respondents, most of whom had actual interactions with the police, generally had negative views. One of the starker messages from young people was that because of stop and search; many were equally as worried about the police as they were the actions of their peers. Although most young people agreed that stop and search was necessary, they objected to the aggressiveness of how it was carried out.

Respondents as young as 13 spoke about being pushed, forced to lay on the ground, sworn at and threatened with tasers. Some young people felt that the police often tried to get them to react negatively so that action could be taken against them. Discussing the several times he had been stopped and searched, one young person stated:

“The officer kept saying; you want to hit me, don’t you? I know you do just admit it.”

Another stated:

“We know their power, but it doesn’t mean they have to be aggressive. There’s no need to be swearing my face because if I swear, I’ll get arrested.”

Another described his encounter as:

“One officer, without putting his camera on, threw me to the wall and pinning me and saying ta-dah.”

Young people told us that they feel targeted and, in the eyes of the police, are guilty no matter what. The comment below captures the general feeling of many young people:

“When they stop you and find nothing on you, the way they are, you get the feeling that they are thinking, “we will catch him next time.” They just think we are all criminals when we are not.”

Many of those working with young people reiterated this sense of targeting, stating that young people are often targeted because of where they live or hang out rather than what they have done. The officers we spoke to commented that young people’s experiences might have been affected by whether the stop was carried out under PACE or Section 60. However, the young people pointed out that, for them, an aggressive and abusive stop and search has the same negative impacts regardless of the police powers used to carry out the stop and search.

A common theme from the interviews with young people was that the police are targeting the wrong people, with most stop and searches carried out on those not involved in criminal activities. Those who get caught with a knife often carry one as it is the only way they feel safe. As one young person explained:

“We are scared of the Police, but we are scared of what might happen on the streets too. So, people won’t stop carrying knives as it’s the only way to be safe.”

5. Funded Group Evaluation

The council committed £500,000 to fund 12 projects designed to help implement the Taskforce recommendations. Those funded included schools, youth organisations and council departments seeking to implement new ways of working or support services. Please see Appendix 2 for a list of the funded projects.

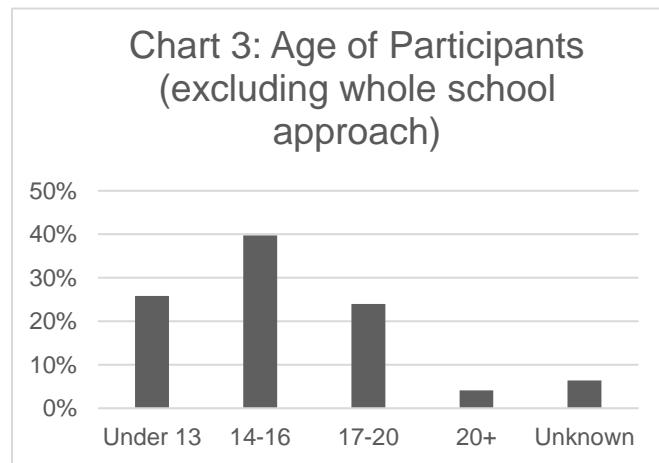
At least 1,850 additional sessions were provided through Taskforce funding, directly engaging at least 2,121 young people and 61 parents⁵ over a two year period. This included 1,482 young people reached through whole school delivery and circa 639 young people supported through targeted interventions. However, the actual number of those supported by the funded projects is likely to be significantly higher, as much of the work focused on supporting frontline workers or changing the way young people are supported, rather than direct delivery to young people.

The Taskforce funding allowed organisations to support young people by providing activities focusing on knife crime awareness, emotional health and wellbeing, enterprise and employability, life skills, and online safety. There were also specific mentoring support interventions for those at risk of exclusion. Some projects also engaged parents by providing ESOL classes, employability support and helping strengthen relationships with their children. There were also professional facing interventions that sought to embed a trauma informed approach in nurseries, schools and youth organisations.

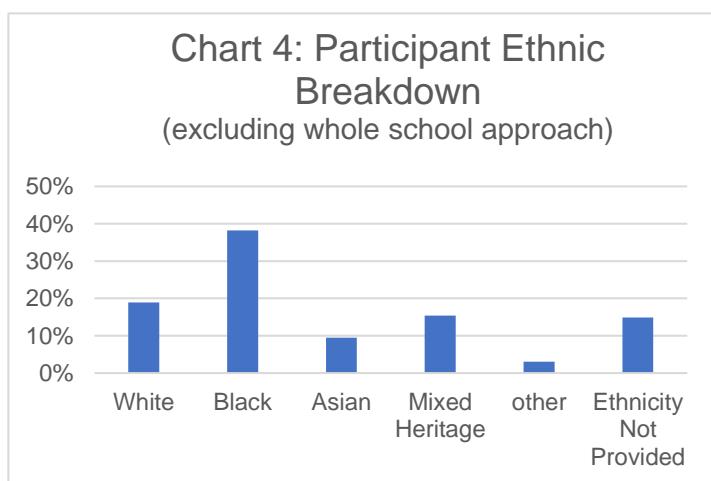
In terms of young people directly supported by the funded projects, 60% of those supported were male, almost 40% were female, and 0.4% identified as non-binary.

⁵ This is a rough estimation based on information from the Year 2 funded group reports. However, some reports were incomplete.

Chart 1 shows the age breakdown of the young people taking part in the targeted provision. It is evident from the funded group's reports and other data collected throughout the evaluation that very few organisations engaged the 18-25 age group.



A change in the reporting criteria between years one and two has meant that it has not been possible to accurately report on the ethnic diversity of the funded project participants. However, Chart 2 shows the ethnic breakdown of those supported by the funded projects in broad groupings. 42% of the young people identified as Black British, Black African or Black Caribbean, 19% identified as White British, White Irish, or White European, 15% were of mixed heritage, whilst 9% identified as Asian. If the year two reporting categories are used in the future, the council will have a more accurate picture of ethnic diversity engagement.



Although the interventions disproportionately engaged Black and Asian young people, this was not true of Somali young people. **Although local Somali organisations supported 197 Somali young people, the end of project reports suggests that very few Somali young people were supported by other projects. On the one hand, this indicates that the council's strategy of engaging specific organisations to work with particular groups within the borough was effective. On the other hand, it raises concerns that the borough is somewhat divided, and less targeted organisations struggle to engage with specific demographics.**

This is also true of young people with other characteristics. The funded project reports suggest that only six young people with physical disabilities were supported, 39 with SEND, 59 with mental health concerns and only six with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Most of those who reported having SEND or mental health concerns were supported by one of the funded school-based projects. Given the link between SEND, mental health, ASD and youth violence⁶, it is concerning that most VCS groups are not engaging with many young people who fall into these categories or are unaware of the needs of the young people they are working with.

It was concerning that despite the important work that the Taskforce funding has allowed these organisations to do, only two projects had received some funding to keep the interventions going. Only a further two were in the process of applying for resources to continue their projects. This means that most of the work funded by the Taskforce will stop soon or has stopped already. Some funded groups commented that they would try to keep projects going using pots of money from elsewhere and expressed ambitions to seek further funding. In addition, Camden Council has provided support and highlighted other funding opportunities potentially available for funded groups. Therefore, we can anticipate that some applications may be successful in 2022.

The above information on the funded projects is as accurate as possible. However, it should be noted that some end of project reports did not appear complete. There were

⁶ Ministry of Justice (2016) *Understanding the Educational Background of Young Offenders*

also inconsistencies in how intervention participation was recorded. This has made it difficult to give an accurate picture of the number of those engaged and the number of interventions delivered.

Over the past two years of delivery, the funded projects have contributed to improved and increased support to young people. These impacts are discussed further in the next section.

6. Taskforce Recommendation Evaluation

The Taskforce's 17 recommendations represent a commitment to embed a public health approach within the local authority and other statutory services, such as the police and partner organisations. Although enforcement helps to keep young people safe, the council's ambition is to see a public health approach that empowers the wider Camden community, including schools, residents, businesses, council services and youth services, to tackle the underlying causes that impact young people's safety. The evidence of this evaluation suggests that good progress is being made to realise this ambition.

The recommendations fall into five categories: Prevent, Identify, Support, Disrupt and Enforce. In reviewing the progress made in these areas, it should be noted that where public health approaches have been taken elsewhere, it can take a decade before any substantial improvements in youth safety are recorded. Therefore, many of the recommendations in the Taskforce Report will have long-term benefits in relation to youth safety that may not necessarily be realised immediately. Below is a report of the progress made on each of the strands; see Appendix 1 for a summary of progress to date.

6.1 Prevent Strand

Youth Safety Taskforce Recommendations under Prevent:

Prevent youth violence by providing young people, parents and professionals with information which raises their awareness of the issues and helps them keep themselves safe, make positive choices about their behaviour and build their resilience.

Recommendation 1. Supporting community-led efforts to prevent youth violence and making it easier to volunteer.

Recommendation 2. A Camden-wide 'public health approach' to tackle youth violence should be established, which involves young people, parents, residents, schools, businesses, community and voluntary groups, the council, the Police and all other local partners who can contribute to keeping our young people safe.

Recommendation 3. Robust programmes should be developed to equip young people with the skills and resilience needed to make positive choices and deal with difficult situations, with a focus on those young people moving from primary to secondary school.

Recommendation 4. Young people's access to and ownership of activities in their community which can have a positive impact on their lives, should be increased, and information about the borough's full youth service provision should be brought into one centralised and easy-to-access place.

6.1.1 Implementing a Public Health Approach

There has been significant progress in implementing the recommendations under the Prevent strand. Embedding a public health approach was particularly evident within council departments and partner organisations. Notable actions included:

- Every youth organisation and school that participated in the evaluation offered a mental health and well-being support programme for young people,
- Many of those on the frontline, including the police, teachers, youth workers, and nursery workers, have received trauma-informed practice training,
- An increased focus on schools supporting families as well as pupils,
- Greater awareness within nursery provision of the role of secure attachment in providing a stronger foundation between parent and child,
- A move to identifying SEND among children at an earlier stage,
- The police have adopted a policy where arrest and police custody are only used when all other options have been exhausted.

Throughout the evaluation, innovative multi-agency and partnership working was on display, whether this was NHS mental health staff basing themselves in youth centres, specialist training organisations working with youth organisations/schools, or more organisations connecting to the council's multi-agency processes.

Many indicated a common language of support and trust building between organisations.

The general view is summed up as:

“...and there's a good open communication between all agencies in the borough ... and so things are picked up and dealt with quite early as feasibly possible.”

