

Camden 2025

Disproportionate
impact of COVID-19
on Black Asian and
other Ethnic Minority
Groups: a call to
action

Background and Context



- With the whole country and world waking up to the **deeply entrenched structural equalities** that have impacted the lives of our Black, Asian and other ethnic Minority communities, there is a collective appreciation that we need to go further to dismantle a system, and create new ones.
- Local and national evidence shows that people from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background are disproportionately impacted by Covid-19.
- In response to this, the council implemented this working group to carry out a rapid 6-week programme to gather evidence of the impacts of Covid-19 and develop actions for supporting our residents during this time and beyond.
- Intensive work has been underway to understand and take action to address the direct and indirect health impacts of Covid-19 on our Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority communities in Camden, and to ensure that individuals and communities are protected both **now and through the next phase of the pandemic, but also to bring about wider systemic change.**
- The Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority Inequalities and Covid-19 Working Group has benefitted from evidence and the lived experience of our residents, VCS partners, professionals and Members in guiding and shaping the Council's response from bureaucratic to relational.

“Covid-19 does not target race rather it targets the structural racism of society so we must begin with dismantling that structure”- Lord Woolley

Some reflections over the last 6 weeks... this work could not have been done without our communities



We have welcomed hearing the experiences of our residents, practitioners and staff during the pandemic so that we can respond quickly with immediate actions.

- Camden's Youth MP, Athian Akec joined us for the schools and education session; a number of youth roundtables have also been held with young people across Camden
- The voices and experiences of our diverse Black and Asian employees have been collected through staff focus groups, Yammer and emails directly to senior leaders
- Local head teachers, GPs and Healthwatch attended the sessions and contributed powerful evidence of the impact of the pandemic they are seeing and shared their views on the change that needs to happen within the health care system and schools
- From the beginning of this work we have actively engaged with our VCS partners through a number of channels to gather rich qualitative evidence of the lived experience of our residents.

Next steps



- Interim report due to be published this week
- Final report with evidence and recommendations due to be published at the end of July
- Embedding the action plans and way of working into departments with regular reporting and will be accountable
- Continuing to engage and encourage participation from residents; we will do this through various channels including
 - Using cross-channel communications tactics and reaching out to all Camden residents to make sure everyone is informed and given the opportunity to engage;
 - Encouraging residents to share their lived experience of Covid-19 and help us garner the evidence we need to take action;
 - Encouraging residents to work with us and our partners to shape and deliver the actions in our plan and act as a critical friend to make sure we stay true to our objectives and deliver the change we are promising.

Camden 2025

Healthy Lives



Summary of what evidence told us

Direct Health Impacts

- Camden has a COVID-19 age-standardised mortality rate that is significantly lower than the London average (55 versus 86 per 100,000) and has one of the lowest COVID-19 mortality rates amongst all London boroughs
- National evidence showed that people of Bangladeshi ethnicity had around twice the risk of death than people of White British ethnicity. People of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black ethnicity had between 10 and 50% higher risk of death when compared to White British. These analyses did not account for the effect of occupation, comorbidities or obesity.
- Local analysis of death registrations in North Central London, similarly show a higher percentage of COVID-19 deaths in people born in African or Asia, compared to those born in the UK or Europe.
- The prevalence of key long-term conditions that increase clinical vulnerability to COVID-19 such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity and high blood pressure is higher in some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups compared to non-Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic communities.
- Significantly higher proportion of Asian residents are shielding from COVID-19 – 11% of Asian residents are shielding compared to a general population of 7%
- People who live in deprived areas have higher diagnosis rates and death rates than those living in less deprived areas with more than double the mortality rates from COVID-19 in the most deprived areas



