

Your Voice in Homes and Communities: Our Ambitions for Housing Participation





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Reflections from the Cabinet Member for Better Homes

In Camden, we're home to passionate, energetic tenants and leaseholders who have a strong sense of community, help each other out and stand up for what's right. It's one of the things that makes Camden so special.

Our renewed ambitions place resident voices at the heart of decision-making about our estates and neighbourhoods. This is a commitment to fundamentally change not just what we do, but how we do it, by building genuine partnerships with tenants and leaseholders and embedding the principles of power sharing and community collaboration across housing and property services.

This builds on our shared vision for the borough, **We Make Camden**. We Make Camden sets out what we want to collectively achieve across the borough and one of its missions is that 'By 2030, Camden's estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity.'

We know that working together and understanding what matters to our residents is key to making sure our estates and neighbourhoods are communities where everyone can thrive. This includes the homes we live in because like other councils, our housing service is facing significant pressure, the cost of living remains high and there's a shortage of decent and affordable homes across the country.

It's inspiring to see the work of local people through our Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs), District Management Committees (DMCs) and community groups, resident-led panels and activities. Their work is vital in driving meaningful, impactful social action. We hope that even more people will get involved.

In the following document we've outlined the ways in which we're making sure residents' voices are at the heart of everything we do, and that we are making decisions together. I hope that, if you're not already, everyone will consider getting involved and sharing their thoughts in some way, shape or form – and I look forward to us continuing our work together.



Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali
Cabinet Member for Better Homes

The regulatory landscape

As a social housing landlord, Camden's participation model is set within a framework of national legislation and standards. The key areas are outlined below.

Social Housing Regulations 2023

The **transparency, influence, and accountability standard** puts tenant participation at the centre of delivering social housing. The Act shifts the regulatory focus to a proactive model, ensuring social landlords are held accountable for the safety, quality, and management of properties. For tenants, this means a more influential role in shaping the services they receive and holding their landlord to account.

We see these requirements as a springboard for change. We believe that true participation isn't a box which can be ticked, it's about fostering genuine, deep connections with our estates and neighbourhoods.

A feature of the regulations is the requirement to measure social housing provider's performance annually through **Tenant Satisfaction Measures**.

75.2%

Tenant satisfaction that they are kept informed about things that matter to them

Housemark Median 71%

55.9%

Tenant satisfaction that views are listened to and acted upon

Housemark Median 53%

Building Safety Act 2022

This legislation represents a major shift in the management of building safety, placing a strong emphasis on empowering tenants and residents, especially in high-rise buildings. The Act establishes clear, legal duties for freeholders to engage with residents on safety matters, primarily through a resident engagement strategy.

Our Building and Resident Safety team is dedicated to engaging tenants well. We have worked with tenants in high-rise buildings and our Fire Safety Advisory Panel to develop a **tenant engagement strategy**.

Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1996

These Acts marked significant milestones for tenant participation. They moved the sector from voluntary good practice to having a legally enshrined set of rights and obligations, laying the foundation for the more robust regulations seen today.

Specifically, they placed a statutory duty on local housing authorities to consult with their secure tenants on matters of housing management, such as maintenance and improvements to their homes, changes in the provision of services, and policy or practice.



Participation at Camden

The communities living in social housing are at the heart of any decisions we make more widely at Camden Council. This is a crucial aspect of **We Make Camden**.

Social action and neighbourhoods

We focus on bringing people together to amplify community voices and promote local leadership. This involves supporting community networks, hosting open meetings, and working with residents to develop their own projects.

The One Kilburn Community Fund

The One Kilburn Community Fund is a resident-led initiative, co-produced with local residents and Camden and Brent councils, designed to support projects that benefit and celebrate Kilburn. The fund builds skills through workshops and mentoring, establishing One Kilburn as a trusted partner in its own development. By giving residents direct voting power, the fund has brought five brilliant projects to life, including a community film, a car-free day, a photography course for youth, a "Healing Choir," and an art project for older residents.





We Make Camden Kit

The We Make Camden Kit is an initiative to empower Camden residents to lead change, providing tools and funding to run projects that drive the We Make Camden Missions forward and improve life in the borough.

Run by charity partner Camden Giving, the Kit is open to tenants and residents, community groups, and small charities whose projects address missions like healthy estates, access to food, diversity in leadership, and youth opportunities.

The Kit provides:

- Seed grants up to £2,000 for new ideas.
- Growth grants up to £5,000 for existing initiatives.
- Tailored guidance, training, full insurance, and access to a network of grantees.
- Funding decisions are made by a panel of Camden residents, putting power directly into the community's hands. The Kit has already supported over 400 community-led projects.