However, statutory and voluntary sector staff commented that people were still working in silos. **VCS organisations are often missing from key discussions despite having stronger relationships with the young people who are being supported.** Commenting on those involved in multi-agency partnerships, a council staff member commented:

“They [youth workers] are not the best people to do paperwork, and they find themselves not invited to the table... and I found that infuriating. One of my recommendations would be that fewer, more effective people should be involved.”

However, there is some concern that including youth workers, who have strong relationships with young people, within certain multi-agency partnerships may impact their ability to build these necessary relationships, given some young people's suspicion of professionals. Therefore, there is a balance to be found whereby those with trusted relationships can be included, but not at the expense of their engagement with young people.

6.1.2 Wider Engagement in the Public Health Approach.

Although Covid 19 significantly impacted local organisations' ability to develop their volunteering opportunities, there have been several initiatives that have helped empower local people.

The Safer Camden Network's (SCN) engagement model with the Camden Somali Community is an exemplary model of developing community-led efforts to improve youth safety. Through community discussions involving local Somali organisations, Somali parents and young people, several areas of development were identified. The council worked with Somali organisations to develop and deliver interventions. The SCN placed local people at the forefront of council delivery, levelling

off the often hierarchical dichotomy of professionals and residents. This approach, for example, directly led to the development of videos and leaflets explaining the secondary school system in Somali.

Through a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) funded partnership with Islington Council, parents have access to a series of online training workshops designed to help them identify and address some of the risk factors impacting their children. Topics have included child mental health, the EHC assessment process, and child criminal and online safety.

The VRU Parent Empowerment Project led to 12 parents setting up the VRU Parent Champions. This group grew out of parents' experiences supporting young people affected by knife crime and has reached over 100 other parents via workshops with local churches and other organisations. Similarly, the Somali Youth Development and Resource Centre (SYDRC) has trained 21 parent/carers, with 15 parents developing a parent champions group which reached 50 other Somali parents. **Supporting organically developing groups like this is an excellent way to ensure more people act on youth safety issues.**

The VRU and SCN approaches seek to empower local people to be agents of change by equipping them with the tools to make changes in their own lives and support those around them. Although this type of activity will need ongoing facilitation, it can provide support and interventions to those who may not engage with traditional forms of volunteering or service delivery. For example, 90% of VRU parent champions are Black parents, many of whom have children who have been involved in youth violence or have significant risk factors such as ASD or SEND. These parents have been given the platform to help design the Parent Empowerment Project's support programme. In addition, they have been supported to engage with more parents who may be going through similar experiences to them.

6.1.3 Support Around Education and Transitions

The Taskforce identified the transition from primary to secondary school as a particularly vulnerable time for young people; this was reiterated during the evaluation. **The change in school culture and the lack of engagement with parents at secondary school were highlighted as continuing concerns.** Some parents spoke

of how it felt as if they had to fight just to be heard by their child's secondary school, and others thought communication was almost entirely one way, with schools showing little interest in dialogue. This contrasts with primary schools, which were generally characterised as supportive, inclusive environments where teachers and parents work collaboratively to support the child. Teachers commented that these nurturing environments often allow children with signs of SEND to cope with mainstream settings. However, these pupils often find the transition to secondary school difficult unless the necessary support is put in place early enough. Those working for alternative provision suggested that **it is often only when young people end up at the pupil referral unit (PRU) or the Camden Centre for Learning that their needs are identified, and an EHC assessment referral is made.** In addition, 48% of young people screened by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) had Speech, Language and Communication Needs, and 38% of that number had no prior history of identified SLCN or SEND need.

However, there was some positive work to help address these issues. Camden is developing a Transitional Safeguarding approach to its work with under 25s, which aims to support young people build their resilience through developing protective and participatory practices founded on relationships rather than procedure. Camden Council promotes a process of 'early intervention' that aims for most pupils to be supported in mainstream educational institutions to ensure a high-quality level of universal education. However, they recognise that some pupils will need additional support. Over the past five years, the council has implemented a Local Area SEND Strategy that prioritises good quality information and advice for children and their families, early support at the right time, short breaks for parents and carers, inclusive education, effective preparation for adulthood and universal health services appropriate to young people's needs. The council is also planning to increase the number of commissioned specialist primary school places by 56% by 2024/25. After a 2019 inspection, the council recognised that exclusions of secondary school pupils with special educational needs were still too high. The council has undergone a systemic review of SEND exclusions, which has contributed to reducing the exclusion rate. In September 2021, the council established a SEND Strategic Improvement

Board, which includes representation from parents. There are plans to refresh the current strategy in 2022 co-productively with young people and their families.

Some of the initial community conversations which helped shape the Taskforce report identified that parents do not always understand the secondary school system in the UK. This is especially true of some minority ethnic communities. The materials produced in partnership with members of the Camden Somali community, aimed at helping parents understand secondary schools better, are a good example of some simple interventions that have helped parents engage with secondary schools. **The council should consider developing similar materials for other groups within the borough.**

The CRiB has used VRU funding to employ a family worker whose remit includes home visits and building relationships with parents and guardians. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to understand if the approach has increased participation, attainment, and outcomes for young people, as the CRiB project and family worker role coincided with the period of Covid lockdowns. However, the CRiB achieved an 80% reintegration rate, which indicates the holistic approach of the CRiB has merit. The council could explore whether an increase in family support can help mainstream schools improve attendance and outcomes for children.

Although the Taskforce recommended focusing on transitions from primary to secondary school, much of the concern raised was on the transition to post 16 education employment and training. At this point, the routine and structure provided by compulsory education and many support services, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), start to taper off, often with nothing replacing them. Many young people excluded from mainstream provision due to behavioural issues or SEND may not have developed the skills or resilience needed to make the post 16 transition successfully. **Many professionals felt that more post 16 transition support was required.** This concern intensified with Covid, with one education provider stating that they usually managed to secure post 16 outcomes for 90% of their students. However, for 2020/21, this dropped to 60%. The Careers and Connexions service provides much-needed support for young people with learning disabilities or autism up to the age of 25, not in education, employment or training

(NEET). There are a small number of projects which do offer post 16 progression routes. However, the overall lack of post 16 education support, coupled with anxiety around travelling to other areas, heightens the risk that young people from this group will drop out of education, training or employment in years 12-13, increasing their vulnerability.

6.1.4 Access and Ownership

The Covid 19 lockdowns significantly impacted young people accessing services and activities locally, as organisations targeting those in most need during these periods. Organisations tried to mitigate the impact of shifting services online by providing laptops and dongles to young people without internet access. Most youth organisations found that levels of engagement returned to pre-lockdown levels once social distancing restrictions were removed. However, some commented that they had lost touch with many young people they engaged with pre-lockdown and are now engaging with a new group of young people.

All the youth providers with whom the evaluation team engaged provided support that helped young people become more resilient and make positive decisions. Feedback from staff and young people on their effectiveness was mixed, with many questioning the long-term impact of short-term projects. **The programmes' content was considered worthwhile but often ended without the necessary support in place to help young people continue their development.** This is a point summed up by the comment from one youth worker below:

“at the end of that targeted programme of intervention, there's no outlet for those young people; there's nowhere for them to go beyond that, where they'll be accepted and which is a safe space for them.”

The young people's views are summed up very simply in this comment from a focus group:

“They give you hope that school can't provide.”

Young people often contrasted their experiences of the school environment with the support they receive from youth workers; one young person explained:

“The people that run the youth centre they're there to help you deal with stuff. Like, I can't tell my teacher that I didn't do my homework because I have to look after my grandparents, because I am their carer, or that I couldn't do it coz we got no internet. But at the youth club, they already know all of this, and they will help me, sit down and do my homework with me, make sure I have internet.”

Most of the young people we spoke to valued long-term support over time bound projects, which should be the priority for future provision. Many young people we talked to had been attending the same youth provision for several years, some following in the footsteps of their older siblings. These connections that can last over a decade allow trusted relationships to form. This sense of trust was often highlighted when young people spoke about who they confided in. Teachers and other professionals were considered untrustworthy due to concerns that they would report concerns to social services and share what was discussed with other colleagues. Although youth workers commented that they always make it clear that they are under the same duty to report as teachers, this perception of youth workers being more trustworthy remained. One youth worker explained:

“knowing them from when they were young allows them to say things to me they wouldn't say to other agencies. I think it also helps to break the barrier when I introduce them to another agency. I think because they feel safe.”

Some organisations have identified this and indicated that they were already moving away from short-term programmes and concentrating on building resilience through long-term relationship building. However, this is a challenge given that much of the funding streams to youth organisations focus on short-term delivery.

The importance of supporting young people through relationship building was evident in the comments made by young people with chaotic home lives. Many young people told us that they would not have been able to overcome the issues they faced without the support of youth workers. Within these youth settings, we saw younger children experiencing risk factors, such as balancing school commitments and caring responsibilities, struggling to stay engaged at school and navigating through adolescence with neurodiversity, who were not involved in youth criminality. **These**

youth organisations play a vital role in ensuring vulnerable young people stay safe.

The funded groups who engaged the most at risk young people, including those who had primary trauma from youth violence and exploitation, were those whose main focus was to build long-standing trusted relationships with those they worked with. Such projects also had higher staff to young person ratios, which reflected the more intense work done with the young people. This included ensuring young people felt safe, were supported to reflect on the impact of what they had experienced and their reactions to it and helped access positive activities.

Unlike statutory services, which often comment that they get notified of situations of grooming and criminality after the fact, many VCS organisations felt they were able to pick up on the early signs in the young people they work with.

Currently, there is some extremely good youth delivery in the borough that attracts young people from both the local neighbourhood and further afield. Despite Covid restrictions, the Cabinet Member for Young People, Equalities and Cohesion's end of year report showed that 1,774 young people accessed a youth project in the borough in 2020/21. Although groups of young people do not feel safe and would benefit from a localised youth offer, we also met many young people who felt free to move across the borough to play football or attend youth clubs. Many of these more mobile young people had often been connected to their youth/sports club for many years. However, although they were welcome at their destination, youth workers felt that local provision would be more beneficial

“I think that hyperlocal is really important, having something on your doorstep. But we noticed some young people that come to us live in Kilburn; they've travelled the whole borough to get our support. How great would it be if, in Kilburn, there were similar levels of support available to young people.”

