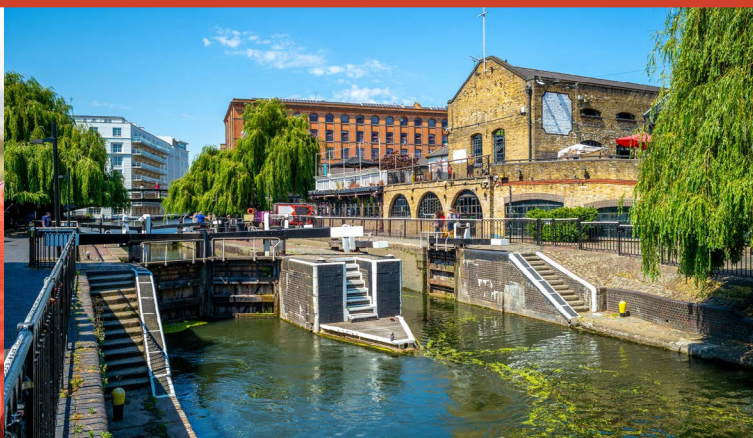




THE CAMDEN COMPANION

Your essential guide to healthy living in Camden



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This booklet provides a directory of support and services you may wish to consider in Camden to help you stay well, get active and connect with your local community.

Looking after our health is important and making sure we make the most of the many opportunities available to us in Camden can help us live healthy, active and independent lives for as long as possible in the borough that we all love.

How to use this booklet

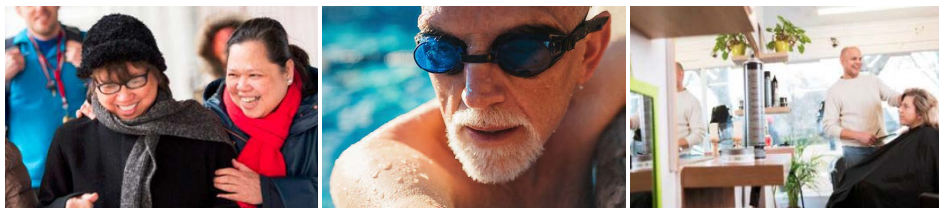
You will find there is quite a lot of information in this booklet – some of it will suit your needs and goals, and some of it might be more useful at a different time. If you are unsure, it might be a good idea to read through it with a family member, friend, social care or healthcare professional to work out the bits that are going to be most helpful for you.

Throughout this booklet there are some email addresses and links to useful websites. If you do not have a device with online access at home, you can use the IT equipment in Camden Libraries for free. If you would like help to develop your computer skills see page 56 of this booklet for information about adult courses in Camden.

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Staying well



Your GP

You have the right to choose a GP practice that best suits your needs. Your GP surgery will help you stay well and ensure any potential health problems are found early.



If you are not already registered, you can find your nearest GP surgery by visiting [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or by calling **0300 311 22 33**.

Reviewing your medication

If you would like to talk with someone about your prescription and medicine that you regularly take, you have the right to have regular discussions about whether your prescription is still right for your condition. This is also a chance for you to raise any concerns you may have about your medicines and ask any questions.



If you would like to find out more, speak to your GP or your pharmacist.

You can get faster and better treatments by choosing the right health services



Contact your GP. Your surgery provides same-day treatments and advice for many urgent health problems.



Visit a pharmacy. They offer expert medical advice and treat most minor injuries and illnesses. Many are open late and can be found close to your home.



Call NHS 111. You will receive immediate health advice from a highly trained advisor. It is open 24 hours a day and is free to call.



Visit Accident and Emergency at hospital. This is only for serious and life threatening emergencies.



Find out more about Camden health services at camden.gov.uk/health

Staying well all year

Flu

For some people, flu can lead to complications. We recommend having a flu jab in the autumn.

Even if you've had a flu jab in previous years, you'll need another one this year. You can get a flu jab from your GP or a local pharmacy.

The flu jab is free at your pharmacy or GP surgery if you are aged 65 and over, have certain medical conditions, you are a carer, or you are pregnant.

