

Camden Community Centres' Consortium (C4)

Response to Healthwatch Camden and Camden Disability Action general report

Of the 28 Community Centres that were visited to gather information for this report 12 are members of C4 and are also Camden Council Strategic Partners.

C4 welcomes this initiative and recognises that Community Centres in Camden have a wide range of focus, activities and services, and that there isn't a 'one size fits all' fix for accessibility and that each Centre has its own unique set of challenges and opportunities for users.

We note that the main driver for Healthwatch Camden and Camden Disability Actions' report was 'because Camden Council's strategy for disabled and older people says it will "*use community resources first*" when developing solutions to peoples' support needs. This includes "*tackling barriers to accessing community facilities*". C4 would welcome close involvement in the formation and delivery of this strategy as C4 members are experts in this field.

C4 broadly agrees with the recommendations in this report. Some are 'quick wins' and easily - and cheaply - put in place. Others have longer term implications and higher costs attached. C4 recognises that building improvements with costs attached cannot be put in place by using the existing strategic partner or equality funding. Further funding will be essential to cover any improvements deemed necessary and recognition of this incorporated into any policy/strategy which is agreed. C4 would welcome the opportunity of working with LB Camden to secure funding from trusts (capacity building) and secure CSR funding/capital work from developers contracted by Camden if building improvements are needed.

C4 considers the following recommendation to be of prime strategic importance

For Camden Council - we recommend that the council:

In all its work related to community centres:

- Has a clear policy on the role and value of community centres in the borough and on the purpose of its support for community centres

Since 2012 the traditional funding and delivery of services in community centres has changed. We welcome the support that LB Camden is giving Centres up to 2020. With the restructure of council support, the reduction (and in some cases removal) of local government funding, in particular rent relief, and the introduction of near commercial rent in some community buildings, there is a need to have a clear policy on the role and value of community centres in the borough. A strategy that is agreed by the council and community organisations and then communicated to all of the different council departments and stakeholders is required so that clear, realistic expectations can be applied across the board.

C4 is keen to work towards a shared vision and delivery of community activities and resources that is fit for purpose. A policy that is clear on the role and value of community centres in Camden, that can be communicated to all stakeholders, that recognises that as political, economical and needs change, responses, solutions and assumptions have to be updated to enable us to respond effectively to those who live, work and play in Camden.

Nicole Furre - Chair of Camden Community Centres' Consortium C4