Championing communities

Community Champions work with local tenants and residents to drive social action initiatives that benefit the whole community and improve wellbeing. By working in partnership with these trusted organisations, local people are empowered to take the lead in improving their own neighbourhoods.

Here are some examples of what they've achieved so far in 2025:

Peckwater Estate Clean-Up: The NW5 Project empowered young people to organise and lead a community litter pick during a Neighbourhood Action Day, directly improving their local environment.

Celebrating Heritage and Community: The King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association (KCBNA) celebrated South Asian heritage by organising the Camden Mela community day, a vibrant festival that brought diverse residents together.

Connecting Neighbours in Kilburn: South Hampstead and Kilburn Community Partnership (SHAK) organised a series of 'resident open days'. These events connected tenants and residents to essential services like clothes repairs and fitness sessions, while also helping residents discover local activities and meet their neighbours.

Through these projects, Community Champions are not just delivering initiatives; they're actively building stronger, more connected communities from the ground up.

Deliberative participation

We create spaces for residents to come together and consider different points of view on important issues before reaching a shared decision. This includes hosting Citizens' Assemblies on strategic priorities and developing resident panels to ensure direct involvement in key decisions. We also use online platforms like **Citizen Space** and **Commonplace** to gather your input on a wider range of topics.

The Community Wealth Fund

Camden Community Wealth Fund is a £30 million social impact fund and local people are at the heart of helping us decide how we invest the money. This year, we recruited 15 young people to join our Youth Panel. They've helped us develop our investment strategy for the first £2m of funding - and they're currently helping us decide which businesses receive investment. We've also recruited a 1,000 person Diversity Panel who'll be doing a similar job. Business owners can apply for the Diversity Fund when it opens next year.



Our Participation ambitions

How we got here

Over the past year, we have been working together with tenants and leaseholders to build a new participation approach which better reflects the diversity of voices in Camden and responds to some of the tricky challenges residents face.

From the start, significant efforts have been made to engage with residents who were not already involved in some way with the council. We've reached out to residents in the following ways:

- 883 residents had their say in a resident engagement survey
- A solutions-focused workshop with residents not already involved in Housing and Property engagement activities
- A workshop with our Housing and Property Resident Panel
- A youth focus group with 15 young and SEND tenants at our Somers Town Youth Centre.
- A staff workshop held with 20 colleagues from across housing and property services.
- Conversations with residents at neighbourhood action days and door knocking through the intensive tenant engagement programme
- A review of services in line with the social housing regulations

Camden in Action

Camden in Action: The intensive tenant engagement programme

Kick-started in summer 2023, the Intensive Tenant Participation programme aimed to engage tenants to better understand their lived experience, and gain feedback to address local issues. The programme took a relational approach to working with residents, centring communication and a culture of involvement.

The programme consisted of 35 local Action Days all over the borough, and 300 volunteers from across the council visited 6,600 of our tenants' homes to speak with them directly. We are continuing these activities as part of our new model, bringing services to the front doors of tenants.

The conversations we had highlighted some of our approach's strengths, as well as the challenges we need to work together to overcome.



What residents said is going well:

- The newly established Resident led panels were held as an example of how we can work better in the future. Panel members appreciated the sense of partnership with services and sharing experiences together
- The visibility of services at neighbourhood action days. This allows residents to 'put faces to names' and get enquiries resolved quickly
- The opportunity to give back to others, help neighbours, and improve their community, such as by applying for the **We Make Camden** kit toolkit to drive more social action in their estates and neighbourhoods.

What residents said can be improved:

- The need to engage more to ensure better representation of diverse voices, especially young people
- Engagement beyond formalised or routine groups
- Focusing change on the issues close to their hearts and homes, e.g. repairs and anti-social behaviour
- The sharing of positive news and stories of how tenants and leaseholders are influencing change
- The sharing of more proactive information on the performance of services



What we are committed to

Camden residents are the experts on their homes and their neighbourhoods, and we know that working together is essential to help us solve some of the challenges we face.

To get there, we want to make sure:

1. Every resident has the opportunity to be an active citizen
2. Citizens are proactively brought closer to decision-making, service design and scrutiny
3. Community power and social action are championed across the borough

This model builds on our We Make Camden participation framework and mission-led approach. With this, we hope to move away from the separation between centralised and localised decision-making and form new partnerships with residents based on our shared ambitions.