Summary of what evidence told us

Accessing health services

- There has been a decrease in people accessing NHS services for a range of conditions that are not related to coronavirus, including people attending A&E for urgent and emergency medical issues, such as strokes and heart attacks.
- A Health Foundation survey found access to health services for people with pre-existing conditions was 20% lower during the COVID-19 peak period. 10% said that they were unable to get an appointment and 22% cited concerns over contracting/transmitting the virus or worries about breaking the lockdown. Not accessing care due to fear of contracting COVID-19 was higher for patients with diabetes (27%), heart disease (28%) and mental health illness (30%).
- Camden's Annual Public Health Report '[Going Further on Health Inequalities](#) 2019/20' identified how issues around discriminatory treatment (actual and/or anticipated) shapes people's experience and use of health and wider statutory services.
- National research has shown that the fear of every day discrimination is closely associated to a number of poor health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Digital exclusion – ONS data shows in 2018 the gap in recent internet use among the different ethnic groups had narrowed. This is particularly the case for adults of Bangladeshi ethnicity. In 2011, 31.4% were internet non-users, higher than the figure for UK adults overall (20.3%). In 2018, the figure for Bangladeshi internet non-users had dropped to 8.0%, a figure that is now lower than for the UK overall (10.0%).



Summary of what evidence told us

Physical activity

- Obesity is a risk factor for severe illness and death from Covid-19
- Local data shows that prior to the pandemic, Black people were 15% more likely to be overweight and 71% more likely to be obese compared to the Camden average adjusted for age. Asian people were 36% more likely to be overweight and 61% more likely to be obese compared to the Camden average.
- COVID19 has led to fundamental & immediate changes in how people lead their lives and how they can be physically active. There is considerable concern in some communities around leaving the home which is having a significant impact on physical health and mental wellbeing now and for the future.
- The impacts can include weight gain, reduction in mobility for some people, poor mental health and wellbeing and exacerbation of existing long term conditions.

Mental Health and wellbeing

- We know that black and Asian residents in Camden rate having a supportive community as being more important for their health and wellbeing than white residents, suggesting lockdown might have a greater impact.
- Early results from the Healthwatch resident survey show that residents are more stressed, anxious, isolated or depressed as a result of Covid-19
- Camden has one of the highest rates of severe mental illness (SMI) in the country and there are clear inequalities for and within this population group



Moving into action

- Approximately 34% of Camden residents are from BAME groups (2011 Census data), with the largest communities being: Bangladeshi, Somali, Other black African. Other Asian and Chinese.
- Pre-existing health inequalities among ethnic groups, and the interrelationship with deprivation and other social, economic, cultural and environmental determinants of health, are likely to underpin the differential experience and health outcomes of BAME communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There are two broad dimensions for understanding why BAME groups are more at risk of COVID-19:
 - Greater **vulnerability** to the infection due to a greater propensity to pre-existing underlying conditions;
 - Greater **exposure** to the virus due to greater likelihood of, for example, being a frontline worker or living in an overcrowded household.
- Any action in the immediate response needs to address both dimensions.
- It is important to note that BAME communities are not a homogenous group and there are considerable differences between ethnic groups and health risks/outcomes; therefore, different approaches for different ethnic groups may be required.



What have we started to deliver?

Direct Health Impacts

- Working with colleagues across the council and the system to support the immediate response to Covid-19 through:
 - Wide ranging Public Health advice, e.g. social distancing; PPE; schools, in a range of accessible formats aimed at residents and the workforce
 - Developing and implementing Testing / Contact Tracing
 - Ensuring timely and appropriate data analysis to help understand the scale, shape and progress of the pandemic to inform ongoing decisions and action.
- In line with local and national recommendations for better ethnicity data collection we have started working with local registrars to set up processes for routinely collecting and recording ethnicity as part of the death registration process
- Implemented an individual staff risk assessment tool which specifically considers ethnicity and aims to reduce the risk of employee's exposure to and acquisition of COVID-19. A series of Q&A sessions are being hosted for senior managers across the council to support implementation of the tool in a culturally sensitive way.
- Ongoing dialogue with our Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic residents regarding disproportionate impacts of COVID-19, including the underlying health risks, using range of forums and meetings for VCS and faith organisations to raise awareness of the issues and to support our local communities.
- Convened the Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic VCS network which is focusing purely on communications to enable a two-way dialogue to share culturally competent and accessible information, provide reassurance and tackle misinformation early.