It was recognised that the council had taken the initiative to conduct a strategic review of youth provision across the borough. This is particularly pertinent, as some providers commented that the economic uncertainty caused by Covid 19 meant that they were unsure of their medium to long-term future. This poses some critical questions

regarding the logistics of support for the borough. Currently, some organisations spoke of being overwhelmed with young people, meaning increased funding and staff would be needed to provide sufficient support. Providing localised support would ease this pressure. However, it may cause greater competition for limited funding. This would be on top of a local context where some commented that Camden was not a level playing ground for organisations. Some felt that specific larger local organisations monopolised local resources to the detriment of smaller, more grassroots organisations.

Going forward, the council has secured £800,000 from the Department for Education to continue and develop its Summer in Camden Programme. Through the Youth Camden Foundation and its partners, regular school holiday activities will be provided and promoted through the website (<https://www.summerincamden.co.uk/>) and its accompanying Instagram account. In summer 2021, they offered 659 programmes and opportunities to young people. These activities will support young people's mental health and wellbeing and provide additional positive activities for young people.

Evaluation Recommendations Under Prevent:

Evaluation Recommendation 1: The council should consider how it promotes organic resident leadership, which enhances the role of young people, parents, residents and other underrepresented voices in efforts to keep young people safe.

Evaluation Recommendation 2: Schools and the local authority should ensure that those with SEND and additional needs are supported effectively, particularly through the transition from primary to secondary school. This should include a commitment that assessments are made as early as possible, and parents and children are supported to understand the process.

Evaluation Recommendation 3: The council should work with local partners to review post 16 support. It should work collaboratively to ensure a greater level of support and opportunities are available to the most vulnerable when they leave school and enter young adulthood.

Evaluation Recommendation 4: The council should consider how it can use its influence to support organisations in gaining the long-term funding needed to establish supportive relationships with young people and families.

6.2 Identify Strand

Youth Safety Taskforce Recommendations under Identify:

Identify and refer those young people who need support because they are vulnerable to being affected by youth violence.

Recommendation 5. Identification of those at risk of being affected by youth violence to be increased.

Recommendation 6. Young people, families, and the wider community should be better able to identify and act on early warning indicators of those at risk of youth violence, with one centralised place for people to contact for advice and help.

6.2.1 Identifying those At Risk and Providing Early Help Support

There are several mechanisms within the statutory and voluntary sectors to help identify those who may need more support to stay safe. Camden's single point of access referral system initiated much of this support and is helping to ensure promptly coordinated referrals.

Data from these assessments show that the four main concerns have remained relatively consistent over the past three years, as have the volume of contacts at circa 5,900. Domestic Violence has remained the most frequent presenting need at front door stage, followed by Mental Health concerns, with parenting issues, drug and alcohol concerns and housing issues making up the five most common presenting issues.

Actions to address these presenting needs include:

- The agreement to invest a further £400,000 to address domestic violence against women. A Violence Against Woman and Girls Board will meet in March 2022 to discuss efforts to prevent wider violence against women and girls.
- Initiating a number of workstreams to understand how best to support those with debt, financial and financial related housing issues. Including the challenge "Everyone can get the support they need to avoid debt and be financially secure." in the Camden 2025 refresh.

- Investing £27m to support residents facing financial hardship through the council's Council Tax Support Scheme.
- Proving £2m funding in the way of food vouchers, support for food co-ops and an expanded Welfare Assistance Fund through the Household Support Grant.
- Providing £1.1m in funding to Camden Advice Network to provide debt, employment and welfare support, which has helped residents secure over £7m in additional benefits.
- Developing initiatives, such as Good Work Camden and digital inclusion pilots, to help people back into work
- Developing a Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the borough.

When considering presenting issues for young people, only mental health concerns remain the most common presenting need at the initial assessment stage. Quite understandably, the percentage of young people with mental health, including concerns about their own or a family member's mental health, increased during the lockdown period. 56% of young people had mental health as a presenting need in 2020/21, up from 49% in 2018/19. In 2018/19, 47% of young people had a Parenting Issue as a presenting need, the second most frequent issue. In 2020/21, this decreased to 43%, with housing at 52% becoming the second most frequent presenting need. In 2020/21, 32% of young people had financial problems at assessment, up from 28% in 2018/19, and 31% had acute stress.

Although there has been some improvement, there remains a disproportionate percentage of Black young people assessed, making up 20% (down from 25% in 2018/19) of those assessed through the Front Door process, against a 12% Black youth population. There are differences in presenting need by ethnicity, with Black and 'Other' ethnic groupings more likely to have housing concerns or financial problems. Asian and Mixed ethnic groupings are more likely to have parental mental health issues. White and Mixed ethnic groupings are more likely to have child mental health concerns.

In 2016, Camden developed a comprehensive Early Help provision, including a specialist Youth Early Help (YEH) service to support 11-17-year-olds identified as needing support. YEH is based in three locations across the borough, Somers Town, Kilburn and Highgate, and aims to provide multi-agency support to young people and

families before the need for statutory interventions. Many working within the council spoke of a good process that identified those who didn't meet the threshold for statutory intervention but may benefit from support. However, some school staff spoke of an ambition to work with children and families even earlier, often hampered by resources and processes.

Those referring to this provision have commented on its strength and comprehensiveness, working closely with other provision within the borough. There was evidence of a culture of partnership developing with statutory and voluntary sector organisations, which aided information sharing and helped young people get support earlier. **Council support has allowed more significant investment in early help within different organisations, including ensuring young people have access to more specialist services and early intervention workers.**

However, overall Early Help referrals suggest that a significant proportion of young people still only receive local authority support once they have come to the attention of the police. **Over the past four years, around 40% of referrals to Early Help have come from the police. Referrals from voluntary sector organisations have dropped 94% since 2017/18.** Some of this would have been due to Covid 19; however, there was already an 86% reduction in referrals between 2017/18 and 2019/20. Similarly, referrals from family members were down by 33% in 2020/21 compared to 2017/18, with the downward trend starting before lockdown. However, nursery referrals and referrals from members of the public have increased, although from a relatively low baseline.

Although referrals stayed stable at circa 3,000 per annum from 2017/18 to 2019/20, there was a 5% increase in referrals in 2020/21. This increase occurred from August-December 2020 and may be linked to young people coming out of lockdown. School and Secondary Health providers, such as hospitals, remain the second and third most common referrer, with school referrals remaining stable in percentage terms and hospital referrals increasing by 41%. However, further work is needed to ensure that referrals come from a broader range of sources other than statutory services.

Once supported by Early Help services, 79% of young people do not need further council support once their case is closed, with 60% of cases ending with the original

outcome achieved. However, of the cases that do return, 49% are referred to social services, and 51% receive further support from the early help team.

YEH worked with 400 young people in 2020/21, with 79 young people receiving family casework support, 160 interventions from the FWD drug and Alcohol Service, 148 receiving youth worker support whilst in police custody from Engage, and 53 receiving Triage support. The highest category for family casework were young people who needed help with their mental health, leading to closer working with CAMHS. 58% of Family Casework cases were closed successfully, 19% referred to social services, 16% were transferred to another borough or service and 8% disengaged without the case closing successfully. 66% of those receiving FWD support had been open to social services at some point, and cannabis was the most common reason for a referral to the service. Feedback showed that 90% of young people and 86% of parents thought the support they received was positive.

However, some teachers have aired their frustration at how long it took to get support for a young person despite the progress made. For example, one headteacher told the evaluation team

“Sometimes school leaders are frustrated that you can see things coming, but it's not until you've gone through quite a lot of steps that something happens. I think a general observation is that there is an ambition is to work earlier with the families and children.”

Additional early help support has been provided by the VRU funded Parent Empowerment project. The Project offers family support to families who have a history of domestic violence, but that would not meet the threshold for support from the council's Early Help Service. However, although this project has successfully provided additional parenting and primary to secondary transition support, its funding ends at the end of March 2023.

6.2.2 Identification and Support in the Community

Outside of council services, some of the earliest identification that a young person may need additional support is made by those within the voluntary sector. These more relationally based organisations are often good at identifying those in need early due to deeper connections with those they support. Although these

organisations may not be referring into Early Help services, they are providing some form of support. This has increasingly included working closely with local schools to meet educational needs, providing family support and helping to make referrals to other VCS organisations.

However, there are concerns that there is no systematic information sharing between the council and voluntary sector organisations or VCS organisations sharing information with each other. There is still a silo culture that needs to be addressed.

Alongside these services, the council has made additional funding available for workshops and training in schools to help young people understand how to stay safe and identify risk factors that make young people more vulnerable. This training has generally been delivered through a whole school approach in school assemblies, reaching 720 young people. Topics include understanding the dangers of knife crime, knife crime first aid, and internet safety. This whole school approach can be helpful. However, youth workers feel that most young people they work with already know and understand much of the information covered in these sessions. **In addition, some questioned the quality of some providers and suggested the council should coordinate an approved provider list.**

Evaluation Recommendations Under Identify:

Evaluation Recommendation 5: The council should consider developing a systematic information sharing process between the council and voluntary sector; including exploring how to involve VCS organisations in multi-agency arrangements, and encouraging more information sharing between VCS organisations.

6.3 Support Strand

Youth Safety Taskforce Recommendations under Support:

Target those at risk of or affected by youth violence and provide them with the support they need, including enabling parents and professionals to support the young people with whom they are involved.

Recommendation 7. Developing trauma-informed practices for schools, youth workers and professionals who work with young people.

Recommendation 8. Additional support for students excluded, at risk of exclusion or with poor attendance should be provided and schools should have information on the most effective interventions alongside a knowledge-sharing mechanism for best practice.

Recommendation 9. Encouraging businesses to develop employment and training opportunities for young people at risk of youth violence.

Recommendation 10. Additional support for young people aged 18-25 at risk of or affected by youth violence.

Recommendation 11. Early help services to be promoted to families in need and least likely to ask. Community-led parenting programmes to develop parenting skills and promote greater resilience in families.

6.3.1 Developing Trauma Informed Services

Throughout the evaluation, it was clear that Camden Council and its partners, from nursery provision to interventions working with 18-25 year olds, have sought to continue to build on the good practice already demonstrated in the borough.