Hand hygiene

Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap regularly and every time you cough or sneeze on them.

Staying warm

You can get free advice on how to make your home warmer and reduce your fuel bills. The Green Camden helpline can check eligibility for any grants, services or discounts on your utility bills, and give advice on what to do if you are in fuel debt.

To find out more, call the Green Camden helpline on **0800 801 738** or email greencamden@camden.gov.uk

Staying cool

It's also important to stay cool in hot weather. Wear light, loose fitting clothing. Leave your windows shut when the day is at its hottest, as this may help to keep your home cool. If possible, only let the air in early in the day, or late in the day. Avoid the heat of the sun between 11am and 3pm, and drink plenty of cold fluids like water and fruit juice.

Staying steady

As we get older, we all have an increased risk of falling. However, there are many simple things we can do to reduce our risk.

Top tips to prevent slips, trips and falls:

- Ensure your home is safe by removing tripping hazards
- Keep active and do some exercise every day
- Eat well to remain healthy and keep bones strong
- Have your eyesight reviewed regularly
- Have your medicines and tablets checked every twelve months
- Wear well-fitting shoes and slippers.



You can speak to your GP about whether Staying Steady, the local falls prevention service, is right for you. If you are at particular risk of falling you may want to consider whether assistive technology might be right for you – find out more at camden.gov.uk/careline or see page 11.

Dental

Healthy teeth and mouths add to quality of life and wellbeing, so it's important to make regular visits to your dentist.



You can search for your local NHS dentist online at nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist For out-of-hours emergency dental treatment call NHS 111.

Sexual health



Terrence Higgins Trust is a national charity promoting good sexual health and they provide information and advice for people living with HIV. You can contact an advisor by calling **0808 802 1221** or visit tth.org.uk



For people with a learning disability and who live in Camden or Islington, The Bridge Service at CNWL NHS can help with accessing sexual health services.

Email: cnwl.bridgeservice@nhs.net

Phone: **07738 261 323**

Website: sexualhealth.cnwl.nhs.uk/useful-leaflets-and-links/the-bridge-service-for-people-with-learning-disabilities

For further details about other services offered, visit sexualhealth.cnwl.nhs.uk



Central and North West London (CNWL)

NHS Sexual Health Services provides free and confidential sexual health services to everyone in London. All appointments in CNWL NHS Sexual Health Services are booked online: sexualhealth.cnwl.nhs.uk If you need an interpreter or have a disability that requires assistance, call the Helpline **020 3317 5252** (Monday to Friday, 1pm to 2pm).



akt sexual health support in an inclusive LGBTQ+ environment

akt provides a list of sexual health clinics specialising in supporting those in the LGBTQ+ community akt.org.uk/resources/inclusive-lgbtq-sexual-health-services

Vision

Taking care of your eyes through regular visits to an optician is important. As well as helping with any sight problems, an eye test may detect health problems and prevent falls.



To find your local optician, visit nhs.uk For urgent eye treatment, there are 24-hour walk-in clinics at the **Western Eye Hospital (020 3312 6666)**

and Moorfields Eye Hospital (**020 7253 3411**).

Or contact the helpline **020 7566 2345**, that is open 8.30am to 9pm Mon to Fri, and 8.30am to 5pm on Sat, if you are worried about eye health.

Hearing

If you are D/deaf or hard of hearing, there is help and support available. Some high street opticians may be able to offer free hearing tests.



A good place to start for help with your hearing is with your GP.

You can get advice and support from Royal National Institute for Deaf People by calling **0808 808 0123** or by visiting their website rnid.org.uk to use their online chat or arrange a support call in British Sign Language.

Similarly, the Royal Association for Deaf People offer help and advice on **0300 688 2525** or text on **07467 914 175** or via email at advice@royaldeaf.org.uk

Support for Disabled residents

If you are a Disabled resident, support and advice is available from Camden Disability Action (CDA). CDA supports residents with form-filling (for example to help with travel), hosting social groups, and providing benefits advice.