What have we started to deliver?

Health seeking behaviours

- Working with Healthwatch Camden and VCS partners to hear directly from residents from different ethnic groups about their priorities, concerns and needs and to explore trends in health seeking behaviors and access/ use of health services and reasons behind it.
- We are working with North London Cares and Ageing Better in Camden to identify and support people without the means or skills to access digital information.

Physical inactivity

- Supporting families with less living space – “Gardens for All” Scheme set up by Children’s Services to enable identified families without access to gardens at home to book time in currently closed facilities. Excellent uptake by Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic families at 63% of all families.

Mental Health

- Using local insight to develop a well-targeted communications campaign to alleviate fears and anxiety around the pandemic and to support and encourage Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic residents to access early help
- Worked with HR and communications team to develop wellbeing promotional messages and resources for staff and residents with a proactive communications campaign.
- Adapted existing and developed new virtual trainings to promote good mental health and wellbeing and to tackle stigma and discrimination
- Developed new and adapted exiting mental health services to meet the new needs of residents. These are being actively promoted to key at risk Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic groups.

Camden 2025

Young People
and Education

The best start to life



Summary of what evidence told us

Young people and learners

- There are 48,823 children and young people aged between 0-19 years old living in Camden. 25,037 Camden households have dependent children. In 2018 43% of children in Camden were classed as living in poverty. (<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/> (Centre for Research in Social Policy (Loughborough University) Local indicators of child poverty, 2017/18 - Summary of estimates of child poverty in small areas of Great Britain, 2017/18 (Published May 2019))
- There are 21,761 learners in Camden state schools, plus over 3500 under-fives in early years settings. Half of these children are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups compared to the national average of 21%. (Autumn School Census 2019)

Camden Schools

- There are currently 41 state primary schools including one academy and two free schools. In December 2019 St Aloysius primary school was closed due to low numbers. There are ten state secondary schools, including one standalone academy. There are two special schools and four pupil referral units including one alternative provision free school. There are 33 independent schools in Camden.
- There are 163 languages and dialects spoken in Camden schools. (ONS 2011 Census table QS204. All people aged 3+.) The proportion of children with English as an additional language in primary schools is 56% (Autumn School Census 2019) , compared to 21.2% nationally (National figures Spring 2019 School Census) , and in secondary schools is 49.3% (Autumn School Census 2019), compared to 16.9%23 nationally. The most widely spoken languages after English are: Bengali with 2,920 speakers; Somali with 1,520; Arabic with 1,160; Albanian/Shqip with 885, and French, Spanish and Portuguese, each with more than 320 speakers.

The best start to life



Summary of what evidence told us continued

Attainment

- Children attending Camden's schools achieve well overall.
- Children at Camden primary schools place Camden 5th in London and 7th nationally at Key Stage Two attainment. We recognise that our Key Stage Four and Progress 8 scores still need to improve, although our Progress 8 scores are still ranked 39th out of 152 local authorities.
- This is in the context of 43% of Camden children living in poverty with 30.7% (6855)³¹ of all pupils eligible for free school meals. (3453 primary school children (30.2%) and 3133 secondary school children (30.4%) School Census Autumn 2019)
- Comparative performance of other ethnic groups at the end of Key Stage Two shows that all groups perform above the expected standard apart from Black Other. At Key Stage Four – Progress 8 scores vary across ethnic groups with most groups having average scores.
- By far the lowest group is White British disadvantaged pupils and this group is significantly below national averages.
- The Caribbean group is also significantly below average.
- There has been a particular focus on Somali students following the initiative of the Youth Safety Steering Group, at the end of Key Stage Two Somali pupils perform in line with all Camden pupils and their progress across Key Stage Two is well above average.
- Performance of Somali students at the end of Key Stage Four is slightly below the national average, however progress 8 scores are in line with the national average.