For example, Camden Learning is working to ensure a standardised response to trauma across all schools and organisations working with young people. To this end, since 2016, they have offered Mental Health First Aid, Domestic Violence awareness, bereavement support, and trauma informed practice training to schools, youth workers, and local police officers in partnership with an Education Psychologist. In addition, Camden Learning and Camden Education Psychology Service's partnership project Trauma Informed Practice in Camden (TIPiC) has focused on embedding a

trauma informed approach in schools by introducing an Attachment, Regulation and Competency (ARC) framework. This promotes positive relationships that nurture staff and children's wellbeing and seeks to build resilient systems that can provide the right support at the right time. The TIPiC support package includes training and 12 month follow up support on how to implement a trauma informed approach, school and pupil audits, self-assessment tools, and help build a multi-agency team around the school. This includes the Educational Psychologist service, Camden Learning, CAMHS and other specialist services. The TIPiC project also organised a schools' conference and provided training for council and statutory services which come into contact with young people.

Although participation was hindered by Covid 19 restrictions and logistical issues of scheduling training when teachers can participate, 1,387 members of staff from youth organisations, schools and nurseries have been supported. This has reached at least 3,238 secondary school and 2,592 primary school pupils.

In addition, through the TIPiC project, The Wave Trust has been working with around 70 front line services within Camden to help support these organisations, assisting parents in understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and operating in a trauma informed way. The goal is to expand this provision to all schools in the borough. There is also a specific aim to reduce the number of Camden Centre for Learning's long-term students becoming involved in crime and violence.

Although this is impressive, there was a concern that staff turnover in schools and youth organisations may dissipate its influence unless the current training programme continues.

The benefits of a trauma informed approach in schools were made even more apparent when listening to the lives of many young people. Some of them lived with relatives because their parents had left or experienced trauma in the home. Some young people outlined their experiences, with one commenting

“Sometimes you are coming to school with so much going on. Like your mom and dad may have an argument at home, like a physical argument or whatever. Then you are being bad in class because of that, and they [the teachers] going to treat us like we are bad kids.”

There has been a greater emphasis on Children's Safeguarding and Social Work practice, with training and lunch and learn sessions available to all of Camden's Safeguarding Network. Within the community sector, all the organisations we spoke with had some knowledge of what a trauma informed approach meant, and all offered some form of health and wellbeing support for young people. However, very few funded groups discussed operating in a trauma informed way. There are also significant differences in how these organisations addressed the signs of potential trauma. For example, some saw 'acting up' and breaking the rules as a need for sanctions, including being banned for a while or needing parental intervention.

For the two organisations that had embedded a trauma informed approach to their work, this type of behaviour triggered additional support and reflective conversations with the young people rather than sanctions. **For example, aggressive behaviour or rule breaking was understood as an attempt to self sabotage, leading to discussions around rejection and self worth.** For young people, this level of acceptance led to long term engagement, which helped them gain the confidence to see that change is possible. Those who operated in this way engaged more young people at risk of offending. Only these organisations reported working with those who had a direct experience of youth violence and exploitation.

6.3.2 Addressing School Exclusions

Over the past few years, Camden Learning has championed a move away from a disciplinarian approach to behavioural issues to reduce fixed term exclusions. Since 2016/17, exclusions in Camden have continued to fall, decreasing by 70% from the academic year 2016/17 to 2019/20, with only nine permanent exclusions in 2019/20. This number may be impacted by Covid; however, in 2018/19, there were 18 permanent exclusions, a 40% reduction from 2016/17. Currently, the exclusion rate for the borough stands at 0.04, down from 0.08 the year before and 0.13 in 2016/17. Compared to the rest of London, Camden has the 7th (out of 12) lowest exclusion rate of the inner London boroughs and the 18th (out of 32) lowest exclusion rate of all London boroughs. It is the 19th most improved London borough and 6th most improved Inner London borough in reducing its exclusion rate from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

Despite progress, there are still concerns that schools are not assessing their students early enough and therefore excluding, rather than supporting, young people with complex needs. Staff from the CRiB and CCfL suggested that most young people they work with do not have an Education Health and Care Plan, even though there are clear signs that one should be in place. Camden Learning also reported to the evaluation team that they have seen more parents deciding to home school their children due to their child's anxiety. This is concerning as it is seen as a reactive school-based avoidance response to a problem, resulting in the child being less supported and more isolated. To address this, the Educational Psychology Service is offering workshops to frontline practitioners to help develop a shared understanding of Emotional School based avoidance work.

For those unable to stay in mainstream schooling, there are some supportive alternative education provisions in the borough. For example, the CRiB, which takes referrals from nine out of the ten Camden secondary schools, is an excellent example of a multi-agency trauma informed approach, which has supported 52 pupils in years 7-9 with learning or mental health concerns who were at risk of exclusion for 12 weeks. Whilst at the CRiB, students combine learning core subjects with personalised therapeutic support delivered in partnerships with specialists. The CRiB achieved an 85% attendance rate for students during the intervention, with 80% of students reintegrating back into their referring mainstream school. This has helped prevent permanent exclusions, where reintegration was achieved.

Similarly, CCfL provides a supportive environment for students with behavioural and SEND needs. Their multi-agency team includes a social worker, two early help workers, a family worker, educational and clinical psychologists, and youth workers. The family worker, funded by the VRU, works specifically with those at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation. In addition, Camden Learning's School Exclusion Team is reviewing the safeguarding processes used by schools where a child is removed for a specified period of time. This is to ensure the child stays safe when they are out of mainstream education. Child Safeguarding and Social Services and the Youth Offending Team are also working to clarify how agencies work together to identify suitable education provision for those at risk of youth violence and exploitation.

The Council's Sports Development Team works with year 10-11 students at risk of exclusion, developing their peer leadership, communication skills, and self confidence. They also help develop harder skills such as understanding health and safety, risk assessments, and first aid. Although the project is sports based, participants are supported to consider their further education options, including staying on and completing an NVQ, CV writing and gaining work experience with the team. Unfortunately, Covid 19 impacted the referrals to the Sports Leadership Programme, with only two participants on the course in the past year.

Through the Taskforce funding, 22 young people at risk of exclusion, who may have otherwise not engaged with support, were mentored. This contributed to fewer permanent exclusions.

6.3.3 Supporting 18-25 Year Olds

Looking beyond schooling, there are some examples of organisations engaging with 18-25 year olds. Project 10/10 was highlighted as a good example of a trauma informed project that provides a safe place for 18-25 year olds. The project was initially funded by the NHS for three years but is now into its fifth year, mainly working with the same group of young people, which shows the importance of long-term support for young people affected by trauma.

The council has developed the Evolve Service for 17-25 year-olds which provides additional support for 18-25-year-olds affected by youth violence, gangs and exploitation. So far, the service has 35 active cases, including supporting seven Camden young people in custody.

Partnering with other specialist services, the Evolve Service, including New Horizons Youth Centre and Camden and Islington NHS Trust, has developed a weekly allocation meeting to collaboratively identify the best way to support new referrals. The support offered includes advice and guidance on housing, physical and emotional wellbeing, relationships, feeling safe and employment. The support for this older age group has collectively worked with 187 Camden young people.

6.3.4 Employment Support

Finding work was one of the critical concerns for those transitioning into adulthood, and Camden is in a strong position to offer local employment, with 36,805 businesses as of March 2020⁷, the third highest concentration of businesses of any borough in the UK. Camden has several construction projects, including Cross Rail, that has the potential to help supply many jobs locally. Camden is also home to the Kings Cross Knowledge Centre, attracting large global companies such as Google. These developments also have a significant value to the council in terms of Section 106, CSR and training commitments, including the Kings Cross Skills Centre, which could be further utilised to provide training and employment for young people. Where businesses have connected with youth organisations and brokerage schemes, there seems to be an appetite to support young people. However, these connections are not occurring organically.

For the year 2020/21, 97% of Camden's young people are in education, employment or training compared to 96.1% of young people in London as a whole. In addition, Camden has the lowest percentage of 18-21-year-olds claiming out of work payments (5.6%) in inner London; this figure is significantly less than the percentage for London as a whole (10.2%). However, the uncertainty around Covid contributed to a 180% rise in youth unemployment within Camden from March-December 2020⁸ before reducing slightly to 1,665 in June 2021 (up from 320 in June 2018). Apprenticeships have also been hit with a 70% reduction in the number of apprentices employed compared to before the lockdown. Five of the seven young people responsible for 71% of all reoffences were NEET at the end of their YOS order, and over a quarter of the offences committed by young people in 2020/21 were motivated by money. This shows the importance of supporting young people's employability when addressing youth criminality.

To help amend this, Camden YOS have partnered with Kings Cross Recruitment on a work experience programme, which sees young people aged 16-18 and known to YOS

⁷ Camden Business and Employment Bulletin February 2021

⁸ Camden Business and Employment Bulletin February 2021

offered work experience. They have also partnered with Avalon on a youth employment programme, which will see young people known to YOS earn a London Living Wage income through operating an electric cargo bike coffee truck.

Camden has participated in the National Government's Kickstart programme, which funds a young person on universal credit's wages for 25 hours a week for six months. To date, Camden has submitted details of 205 such work placements to the DWP, including 70 young people placed within the council itself and 30 other employers signing up to the scheme.

In addition, Camden Council has developed a Youth Pathways Finder Project, in partnership with the GLA, specifically to provide learning and employment support for 19-25-year-olds who may need additional support to stay safe. This project has engaged 40 employers and worked with 22 young people, including placing 16 young people into work through the Kickstarter programme.

Although these schemes ended in December 2021, going forward, the council is developing a single coherent 'offer' around employment support for 16-25-year-olds, including a single point of contact for young people needing help.

Most businesses who have taken on a young person through the schemes above commented that although they were keen to support young people, they may not have been able to take someone on without Camden Council's support. Due to the precarity caused by Covid, the financial support enabled businesses to take young people on during a time of acute uncertainty. However, the main benefit of the scheme was the assurance that a young person was work ready and would be supported as they transitioned into working life.

When commenting on the impact of being supported into employment, one young person explained:

"I got lucky; someone at the youth club asked me if I was interested in an apprenticeship, and they helped me with my CV and everything. Now, look, I am taking care of my family and helping to pay bills. I am very lucky."

Both Youth Safety Taskforce funded groups and other VCS organisations were keen to embed employability support into their mainstream work with young people, with

many recognising this need in those with whom they work. For some young people, it was the connection with a trusted individual who referred them to the scheme which was crucial. This is equally true of apprenticeships. We heard from young people who struggled at school but were excited about the prospects of apprenticeships. Many of these young people had struggled to find a direction after they left school, but their motivation and drive returned when they heard about vocational training routes. Although young people recognised that they were probably told about apprenticeships at school, it wasn't until someone they trusted told them about it that they realised it could be for them.

