

Update of the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People & Culture Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee – February 2025

1. Purpose of the Cabinet Member update

This paper provides an update from across the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People and Culture. It presents an opportunity for the cabinet member to speak directly to the CSF Scrutiny Committee and highlight key pieces of work, both to share successes and identify challenges and opportunities in the coming months. This report complements an Annual Report which went to scrutiny on December and lists a full list of activities across the year. This report focuses on the theme of Children and Young People's participation in more detail and talks about young people's participation. Future Cabinet Member updates will cover different themes.

The Committee are invited to consider the information below and ask questions of clarification at the meeting, subject to the Chair's discretion. Requests for additional information can be addressed to the relevant director/s outside of the meeting. The Committee may also use the cabinet member updates to inform their scrutiny work planning for the coming year.

2. Young People's Participation in Youth Celebration Week

Youth Celebration Week ran from 2 to 6 December with a series of engaging events and activities all designed to empower young people, youth workers, and professionals. The week focussed on promoting the voices of children and young people and celebrating their successes. This year's events included:

- Launch and Youth Safety Multimedia Competition – Young People creatively expressed their understanding of youth safety through a range of multi-media. The talented entrants used contemporary dance, poetry, documentary filmmaking, and animation to convey powerful messages about safety and shared these at an event on the Monday.
- Youth Mission event at Somers Town Youth Hub gathered young people aged 13-19 to get their perspective on Camden's Youth Mission. It was the first youth-only event to explore the Youth mission, generating many new ideas for development. The mission aims to ensure all young people have access to economic opportunities by 2025. The event also aimed to raise awareness of the mission. The Youth Mission will continue to have young people's participation at the centre is looking to establish a youth working group.
- Youth Assembly focused on young women and safety by giving young women and girls aged 13-19 a space to voice their concerns and raise awareness of violence against women and girls, alongside young men and boys invited as allies. The event sparked discussions and commitments from senior leaders to ensure the safety and voices of young women are prioritized. The assembly

was organised by Camden's Detached Youth Team and Fitzrovia Youth in Action and co-designed with a steering group of young people.

- Camden Youth Awards and Youth Celebration event was hosted by young people to recognise and celebrate young people who have achieved accredited outcomes through participation in borough-wide youth projects, including voluntary sector organisations. The event brought together over 100 people to celebrate their personal achievements and acknowledge outstanding youth justice workers.

3. Youth Safety Steering Group - young ambassador feedback

The Youth Safety Steering Group, jointly chaired with Daisy Srblin, CEO of the Young Camden Foundation, focusses on improving youth safety through a public health partnership approach. The Youth Safety Steering Group met in December for its twice a year format. A young ambassador from the Young Camden Foundation attended.

In their words in a blog post they wrote after the meeting - *“the meeting brought together representatives from different organisations and schools who work in the local area, dedicated to addressing the challenges our borough is facing in keeping its young people safe, proposing solutions to these challenges and giving general updates on progress that’s been made... it was very clear to see the thought and care put into every person’s work, as well as the sense of collaboration between them. As someone who has lived in Camden for years and goes to school here, a glimpse behind the scenes into the discussions being had has given me a much deeper appreciation into the work being done and inspired me to make my own contributions to making Camden a safer place for its youth”*.

4. Successes in young people’s participation and engagement

- **Peer Advocates** – Peer advocates ensure that youth services are continually shaped by the voices and experiences of young people. The Youth Justice Service recruited two new Peer Advocates in December, making five in total. One Advocate is staying on for a further six -month extension to help develop Family Hubs, expand their skills and learn about the strategic side of the Youth Service. The Youth Early Help service has also hired six new Peer Advocates to work across different projects. We are also looking into recruiting young people looked after to become Peer Advocates for this sector.
- **Honest Grind Coffee Project** - Two participants in the Honest Grind Coffee Project have secured barista jobs; one in an independent coffee shop and one in a museum, thanks to their skills, training and qualifications they gained through the program. Funding is being sought to recruit another part-time youth worker to support the project and ensure young people’s voice is at the centre.

Honest Grind took part in the Regents Roots festival in August 2024, with our students serving coffee to the 1,200 people in attendance.

- **Camden Summer University** - The Camden Summer University had another successful year in August 2024 with 693 young people registered and 553 AQA certificates achieved. Poems written by students taking part in the poetry course about notable Black people will be published in the Black History Month Calendar 2025.
- **Duke of Edinburgh Award** - The Duke of Edinburgh Award program reached its goal of 1,000 participants in 2024 through 15 schools, 2 youth clubs, 6th forms, colleges and University College London (UCL). UCL are engaging with a group of Ukrainian refugees looking to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh program through Camden.