The best start to life

What have we started to deliver?



1. Free School Meals/Pupil Premium

- Council has supported the continued provision of food for all pupils attending school, additionally the Council has supplied over 11,000 food hampers to FSM eligible pupils not attending. Total council support over £400k including cost of food and supplier wages.
- Worked with suppliers to increase the variety of food within hampers, including the provision of fresh vegetables.
- Worked with schools, DfE and Edenred to improve access to the national voucher scheme. Supported schools making local voucher arrangements – including providing physical vouchers where needed and possible.

2. Home Education

- Identifying and respond to need – school by school
- Coordinating a borough wide response to securing devices
- A home schooling set of guiding principles was negotiated with schools

The best start to life

What have we started to deliver?



3. Digital Divide

- Overall 1,085 devices received from the DfE
- 806 devices and 119 4G WiFi routers for young people with social workers & looked after children
- For disadvantaged Year 10 students: 279 devices and 121 4G WiFi routers (the order for devices to the DfE has been made)
- Many schools have distributed their own stocks of laptops and tablets for pupils to use at home and businesses have also donated devices directly.
- Five schools applied and have been awarded £28,360 from the Camden Giving Emergency Fund to spend on devices (Acland Burghley, Carlton, Regent High School, Fleet and Edith Neville).

The best start to life



What have we started to deliver?

4. Reducing inequality and promoting life chances

- Raised as part our submission to the Ofqual consultation; we have recommended that each judgment should be accompanied by an equalities declaration signed by the examiner
- Shared school resources on tackling racism and safe protest advice relating to Black Lives Matter
- Working with schools to develop in house school tutoring and further development of options through the national tuition service.
- Allocated additional funding from the Richard Reeves Foundation working with KS4, Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority and disadvantaged children to reduce the gap in English and maths.
- Doing targeted encouragement to young people to get involved with the Camden summer university/ Playschemes.
- Developed a Virtual Work Experience Programme - evidence indicates quality work experience has a positive impact on young people's attainment, aspirations, confidence and employment outcomes.

The best start to life

What have we started to deliver?



5. Transitioning back into school - including focus on health and well-being/ mental health

Schools and Parents

- Working closely with teachers, governors, parents and other stakeholders to ensure everyone has the most up to date guidance including:
 - Public Health liaison/updates
 - Safeguarding updates
 - Risk Assessments
 - Advice regarding practical planning/issues

Mental Health

- Published guidance for parents, staff, pupils on managing their mental health
- Held regular virtual network meetings for Mental Health Leads in school to support and advice
- Developed guidance for staff on managing parental anxiety and supporting pupils' return to school and supporting their wellbeing
- Held virtual training for staff on bereavement support

Camden 2025

Labour Market

Strong growth and access to jobs

Call to action three: People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic should be able to access the work that is right for them



Summary of what evidence told us

- The UK unemployment rate was 3.9% in January-March 2020. The rate was 3.6% for people from a White background compared to 6.3% for people from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) backgrounds, although there was substantial variation between different ethnic minority groups.
- It is important to note the substantial variation between different ethnic minority groups.
 - Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British – 8%
 - Bangladeshi – 8%
 - Pakistani – 8%
 - Chinese – 4%
 - Indian – 4%
- A Carnegie UK Trust report (2020) found that young people from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds were ‘58% more likely to be unemployed than their White counterparts; 47% more likely to be on a zero-hours contract; 10% more likely to be working a second job; 5% more likely to be doing shift work; and 4% less likely to have a permanent contract’.
- People from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds are more likely to be employed in shut down sectors (e.g. accommodation and food service and arts, entertainment and recreation or key workers) facing biggest health threats.⁴
- Workers in shut down sectors are the lowest paid across the workforce – typical pay for workers in those sectors is less than half that of those able to work from home.⁵