Although the Taskforce report focused on local businesses offering work opportunities, feedback from those involved in the project suggests that many young people do not feel Camden is a safe place to work due to local rivalries. Therefore, it may be appropriate to consider how the council can work with businesses and neighbouring boroughs to help young people access opportunities further afield. Another barrier voiced by young people was monthly pay. Those involved in street crime commented that they are used to almost immediate income, and the thought of monthly pay is off putting for many.

Evaluation Recommendations Under Support:

Evaluation Recommendation 6: Interventions such as mental health first aid training, domestic violence awareness and training, trauma informed approach training, and bereavement support in schools should be embedded in a long-term public health strategy that ensures they are made accessible for all.

Evaluation Recommendation 7: The council should explore how they can use their position and partnerships with trusted organisations and neighbouring boroughs to both provide supported routes into careers and vocational training; and support businesses to foster ongoing supportive partnerships with youth organisations/young people.

6.4 Disrupt Strand

Youth Safety Taskforce Recommendations under Disrupt:

Disrupt the patterns of youth violence to make Camden a safe environment by interrupting the activities of perpetrators and inhibiting the grooming and targeting process.

Recommendation 12. Take a leading role in changing the conversation about the drug trade and campaign nationally to highlight the exploitation of children in gangs.

Recommendation 13. Exploring ways for greater trust and cooperation being fostered between young people, local communities and Police, and other public bodies.

Recommendation 14. An improved rehousing and resettlement offer should be available for young people at risk and families, including a pan-London approach on the issue.

Recommendation 15. The design and planning of local environments which help reduce crime and make residents feel safer should be promoted.

6.4.1 Changing Perceptions

It has been more challenging to make concrete progress on the Disrupt strand, mainly due to the council having less control over the Disrupt related recommendations. However, the Taskforce, co-chaired by Councillor Abdul Hai and Sir Kier Starmer in his capacity as constituency MP, took a partnership approach with representatives from the police, public health and VCS organisations sitting on the steering group. This has improved networking and information sharing. It should be noted that this partnership working has extended across local authority borders. For example, Camden council staff are now working more closely with education, safeguarding, housing, YOT and youth service counterparts in neighbouring boroughs, including sharing information in real time. The local authority has also taken steps to highlight the importance of understanding the role that criminal exploitation plays in the actions of young people. In addition, staff from the local authority have engaged with the Youth Justice Board, Home Office, Department for Justice, the police and the media around the issue of Child Criminal Exploitation.

Despite the difficulties associated with the Disrupt strand, several concrete actions have been taken to disrupt the activities that contribute to youth violence. The council has adopted a place-based approach in some areas of the borough, initially through the Safer Camden Network and then Working Better Together, which the council should consider developing further. Simple actions, such as improving the lighting and cutting back the hedges in problem areas, were identified by both adult residents and young people as having the potential to make a difference to people's sense of safety.

However, some respondents did feel that some of the design and planning measures taken by the local authority had created areas which, whilst making it less attractive for young people to 'hang out', also inhibited the ability for residents to naturally meet. The council needs to strike a balance between designing out crime and creating spaces that allow people to socialise and foster supportive relationships, often leading to a greater sense of safety.

6.4.2 Safeguarding and Housing

Camden's Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) replaced the Safeguarding Children Board in 2018. Adopting the 'Prevent, Identify, Support, Disrupt, Enforce' model, outlined in the Vulnerable Adolescents: Risk and Exploitation Strategy 2019-21, has helped give local action a focus. The partnership has evolved the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel into the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel because it assesses more possible Child Criminal Exploitation than Child Sexual Exploitation cases. The CSCP also offers training and resources on Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation, which parents, young people, schools, and contextual locations, including hotels, can access for free.

Rehousing young people and/or their families has been used across the country as an appropriate contextual safeguarding response to the risks particular young people face. However, both housing and YOT staff commented on the difficulties of making this happen. There are mechanisms for the council to bypass normal housing processes and fast track offering young people and their families alternative accommodation. In most circumstances, where a move is thought necessary due to safeguarding concerns, temporary accommodation can be offered within 2-3 days.

However, multiple barriers persist, including:

- Families will lose any secure tenancy they hold if they accept a move to temporary accommodation.
- A lack of affordable housing in safe areas. This means those rehoused can be offered properties outside the borough and away from schools and support networks. If a family is on benefits, this situation is often made worse.
- If a young person is moving on their own, there is often a lack of suitable and affordable supported local accommodation.

The issues above mean that what can be offered is limited, and families often decline what is presented to them. Most of these barriers are outside the council's control making it complex to rehouse those at risk of exposure to youth violence. To help provide more options, Camden Council participates in the Pan London Reciprocals Scheme run by Safer London and has reciprocal partnerships with neighbouring boroughs. However, availability is still limited.

Where young people have been moved, unfamiliar surroundings and the location of their friendships or support network means that they often still want to socialise within the neighbourhood from which they moved. One young person summed up many young people's feelings about relocating out of the area when he said:

“The loneliness is the thing that I hated most about living far away from London, I felt like I couldn't get to my friends, and when I needed someone, there was no one there.”

A young person who was previously groomed in Camden, despite living in a neighbouring borough, commented that he was so lonely when he was rehoused outside of London that he did all he could to force a move back. Now he lives back in Camden; he fears that he will be groomed again. This risk was associated with increased drug use once he was moved. Despite accepting that his own decisions have put him at further risk, he did comment that there was not very much support offered from the staff that worked in his various care homes to help him deal with his increased drug use or the risks associated with this.

Young people spoken to felt that the risk of grooming was quite common in Camden. Those in care were particularly at risk as many care homes are in the same area, making the residents an easy target. One care leaver living in supported housing spoke of adults banging on their door at 3am, asking him to do things for them.

As a response to these and other concerns, the council is moving away from using relocation as a suitable safeguarding measure to keep young people safe and is looking to support young people and their families in situ.

6.4.3 Trust in the Police

There is still a sense that the CPS and police rely too much on enforcement mechanisms when dealing with young people exploited into criminality. This has led to concerns over the use of bail (which has increased nationally) and worries that bail conditions may make young people more vulnerable to criminalisation.

It was evident throughout the research that many young people did not trust the police and instead were fearful of them. These feelings seemed to appear in mid adolescence, with younger children having a more balanced view. The general perception from the younger age group, who explained that their views came mainly from the media and what they had heard from others, was that the police do a good job and those who do it badly are the exception. This viewpoint reverses in older young people, whose views were formed more from personal experience.

Covid 19 lockdown and social distancing rules limited a lot of planned police proactive engagement with young people. However, there were some good examples of practice from Safer Schools Officers who look to build relationships with pupils and parents.

There have been some encouraging developments in police practice. For example, the police officers who participated in this evaluation had received some form of trauma training and were aware that trauma can impact the actions of young people and their own actions. Most officers commented that they operated an arrest and custody as a last resort policy, usually considering other options first as they knew that engagement with the police could be traumatic. However, there were, of course, times when incidents necessitated arrest and custody. When in custody, young people are offered the support of a youth worker through the council's Youth Early Help Engage project. So far, over 140 young people have been supported through this intervention.

When considering the impact of trauma on themselves and their own practice, all police officers commented that the Metropolitan Police Service was a more supportive workplace than it used to be. However, most officers mentioned that they would generally try to deal with any concerns informally rather than involving occupational health, which may result in 'days off the street'. Despite working in a more supportive environment, officers spoke of becoming desensitised to trauma in their own work and switching off their emotions to do the job properly. Although potentially an expected coping mechanism, this may impact the way officers deal with situations.

Evaluation Recommendations Under Disrupt:

Evaluation Recommendation 8: Additional support should be targeted at those who have an increased risk of being groomed; particularly those in care, care leavers and those who have been rehoused.

6.5 Enforce Strand

Youth Safety Taskforce Recommendations under Enforce:

Use appropriate enforcement against perpetrators using information and intelligence gathered by partner agencies.

Recommendation 16. Enforcement action should be targeted at those 'at the top' of the drugs market who exploit children and young people for profit.

Recommendation 17: Police, young people and the wider local community should work together to ensure stop and search measures are used fairly, proportionally and respectfully.

6.5.1 Focused Enforcement

Concerns that children are being targeted by those 'higher up' to deal drugs on local or county lines have led to calls for enforcement efforts to be targeted at those higher up. **It is essential that the work to target line holders and those 'higher up' in local drug markets continues, as this will impact youth safety in the borough and help tackle grooming and exploitation issues.** However, many parents and young people felt that violence was fuelled by the thought that the police and other services would not do anything about low level offences, hence the perception that they must take issues into their own hands. These calls also do not consider that around 80% of incidents of youth violence are thought *not* to be related to gang issues.⁹

All police officers we spoke to understand the rationale for focussing on those 'at the top'. However, they commented that those doing the coordination often operate out of the borough, so the enforcement efforts are usually coordinated by or in conjunction with other police services. At the same time, line holders in the borough are increasingly getting younger, sometimes as young as 15 and often only as old as 19. Accounts from front line workers also suggest that there has been a rise of independent dealers who were not linked to an area or gang. The view of the police

⁹ Bailey, L., Harinam, V. and Ariel, B. (2020) 'Victims, offenders and victim-offender overlaps of knife crime: A social network analysis approach using police records.', PLoS ONE, 15(12), pp. 1-21

overall was that such serious violence in the borough is primarily perpetrated by young people. So, many officers felt that enforcement targeted at this age group makes young people safer.

Although youth violence is more widespread than simply including those involved in gang activity, involvement in drug dealing does increase the chance of someone being both a victim and perpetrator of youth violence. The council's current Drugs Action Plan has moved away from enforcement and seeks to support those involved in or at risk of involvement in the drugs markets. As discussed throughout this evaluation, there is a significant focus on equipping parents and young people with the knowledge and skills to stay safe. Another critical action includes providing early intervention targeted at the most vulnerable groups, particularly young women and minority ethnic young men, who are especially susceptible to becoming involved in child criminal exploitation. A further essential action is providing diversionary activities and offering mental health and trauma support to those arrested. Within this, there is an emphasis on including young people in developing solutions.

Further, there is increased support for communities, including making it easier to report drug related crime and proactively tackling issues in spaces where drugs are dealt. There is also increased support for substance misuse issues, including having services co-created by 'experts with experience' and a focus on equipping practitioners with the ability to support those with complex needs. This coproduced support will allow for greater engagement and address some of the underlying causes of involvement in drugs markets, which will significantly influence behaviour change than enforcement alone.