To achieve this, participation needs to be at the heart of everything we do in Housing and Property. This can lead to greater innovation as we become braver and more confident in continuously learning and improving from what we do.

So, our new participation model isn't just about changing what we do, but how we do it.

We are committed to:

- Starting with conversations about place and people, actively listening to and being led by our citizens.
- Taking a strengths-based approach, recognising the existing assets and expertise within our communities.
- Enabling and supporting others to lead, trusting that residents are often better positioned to drive change.
- Focusing on continuous action, testing, and learning, adapting our methods as we go.
- Working collaboratively across teams and with partners to remove barriers and create a holistic approach to resident engagement

The ways you can get involved

There is no one-size-fits-all for engagement, so we have established varying degrees of influence and commitment depending on what we are trying to achieve together and how residents want to be involved.

You can find more information on our **website**.



Associations and committees

District Management Committees

An independent advisory group of elected representatives from Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) across their district. There is one DMC for each of Camden's five districts. DMCs focus on performance, scrutiny, and delivery of a community improvement fund. Each DMC has their own microsite, where important updates are shared, and actions arising from DMC meetings are tracked. More information and links to individual DMC microsites are at camden.gov.uk/district-management-committees.

Sheltered Housing Forum

A forum for Sheltered Housing residents to discuss and provide feedback on matters specific to their needs and circumstances. Meetings are chaired by the Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs)

A group of residents with elected members who come together to represent the views and interests of those living in their estate.

Camden Association of Street Properties (CASP)

A borough-wide Tenant and Resident Association (TRA) that represents and supports the unique interests and needs of council tenants/residents living in street properties.

Panels and groups

Housing and Property Residents Panel

The Housing and Property Resident Panel meets six times a year for a deep dive into different topics that are important to residents. The panel provides valuable feedback and insights to help the council design and improve the services we offer our residents.

Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel

The panel ensures that our landlord service meets safety regulations for the properties where our tenants and leaseholders live. It scrutinises how we monitor the condition of homes, and compliance with building and fire safety checks.

Housing and Repairs Customer Experience Oversight Panel

This Panel meets to discuss complaints and feedback about housing management and repairs. Managers and contractors take back findings to make improvements and reduce the recurrence of future complaints.

Task and finish working groups

These groups are established around a particular issue or area of improvement for tendering, service reviews, and policy and strategic development. An example is for high-impact capital works projects to facilitate deeper engagement with the project.

Surveys and feedback

Tenant satisfaction survey

Survey seeking tenants' views about the Housing Services received from Camden Council. We use the results from this survey to calculate annual tenant satisfaction measures as required by the Social Housing Regulator.

Independent Surveys

Outbound telephone surveys following the move into a new property and after the completion of a repair. We also have a transaction SMS survey after each repair job has been completed.

Complaints

When things go wrong, we encourage residents to let us know so we might learn from it. We have a **complaint process and an online reporting tool** where residents can make complaints

Online surveys and consultation

We provide the opportunities for residents to provide feedback on changes via short **surveys or borough wide consultations**.

Neighbourhood Action Days

A programme of place-based surgery-style events delivered by services across housing and property. They provide an opportunity for residents to get information from services and raise any feedback or challenges.

Training and Conference Attendance

We have a rolling programme of training for residents to help boost skills and share learning. We also offer places at relevant conferences so residents can learn from other organisations and use this information to hold us to account

Tenancy visits

Neighbourhood Housing Officers complete a rolling three-year programme of tenancy visits to all households. These visits help us better understand our tenants' needs and ensure we can provide additional support where necessary.



Self-management

Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)

A resident-controlled organisation that provides a range of management and maintenance services on behalf of the London Borough of Camden. All TMOs in Camden meet twice yearly.

Local Management Agreements (LMA)

LMAs enable council tenants to take over the running of a local housing service from the Council. Russell Chambers is a block where tenants have managed caretaking services under an LMA since July 2014.

Camden-wide

Sheltered Housing Forum

Tenants from our 5 sheltered housing schemes come together to provide services feedback and recommendations.

Panels

Our three panels look at complaints, building safety, and deep-dive into other important topics for homes and communities.

Online

Camden's get involved pages, We Make Camden, DMC and Panel microsites, and CitizenSpace.

District Management Committees

We work with 5 DMCs across the borough, each have access to funds for community projects or improvements in their area.

Community-based

Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA)

We support 110 associations across local communities.

Major works working groups

Local forums to engage residents where works are planned or taking place.

Neighbourhood Action Days

Place-based surgery-style events for residents to get information and feedback.

Engagement Forums and Groups

Tenant Management Organisations

Residents organisations provide management and maintenance services on behalf the Council.