Strong growth and access to jobs



What we found locally

- A high proportion of residents from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds are accessing Universal Credit or Job Seeker's Allowance.
- Of the 821 council tenants that submitted Universal Credit claims since 23 March, 50% are from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds.
- A high proportion of unemployed people from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds claim Employment and Support Allowance.
- There is relatively little hard data on ethnicity in the context of the labour market.
- Gig economy: local VCS have shared that there are many mini cab drivers from the Somali community. They were not aware of available government support and often had negative experiences or perceptions of Universal Credit.
- Early analysis of data from Citizens' Advice Bureau Camden (CAB) shows that there is a disproportionately high number of local people from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds that are accessing advice services related to employment and income.
- Other VCS organisations also told us how Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority residents who do not qualify for the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or other grants such as the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme are experiencing financial difficulty as they had not been self-employed from the required threshold. Across London 100,000 people became self-employed in the last year, 12% of the total self-employed workforce in the capital.

Strong growth and access to jobs



What have we started to deliver?

Prior to the pandemic

- 52% of residents that were supported into apprenticeships through the Inclusive Economy team were from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds (e.g. 48% for construction and 60% for non-construction).
- 68% of residents that accessed Adult Community Learning opportunities over the past academic year were from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds.
- In addition to connecting with local schools, TRAs and housing associations, the Job Hubs have developed partnerships with services that specialise in supporting people from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds within neighbourhoods. For example Gospel Oak: The Caraf Centre / Somali Community Centre, Regent's Park: Hopscotch / Bengali Workers Association.
- Officers are actively developing partnerships with other services that already support residents - GPs, children's' centres, hostels and community centres - to connect with people that might need employment support (E.g. The Gospel Oak Job Hub is supporting residents in England's Lane Hostel).

Since the pandemic

- Sharing Public Health information with local businesses to enable safe working environments.
- We have started to initiate conversations with DWP to release timely data.
- We have begun to pull together local data from different sources as part of a planned Labour Market Intelligence Group and we are building a dashboard that will inform the Renewal Commission.

Strong growth and access to jobs



We're investing more in employment support through Good Work Camden. The Neighbourhood Approach is at the heart of that work - accessible 'Job Hubs' in Gospel Oak, Regent's Park and Somers Town (with future hubs planned) that provide accessible, relational support that responds to individual needs and aspirations.

Whilst the Job Hubs are open to all, we know there are specific challenges that disproportionately impact some residents more than others. We will therefore be led by data and what we're seeing and hearing on the ground to develop bespoke projects that respond to specific challenges.

This work has already begun, with projects focused on homelessness or disability and health. Two other projects that are being developed respond to specific challenges within the borough include:

- **Youth Safety & Employment:** Building on Camden's Youth Safety Taskforce research and recommendations, a project to improve the well-being of participants by creating bespoke pathways into employment and/or further learning for young people at risk of being perpetrators and/or victims of violent crime.
- **Pop-Up Business School:** an alternative to traditional business start-up support that aims to work in specific communities to teach people how to start a business without borrowing money and without a formal business plan. The approach has traditionally had a high reach into Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority communities and that is a key focus of evaluation of an initial pilot based in Kentish Town.

Strong growth and access to jobs



We're scaling up our employment support to respond to the labour market shock. In doing so, we want to involve residents from a variety of Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds in service design to ensure that support responds to lived experience. We are developing local networks within neighbourhoods - inspired by the Backr approach favoured by Participle - that provides opportunities for local people to network, support one another and access the support that they need.

In our Job Hubs, we will provide relational support that seeks to understand residents' individual needs and aspirations – taking into account a broad range of factors that can impact a resident's ability to find and thrive in good work, whether health issues, housing concerns or debt. We can then commission the following types of support in response:

- Training
- Workshops (e.g. soft skills training)
- Employer events / job fairs
- Wellbeing interventions

We will also ensure that the nature of our employment support responds to the needs of local residents (e.g. language / cultural norms / location / etc.).