Looking at youth safety more broadly, the police, many youth workers and young people also commented that the threshold for violence by young people has lowered. It has become so low that everyday disagreements between young people, including friends, not necessarily linked to gangs or drug dealing, can lead to violence. This has led to more young people feeling the need to carry a knife for their own protection. However, this has contributed to many young people commenting that the police stop and search focus target those carrying weapons for their own protection rather than those actively perpetrating youth violence and exploitation. There was a sense of

frustration among young people who felt that the police did very little to keep them feeling safe while targeting them for trying to feel safer.

Regardless of the enforcement focus, those working with young people, especially in youth justice, expressed concern over unhelpful sanctioning of young people as part of bail conditions and orders that could lead to their criminalisation. This situation is exacerbated by the extended time National Referral Mechanism referrals (NRMs) are taking to come back. There was a concern that young people would not comply with orders out of fear of what 'olders' may do to them.

One front line staff member put it like this:

"By the time we work with them, the young person is scared. It doesn't matter the conditions of their bail or order; if they are told to do something, they are going to do it because they are scared of what will happen if they don't."

These concerns have been voiced locally to the police and CPS. However, the council should consider how it can use its political position to raise the issue further.

6.5.2 Stop and Search

From a police perspective, Islington and Camden BCU officers often spoke of a hesitancy to use stop and search because of the public scrutiny that it may cause. Some local respondents believed the issue of disproportionality in the stop and search statistics might partly be explained by Camden's significant night-time economy, which attracts dealers from out of the borough. Those with this view assumed that people dealing drugs within this night-time space were Black and not living in the borough. However, the consensus view of the police was that the night-time economy is not impacting youth safety or stop and search statistics in the borough.

Officers also commented that only those who have been trained carried out stop and searches. However, police officers also commented that many of the stop and searches in the borough are carried out by the Territorial Support Group when a Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 is in place. Allowing officers to stop and search people without suspicion may influence young people's negative stop and search experiences. As these occur after a serious incident, those stopped and searched during this time may be experiencing heightened anxiety, which

may impact how they respond to being stopped. The police should take this into account when carrying out stops. It should be noted that the police differentiate between s60 and other stop and searches and that young people understand this difference. However, young respondents did not distinguish between s60 and other searches when relaying their experiences.

As discussed in Section 4, one of the starker messages from young people was that many were equally as worried about the police as they were other young people, mainly because of stop and search. Young people told us that they feel targeted and feel that in the eyes of the police, they are guilty, no matter what. This sense of targeting was reiterated by many of those working with young people. They felt that young people are often targeted because of where they live or 'hang out' rather than what they have done.

There was also distrust in the stop and search processes, with many young people commenting that the police told them contradictory information during stops. One young person explained:

"When I got stopped, the police told me they were looking for weapons, but when they gave me the form, it said drugs on it. They are just making things up and putting down what they want."

The council has set up a Youth Independent Advisors (YIA) programme, through the Camden Safer Neighbourhood Board, with 36 young people involved. This is a representative group, with 58% male and 42% female participants; 31% of the participants identify as Black, 14% as Mixed Ethnicity, 16% as from a Bangladeshi background and 31% from a White background with 8% from other backgrounds.

The YIA have engaged in a dialogue about stop and search with all new officers whilst they complete their street duties training. This has helped young people and officers understand each other's perspectives.

Police officers have also taken part in training with YIAs in stop and search protocols and young people's rights. In addition, they provided various demonstrations with different scenarios that enhanced young people's understanding of why a stop and search might be carried out. This has included exploring what actions are taken when unexpected issues arise or a weapon is found.

YIAs have also organised 'sharing and scrutiny sessions' with TSG officers, which included an invite to young people known to YOS. This was an opportunity for young people to pose questions and hold officers to account. This work has produced some clear messaging from the work of the YIAs around officers needing to treat every stop and search like it is the young person's first encounter with the police, recognising that young people may be nervous about the process.

In May 2021, the police involvement was passed to their Youth Engagement Team to ensure the project connected with the wider engagement work the police are doing with young people in the borough. However, since then, a lot of the work identified above has stalled. Some people from outside the police felt that this was due to the police putting up unnecessary barriers to engagement. This has slowed progress on the agreed work plan, such as a joint review of body worn camera footage and understanding of the police complaints process.

Currently, YIAs are surveying young people on police engagement, including asking questions about stop and search, grievances, and complaints, with a view to developing new strands of work based on the outcome of the survey.

Although the police have engaged with the YIAs around Stop and Search and officers undergo trauma informed training, young people's experiences are still overwhelmingly negative. The Central North BCU and Camden Council will not be able to accurately assess the impact of police training and other measures to improve young people's experiences of stop and search unless a significant data set is collected. Any data collection would need to consider that trauma can present itself in various ways and often manifests some time after the initial incident. How improvements in stop and search are measured and the reporting mechanism by which the data is collected needs careful consideration and should be developed in collaboration with young people.

Evaluation Recommendations Under Enforce:

Evaluation Recommendation 9: Any future strategy around youth safety should ensure there isn't a sole focus on gang activity. It must be taken into consideration that incidents of youth violence are not just fuelled by gang involvement.

Evaluation Recommendation 10: Increased and continued effort should be made to ensure stop and searches are carried out within a trauma informed framework, which minimises the impact on those being stopped and searched.

6.6 Assessment of the Youth Safety Taskforce Recommendations

Over the past few years, Camden Council has achieved significant progress in implementing the Taskforce recommendations, which built on some already existing good practice. Where something has been within the council's control, clear and definitive action has been taken. However, one of the key messages from those involved in delivering on the recommendations was that these efforts need to be sustained and resourced for the long term. In particular, there are concerns that embedding a trauma informed approach within services that support young people will require sustained long-term commitment, including access to training and funding of the sort available through the Taskforce.

There was also concern that those currently involved in youth violence, or most at risk of being involved, were not necessarily supported by mainstream youth support in the borough. However, those most successful at reaching this group had embedded a trauma informed approach and committed to working with the same young people over several years.

It was also voiced that those making older transitions (i.e. from school to post 16 education or training, those transitioning into work) will need continued support. These groups were some of the hardest hit in terms of progressions during the Covid 19 lockdowns.

This evaluation believes that enhancing a trauma informed approach, supporting those currently involved in youth violence and supporting older transitions cannot be seen as a short-term project.

Less definitive action was achieved where the council needed to influence others to play their part. This included recommendations that involved changes in police and business activities. Again, this isn't specific to Camden and is likely to remain.

However, the actions taken in Camden are important steps, mirroring those taken across the capital to effect change. Similarly, efforts to safeguard and support those at risk of violence and exploitation are robust, although wider policy factors impact their effectiveness.

Given the vibrancy of the local business sector, there is scope to harness greater employment and training opportunities for young people across the borough. However, this will take a culture change within the business sector and cannot be done overnight.

6.7 Impact of the Taskforce Funding

The funded projects were an integral part of implementing the Taskforce recommendations. Some of the interventions have laid the foundation for a different approach to supporting young people going forward. For example, the TIPiC project has helped organisations embed a trauma informed approach to their practice. As a result, it was evident that frontline services were more aware of the impact of trauma. If supported and further incentivised, such as future council funding being dependent on evidence of a trauma informed approach, the impacts could be sustained and long lasting.

Similarly, the Vulnerability Matrix is a resource that, if continued, will improve the way young people are supported as they transition from primary to secondary school. The work aiming to prevent school exclusions seemed particularly strong in terms of the CRIBs approach and the partnerships between VCS organisations and schools, with clear evidence that they prevented exclusions. This is an approach that should be supported and expanded further.

There are two areas of concern. Firstly, most of these projects didn't engage effectively with 18-25-year-olds or those actively engaging in youth violence. For some, this may have been due to their target age group and because traditional youth provision doesn't naturally appeal to these groups. The main exception to this was Project 10/10. However, this is a long-standing intervention designed specifically to engage older young people with experience of knife crime. Unfortunately, many of the interventions in the borough aimed at supporting older young people appeared short term. Staff commented that although there is a need for the work to continue, there remains uncertainty over their longevity.

Secondly, it was concerning that many of the organisations involved in delivering the funded projects indicated that they had not applied for funding to continue the work. This was despite sustainability being a factor in decisions around which projects were funded. This does bring into question how essential the Taskforce funded interventions were perceived by those delivering them. To help address this issue, the council should consider making any future support-dependent recipients secure 'match funding' to help organisations diversify their income sources and help ensure the work isn't solely dependent on council funding.

Overall, there has been good progress towards implementing the recommendations of the Youth Safety Taskforce, and others often see Camden Council as progressive in their approach to youth safety.

However, to sustain the progress, work cannot end here.

Evaluation Recommendation 11: The work started on embedding a public health approach and trauma informed practices, should form part of a longer-term strategy that focuses on sustained change and securing ongoing long-term resources rather than short-term funding.

7. Thematic Evaluation

Throughout the evaluation, a number of issues emerged as reoccurring themes that are not necessarily captured above but which the council should consider for future planning.

7.1 Leadership and Funding

Those involved in delivering the Taskforce recommendations, whether funded projects or council staff, complemented the council's approach, identifying it as the right strategy. However, there were concerns over its longevity. This was especially apparent in the comments made by those delivering the funded projects, many of whom were facing financial uncertainty due to Covid 19. This made it difficult to plan for the long-term and ensure the continuity of relationships between staff and young people. There were calls for Camden Council to support more investment in front line youth workers and ensure the next iteration of their youth safety strategy was for a more extended period. The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, which has had significant success in improving youth safety, operates a ten-year plan cycle; the work of the Youth Safety Taskforce could be seen as the catalyst for planned long-term change.

7.2 Relationships

Those working directly with young people commented that building relationships was key to successful engagement. By employing local people or people who have worked in the borough a long time (including retaining staff), local knowledge helped organisations establish trusted relationships with young people and their families. However, this takes time and commitment and is hindered by short-term funding. Although the sample size is small, it was noticeable that the organisations that engaged with young people who had first hand experience of youth violence and exploitation had worked with those young people over several years. They also had embedded a trauma informed approach into their practice. The local authority should consider how it works with those delivering services to young people to understand how best to provide stable and consistent trauma informed support throughout their childhood and into early adulthood.

7.3 Family Support

Many of the comments made by young people and those supporting them highlighted the need to provide additional support for families, many of whom are struggling to provide a safe and nurturing environment to support their child's development. The pressures on families are likely to increase over the next year, which may add to the pressures and trauma felt by young people. Those who have adverse home lives but successfully navigate adolescence are often supported by professionals and/or VCS organisations. The council and VCS organisations should plan for the need for this extra familial care to increase in the short term.