Making sure everyone has the chance to be heard

We're committed to ensuring all residents can participate in decision-making and community action. If a resident faces barriers to involvement, we'll make every effort to support them. This is in line with our person-centred framework detailed in our **Vulnerability Policy**.

We aim to meet residents where they are, go to communities to hear from them, and act upon any feedback.

We make reasonable adjustments. Where residents are involved, we consider sensory needs, access, scheduling and childcare needs, and advocates so they can actively engage.

We connect with community partners. We work closely with voluntary and community partners who already have deep-rooted connections within local communities.

We signpost onwards for support. Where we are not the experts, we signpost residents to other services that can support and help them connect.

We are always looking to learn and improve. We monitor involvement across groups and the diversity of attendance. This includes access to and use of grants and funds.

We invest time and resources. We have a dedicated team for resident engagement and encourage others across the organisation to involve residents at every opportunity.

We build safe spaces. All activities have co-produced guidelines or constitutions for respectful and fair involvement. We use content warnings, have check-ins, and debrief where needed.

Making the changes we want to see

With each of our three ambitions, we have detailed some clear actions we aim to deliver to make the change we want to see.

1. Every resident has the opportunity to be an active citizen

We will:

- Build and grow our networks of active citizens to ensure all residents have a voice and agency to act
- Work with District Management committees to increase diversity in community representation, and improve grant delivery and accessibility
- Scale up our Community Champions programme to reach more neighbourhoods
- Develop new ways to involve young people and ensure their voices influence housing decisions
- Make the most out of the website and digital tools to encourage resident engagement

2. Citizens are proactively brought closer to decision-making, service design and scrutiny

We will:

- Establish a new virtual We Make Camden Tenants and Leaseholders group, recruited through a random selection method
- Continue and develop existing standing panels, action days, and estate inspections, ensuring residents have a direct role in shaping service delivery
- Ensure residents are actively involved in shaping all Housing and Property Policies.



3. Community power and social action are championed across the borough

We will:

- Continue to support and enable residents to start and grow social action projects that are important to them
- Work with targeted estates to help residents develop their own priorities for action
- Use the 'We Make Camden Kit' and other tools to equip resident-led projects
- Help residents to make better use of community spaces and halls

Camden in Action: Participatory budgeting, Hilgrove estate

Through partnering with local young people's charity The Winch, the Council funded the delivery of a participatory budgeting project which saw residents at the Hilgrove Estate take the lead in how their estate's budget would be spent. Residents and council officers worked on this together, with residents shaping the budgeting process. We've taken what we've learnt from the project to inform how we develop further participatory funding work specific to estates and investment plans, to support the long-term priorities of the Estates Mission.

Camden in Action

Camden in Action: Rethinking Compensation, Learning from Resident Complaints

Camden in Action

In 2025, Camden Council partnered closely with its resident-led Housing Customer Experience Oversight Panel to fundamentally reshape its Remedies and Compensation Policy. Recognising that existing thresholds and entitlements were outdated, the Council together reviewed complaint data and undertook reiterative drafting with the Panel to create a mutually solution.

This solution was implemented by Housing and Property services, and progress was regularly reviewed by the Social Housing Regulatory Board, who oversaw the changes through to formal sign off by the Cabinet Member for Better Homes in August 2025.

By engaging residents in policy review, understanding the impact of complaints, and taking targeted action, Camden has established a clearer and more equitable approach to compensation.

You can find more information about the impact of the Oversight Panel on **their microsite**.



The journey of thought

Resident engagement governance cycle



How we will measure success

We will **assess the success** of the model by:

- Listening to residents' feedback at engagement forums, and sharing our lessons and improvements back
- Ensuring resident participation is reflective of the diversity of our neighbourhoods and communities
- Sharing stories of how residents have shaped housing decision-making locally and strategically
- Regularly sharing our performance with scrutiny committees, panels, and the public
- Monitoring and learning from any complaints.

We continuously **share learning** around this model with residents through:

- Publishing our performance periodically on our **website**
- Publishing stories of resident impact and change on **Citizenspace** and sharing via the quarterly Housing News delivered to all our homes
- Sharing stories and progress through our ward-level updates to Councillors and District Management Committees
- Publishing performance and updates on the **District Management Committee Microsites**
- Producing quarterly engagement reports for the scrutiny of our District Management Committees
- Sharing updates and progress with our communities through our **We Are Camden** site and our **We Make Camden** site
- Sharing and reviewing complaints and feedback data with the Customer Experience Oversight Panel