7.4 Partnership Working

Throughout the evaluation, it was clear that the partnership working between council services, statutory services and VCS organisations has significantly increased over the past two years. This has improved information sharing, decision-making and the support received by young people. There has also been space for dialogue on difficult issues, such as stop and search, which, if continued, will help improve an ongoing problematic situation. The council should continue to support this collaborative approach.

7.5 Covid 19

For many organisations, Covid 19 highlighted acute need within the borough. One school reported that 40% of their families contacted them for help during the 1st lockdown. They also reported a 100% increase in pupils on the child protection register or having a Child In Need Plan after the first lockdown, compared to a year earlier.

Covid 19 has limited the impact of the funding distributed by the council in response to the Taskforce, with many face-to-face projects needing to be delivered virtually. It is unclear how this has influenced the impact of such delivery. Despite organisations adapting well and moving to online engagement, including providing laptops and dongles, many experienced a drop in throughput, with some supporting only 43% of the young people they would normally. Some organisations stated that they lost touch with many of their older service users during the lockdowns and are now mainly working with a different cohort of young people.

Although Covid 19 highlighted the immediate vulnerability of many residents, the overall impact on young people may not be felt for some time. Increased CAMHS waiting lists and strains on other services such as Early Help, and potential reductions in funding to non-statutory and voluntary sector services, may mean that more young people go unsupported than before the pandemic. Youth unemployment has also risen considerably over the past two years, which may leave more young people at risk of seeking illegitimate sources of income and being drawn into a violent youth culture.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Over the past few years, there has been considerable progress in embedding a public health approach to youth safety in Camden. As a result, those working with young people in the borough have a greater understanding of the risks young people face and how to mitigate them.

The council ensures that professionals working with children and young people from nursery age and up are trained to understand the impacts of adverse childhood experiences. This approach will help imbed a trauma informed approach into the services and support young people's access. The aim of promoting a standardised approach to supporting young people who find school life challenging across all schools will help parents and pupils better navigate the education system. Through Evolve and the jobs brokerage system, the council have enhanced their support for those entering adulthood.

However, ensuring young people stay safe takes sustained commitment. The council should see the actions taken as the foundation for developing a long term strategy. It was evident throughout the evaluation that more organisations were aware of the impact of trauma on young people, and all young people involved in the evaluation had access to some form of mental health and wellbeing support. However, not all organisations were operating in a trauma informed way, and this change will take time and resources going forward.

8.1 Prevent

There has been significant progress in implementing the recommendations under the Prevent strand, particularly in embedding a public health approach to youth safety. As a result, more organisations are moving towards embedding a trauma informed approach to their work; there is greater partnership working across the borough, and progress has been made to ensure children have a smooth transition from primary to secondary school.

Yet there are still areas for improvement. This includes ensuring greater collaboration. Information still needs to be shared with and among VCS organisations, identifying those young people with SEND or with additional educational needs sooner and

providing better support for those who may find the transition from school to post 16 education particularly difficult.

8.2 Identify

Camden's Early Help provision and YEH service provide an effective multi-agency service once a referral is accepted. However, VCS and family member referrals have reduced over the past few years, which the local authority should seek to address. This is especially important because family members and voluntary sector organisations can often identify risk factors earlier than statutory services due to the close relationship with young people.

8.3 Support

Camden Council and its partners have continued to build on the good practice already demonstrated in the borough. For example, Camden Learning is working to ensure a standardised and embedded trauma informed approach across all schools and organisations working with young people. Partner organisations have also trained parents to understand the impacts of adverse childhood experiences and how to respond in a trauma informed way. VCS organisations are offering more wellbeing support and have a greater knowledge of the influence of trauma. However, more support and resources are needed to help them transition to operating in a trauma informed way. The school exclusions rate is falling in Camden, and there are now more effective services for young people struggling with mainstream schooling.

However, less support is available to 18-25-year-olds than other age groups. The council should consider how effective initiatives, such as the Evolve and employment support projects, can be supported long-term.

8.4 Disrupt

The Taskforce took a partnership approach, with representatives from the police, public health and VCS organisations sitting on the steering group. However, despite progress, it has been challenging to change the narrative around youth safety. Nevertheless, many concrete actions have been implemented to address safety concerns. The Working Better Together model, which focuses on simple actions identified by adult residents and young people, can improve people's sense of safety.

The MACE panel has helped ensure a coordinated response for those criminally exploited. However, there are still concerns that the CPS and police rely too much on enforcement to deal with vulnerable young people.

8.5 Enforce

Enforcement efforts were still a concern, with many young people feeling equally afraid of the police as they are of the actions of their peers. The experiences of many young people suggest that they are not always treated with respect by the police, and many young people's interactions with the police can themselves be trauma inducing.

8.6 Recommendations

Throughout the evaluation, there were concerns over the longevity of some of the interventions. Many groups in the borough are facing increased financial uncertainty due to Covid 19, making it difficult to plan for the long-term. It was also apparent that very few groups supported by the Taskforce had made plans to fund the work once the Taskforce funds had finished. As the local authority has pointed out, youth safety is the responsibility of *everyone* in the borough. This requires continued sustained commitment and resources from the council and its partners to ensure progress continues. To offer some assistance with this endeavour, the evaluation provides the following recommendations:

Evaluation Recommendation 1: The council should consider how it promotes organic resident leadership, which enhances the role of young people, parents, residents and other underrepresented voices in efforts to keep young people safe.

Evaluation Recommendation 2: Schools and the local authority should ensure that those with SEND and additional needs are supported effectively, particularly through the transition from primary to secondary school. This should include a commitment that assessments are made as early as possible, and parents and children are supported to understand the process.

Evaluation Recommendation 3: The council should work with local partners to review post 16 support. It should work collaboratively to ensure a greater level of support and opportunities are available to the most vulnerable when they leave school and enter young adulthood.

Evaluation Recommendation 4: The council should consider how it can use its influence to support organisations in gaining the long-term funding needed to establish supportive relationships with young people and families.

Evaluation Recommendation 5: The council should consider developing a systematic information sharing process between the council and voluntary sector; including exploring how to involve VCS organisations in multi-agency arrangements, and encouraging more information sharing between VCS organisations.

Evaluation Recommendation 6: Interventions such as mental health first aid training, domestic violence awareness and training, trauma informed approach training, and bereavement support in schools should be embedded in a long-term public health strategy that ensures they are made accessible for all.

Evaluation Recommendation 7: The council should explore how they can use their position and partnerships with trusted organisations and neighbouring boroughs to both provide supported routes into careers and vocational training; and support businesses to foster ongoing supportive partnerships with youth organisations/young people.

Evaluation Recommendation 8: Additional support should be targeted at those who have an increased risk of being groomed; particularly those in care, care leavers and those who have been rehoused.

Evaluation Recommendation 9: Any future strategy around youth safety should ensure there isn't a sole focus on gang activity. It must be taken into consideration that incidents of youth violence are not just fuelled by gang involvement.

Evaluation Recommendation 10: Increased and continued effort should be made to ensure stop and searches are carried out within a trauma informed framework, which minimises the impact on those being stopped and searched.

Evaluation Recommendation 11: The work started on embedding a public health approach and trauma informed practices, should form part of a longer-term strategy that focuses on sustained change and securing ongoing long-term resources rather than short-term funding.

Appendix 1: Youth Safety Taskforce Recommendation Progress on Implementation

Key

Green: Good progress has been made, and the recommendations have been met or will be met with what has been implemented

Amber: Some good progress has been met; however, interventions are currently short term but need to be resourced longer term to see the recommendation implemented or the actions taken only partially implement the recommendations

Red: Little progress or the progress made hasn't impacted the situation the original recommendation was designed to address

Taskforce Recommendations	Key Actions	Areas for future Progress	Rating
Prevent			
Recommendation 1. Supporting community-led efforts to prevent youth violence and making it easier to volunteer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VRU Parent Champions and SYDRC Parent Champions established. SCN schools materials coproduced with the Camden Somali Community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council should consider how it promotes organic resident leadership, which enhances the role of young people, parents and residents and other underrepresented voices in efforts to keep young people safe. 	
Recommendation 2. A Camden-wide 'public health approach' to tackle youth violence should be established, which involves young people, parents, residents, schools, businesses, community and voluntary groups, the council, the Police and all other local partners who can contribute to keeping our young people safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every youth organisation and school that participated in the evaluation offered a mental health and well-being support programme for young people. Many of those on the frontline, including the Police, teachers, youth workers, and nursery workers, have received trauma-informed practice training. An increased focus on schools supporting families as well as pupils. Greater awareness within nursery provision of the role of secure attachment. A move to identifying SEND among children at an earlier stage. The Police have adopted a policy where arrest and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council and wider Camden community should ensure that support is available to help embed a public health approach over the long term to ensure that it becomes business as usual. <p>The council should consider how the work started on embedding a public health approach, and trauma informed practices can form part of a longer term strategy that focuses on sustained change.</p>	

	police custody is only used when all other options have been exhausted.		
Recommendation 3. Robust programmes should be developed to equip young people with the skills and resilience needed to make positive choices and deal with difficult situations, with a focus on those young people moving from primary to secondary school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional transitions support developed in partnership with Islington. Programmes helping young people understand the impact of choices offered across the borough Cooperative refreshing of SEND strategy. Additional places available at specialist schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support should be offered to pupils with SEND and additional needs and other vulnerable groups who may not have an EHCP in place while transitioning to secondary school. Schools and the local authority should ensure that SEND needs are not missed, and assessments should be made as early as possible. This should include supporting parents who raise concerns about their child, understand the process the EHC process. The council should work with local partners to review post 16 support and work collaboratively to ensure a greater level of support and opportunities are available to the most vulnerable when they leave school and enter young adulthood. 	
Recommendation 4. Young people's access to and ownership of activities in their community which can have a positive impact on their lives, should be increased, and information about the borough's full youth service provision should be brought into one centralised and easy-to-access place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good youth provision across the borough with significant numbers of young people accessing them. Strong relationship based youth work in communities dating back several generations. Developing partnerships between VCS organisations and statutory services. Youth organisations responding to the needs of young people. Borough wide youth provision review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden Council should explore ways that multi-agency arrangements can be more inclusive and include those with more informal but closer relationships with young people. 	
Identify			
Recommendation 5. Identification of those at risk of being affected by youth violence to be increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well respected and effective Early Help and YEH. Family Empowerment project for those who don't meet the early help threshold. Various training programmes helping organisations and parents identify the risks factors associated with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued overreliance on statutory services to refer into early help The council should consider developing a systematic information sharing process between the council and voluntary sector organisations and encourage more information sharing 	

	<p>youth violence and know how to access support services.</p>	<p>between VCS organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A directory of reviewed providers of training and programmes for young people, which schools, the council, and VCS organisations can input into, should be developed. 	
Recommendation 6. Young people, families, and the wider community should be better able to identify and act on early warning indicators of those at risk of youth violence, with one centralised place for people to contact for advice and help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various training programmes helping organisations and parents identify the risks factors associated with youth violence and know how to access support services. • Multiple programmes are helping young people identify the risks. • Strong VCS sector who are well placed to identify those at risk of involvement in youth violence before statutory service involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued overreliance on statutory services to refer to early help should be addressed. • The council should consider developing a systematic information sharing process between the council and voluntary sector organisations and encourage more information sharing between VCS organisations. • A directory of reviewed providers of training and programmes for young people, which schools, the council, and VCS organisations can input into, should be developed. 	

Support

Recommendation 7. Developing trauma-informed practices for schools, youth workers and professionals who work with young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive trauma informed practice training programme available from Camden Learning. • Concerted efforts to embed trauma informed practices within youth facing services. • Schools and VCS organisations are providing wellbeing support for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council should consider how to ensure Camden Learning's services, including the mental health first aid training, domestic violence support, trauma informed approach training, and bereavement support, are accessible for all over the long term. • The council should consider how the work started on embedding a public health approach, and trauma informed practices can form part of a longer term strategy that focuses on sustained change. 	
Recommendation 8. Additional support for students excluded, at risk of exclusion or with poor attendance should be provided and schools should have information on the most effective interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion rates are decreasing. • Extensive, effective programmes for young people who are excluded or at risk of exclusion. • A move towards a universal experience regarding exclusions and support within all Camden secondary schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A directory of reviewed providers of training and programmes for young people, which schools, the council, and VCS organisations can input into, should be developed. • The council should consider developing a systematic information sharing process between 	

<p>alongside a knowledge-sharing mechanism for best practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic review of SEND exclusions. • Greater partnership between Schools and VCS organisations. 	<p>the council and voluntary sector organisations and encourage more information sharing between VCS organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support should be offered to pupils with SEND and additional needs and other vulnerable groups who may not have an EHCP in place while transitioning to secondary school and post 16 education and training. 	
<p>Recommendation 9. Encouraging businesses to develop employment and training opportunities for young people at risk of youth violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thriving business sector. • Kings Cross Skills Centre. • Kings Cross Knowledge Quarter. • Well respected employment support for young people, trusted by businesses and youth organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council should explore how they can use their position and partnerships with neighbouring boroughs to leverage more opportunities and support businesses to foster ongoing supportive partnerships with youth organisations/young people. • Some form of employment support for young people transitioning into work will be needed over the medium term and should be factored into any future strategy. 	
<p>Recommendation 10. Additional support for young people aged 18-25 at risk of or affected by youth violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 10/10. • Evolve. • Various employment support programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council should explore how they can use their position and partnerships with neighbouring boroughs to leverage more opportunities and support businesses to foster ongoing supportive partnerships with youth organisations/young people. • The local authority should continue to advocate for a supportive approach by the CPS and ensure that post arrest support of young people identifies and addresses Child Criminal Exploitation risks. • Any future strategy around youth safety needs to consider that youth violence incidents are not just fuelled by gang involvement and ensure that there isn't a sole focus on gang activity. • The council should consider how the work started on embedding a public health approach, and trauma informed practices can form part of 	

		a longer term strategy that focuses on sustained change.	
Recommendation 11. Early help services to be promoted to families in need and least likely to ask. Community-led parenting programmes to develop parenting skills and promote greater resilience in families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well respected and effective Early Help and YEH. Family Empowerment project for those who don't meet the early help threshold. Various training programmes helping organisations and parents identify the risks factors associated with youth violence and know how to access support services. Parent empowerment projects. Newly formed parent champions projects which are becoming self governing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden Council should explore ways that multi-agency arrangements can be more inclusive and include those with more informal but closer relationships with young people. The council should consider developing a systematic information sharing process between the council and voluntary sector organisations and encourage more information sharing between VCS organisations. The council should consider using its influence to help bring in additional long term funding for council and VCS organisations providing early help support to young people and families. 	

Disrupt

Recommendation 12. Take a leading role in changing the conversation about the drug trade and campaign nationally to highlight the exploitation of children in gangs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Safety Week/fortnight with well attended sessions. Positive dialogue between the council and the police. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Police to engage in constructive dialogue with young people and other stakeholders around stop and search and other enforcement procedures. 	
Recommendation 13. Exploring ways for greater trust and cooperation being fostered between young people, local communities and Police, and other public bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership approach involving the council, police, public health, and VCS organisations of the Taskforce steering group. Structured programme for YIAs to engage with the police and other young people. Camden wide survey of young people's views of the police and how to improve relationships between young people and the police. Greater partnership working between statutory services and VCS organisations. Met Detention's Evolve Project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local authority should continue to advocate for a supportive approach by the CPS and ensure that post arrest support of young people identifies and addresses Child Criminal Exploitation risks. The Police to engage in constructive dialogue with young people and other stakeholders around stop and search and other enforcement procedures. The Police should continue to train its officers on how to respond in a trauma informed way when engaging with young people and also consider what additional support, both formal 	

		<p>and informal, can be offered to police officers who have experienced trauma.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased and continued effort should be made to ensure stop and searches are carried out within a trauma informed framework, which minimises the impact on those being stopped and searched. 	
Recommendation 14. An improved rehousing and resettlement offer should be available for young people at risk and families, including a pan-London approach on the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsive housing team. Good coordination between housing, YOT and community safety. MACE arrangements. Part of the Pan London Reciprocals scheme. Bilateral reciprocal arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional support should be targeted at those who have an increased risk of being groomed, particularly those in care or are care leavers and those who have been rehoused. 	
Recommendation 15. The design and planning of local environments which help reduce crime and make residents feel safer should be promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council understanding of how to be more responsive to local design and maintenance issues that impact people's sense of safety. Working Better Together model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council should continue to improve its response to local environmental issues that impact people's sense of safety. The council should strike a balance between designs that help reduce crime and those which foster a greater sense of community. 	
Enforce			
Recommendation 16. Enforcement action should be targeted at those 'at the top' of the drugs market who exploit children and young people for profit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met Detention's Evolve Project. Youth crime reduction across the borough. Arrests are reducing across the borough. Low levels of youth custody. Better understanding of the youth violence picture. Better understanding of the drug markets young people operate in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any future strategy around youth safety needs to consider the fact that youth violence incidents are not just fuelled by gang involvement and ensure that there isn't a sole focus on gang activity. The local authority should continue to advocate for a supportive approach by the CPS and ensure that post arrest support of young people identifies and addresses Child Criminal Exploitation risks. The Police to engage in constructive dialogue with young people and other stakeholders 	

		around stop and search and other enforcement procedures.	
Recommendation 17: Police, young people and the wider local community should work together to ensure stop and search measures are used fairly, proportionally and respectfully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater dialogue between young people and the police through the YIAs and CSNB Police are more aware of the impacts of trauma on young people and their own practice Arrest and custody used as a last resort Met Detention's Evolve project supporting young people who are arrested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Police should continue to train its officers on how to respond in a trauma informed way when engaging with young people and also consider what additional support, both formal and informal, can be offered to police officers who have experienced trauma. Increased and continued effort should be made to ensure stop and searches are carried out within a trauma informed framework, which minimises the impact on those being stopped and searched. The council should consider how the work started on embedding a public health approach, and trauma informed practices can form part of a longer term strategy that focuses on sustained change. 	

Appendix 2: List of Funded Projects and Key Activities

Project Name	Organisation	Key Activities
Family Support Project	British Somali Community	Parent Awareness Training Sessions ESOL and online safety training Training on how to understand the education system Developing Parent Champions
Camden Re-integration Base	Haverstock School/ Camden Centre for Learning	12 week programme supporting those at risk of exclusion
GOAL – Reach Higher	Queens Crescent Community Association	Business and Enterprise Market research Employment advice and CV drop ins Life skills workshops Running a market stall Outreach to local schools
Coram Fields Youth Programme and the 10/10 project	Coram Fields	Trauma informed support for 18-25 year olds Drop in Sessions Employability skills workshops Music recording Detached youth work Girls group sessions
Prevent, Support, Disrupt	Acland Burghley	Whole school safety weeks Sports mentoring Workshops on knife crime and gang violence Conflict resolution Cooking club Careers workshops Sexual health workshops Victim support Anti racist training for staff

Fear and Fashion	LEAP Confronting Conflict	Peer led workshops on knife crime Accredited training
Camden Youth Independent Advisors	Camden Safer Neighbourhood Board	Development of the YIA programme Workshops with young people, the police and solicitors on: Young People's Rights Perspectives and Communication Consultations with the police on their recruitment process
Change and Rise Up	Somali Youth Development Resource Centre	Mentoring for those at risk of exclusion Workshops for parents Developing Parent Champions
Growing Systems for Safety	The Winch	Weekly detached youth work sessions Urgent mental health support Female only sessions dealing with: Vulnerability and exploitation Post 16 destinations Employability
Camden Learning: Developing trauma informed practice in all Camden schools (TIPiC)	Camden Learning	Staff Training and follow up support for schools and youth organisations Training materials developed for schools TIPiC Conference Development and implementation of pre-audit review for school self-assessment Trauma informed training for: Reducing Youth Violence and Exploitation Team Virtual school EPS,

		<p>Safer School Officers (Police), Camden SEN, Camden Inclusion, Careers and Connexions Early Intervention Team, Early Help, Youth Service</p>
Vulnerability Matrix	William Ellis	<p>The development of a single approach to transition from Primary to Secondary Schools for vulnerable pupils</p>
Sports Leadership Day Release Programme	Camden Council - Sport and Physical Activity Service	<p>Delivery of Sports Leaders Level 1 qualifications Providing young people with sports coaching experience Delivery of: Two day Sign Language workshop hosted by British Sign Language (BSL) Inclusive Activity Programme workshop Safeguarding & Protecting Children for 16-18 year olds delivered by the UK Coaching via zoom in the classroom.</p>