CDA run an Information and Advice line on **020 3833 1125** from 10am to 4pm. Alternatively, send a text message to **07543 572 793** or use SignVideo on their website, camdendisabilityaction.org.uk/get-help

Staying independent at home

We want everyone to live healthy, active and independent lives for as long as possible. Also, we want to work with people to enable them to have control of their lives. Assistive technology is one of the ways that can help to achieve this.

What is assistive technology?

In Camden, assistive technology is provided by **Careline** who are an experienced and professional team. Assistive technology describes a wide range of equipment or devices that can help people to live independently by supporting or assisting them in daily living tasks. The equipment or device is simple to use and many of them are operated at the press of a button. Some equipment is also connected to a call centre which means the person is never far from help when it's needed.

If the equipment triggers an emergency response, Careline will phone you straight away and check if you need help. The team are able to come to your home and help you, or contact a family member nearby to help you. Careline can provide advice and support on the equipment and they are also available by phone 24 hours, 7 days a week to provide reassurance if needed.

On the next page are some examples of assistive technology and how they can support people to live independently in their own homes and when they are out and about.

- **Bogus caller button:** can support people to be safe in their own home by sending an alert once the panic button is triggered. Careline staff picks up the alert and they can respond as necessary.
- **Falls detector:** can support a person who is at risk of falling by detecting a potential fall and sending an alert to Careline staff who can contact the person and check they are okay.
- **Epilepsy sensor:** can detect the first signs of a seizure. An alert is triggered and Careline staff can respond to it or the alert can be sent to the person's carer.
- **GPS tracker:** supports people who might be at risk of getting lost, by allowing a carer or family member to trace the person's location.

How can I find out more about it?

Assistive technology is for anyone who needs it. If the person is known to Camden's Adult Social Care team, we will visit their home and have a conversation about what is important for them. If we think assistive technology may be helpful we will refer them to Careline. Careline will then find the best solution to suit the person's needs.

If you are not known to Adult Social Care, you can contact Careline directly. Contact details for Careline are on the next page.



Careline will be happy to discuss your needs and equipment that might suit you. They can also give you details about the two levels of service, and their costs (which are means-tested). Call **020 7974 1491** or visit camden.gov.uk/careline for more information.

Care and support

You might feel that you need support with daily activities such as washing, dressing, preparing meals or assistance with mobility.



To contact Adult Social Care and request a discussion about your care and support needs, complete the Camden Adult Social Care Referral Form which can be found in camdencarechoices.camden.gov.uk/asc.

If you are having difficulties completing the referral form, require urgent support, or are concerned about the safety of a person, please phone Contact Camden on **020 7974 4444** and when prompted, say 'Adult Social Care'.

D/deaf residents can also contact Adult Social Care using SignVideo and connect to a British Sign Language translator via video call. Further information can be found at camden.gov.uk/accessibility



If you need support for an adult with a learning disability, contact **Camden Learning Disability Service (CLDS)**:

Phone: **020 7974 3737**

Online form: camden.gov.uk/how-to-get-help

Email: CLDS@camden.gov.uk

Website: camden.gov.uk/clds

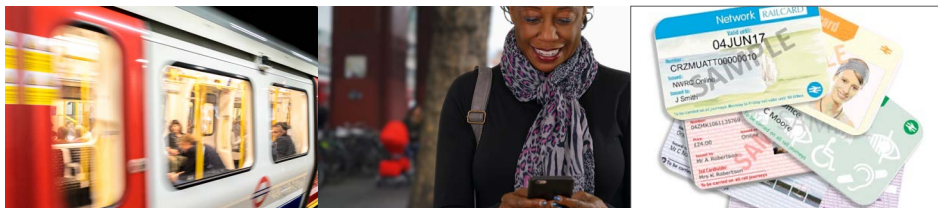
CLDS is a health and social care team run by Camden Council and the NHS. More information about the support that CLDS provides can be found at cldsinfo.net

If you are recovering from an illness or other health condition, and are unable to leave your home, Camden Integrated Community Healthcare (CICH) may be able to provide you with home-based nursing and rehabilitation to help you increase your independence and improve your mobility.



Contact CICH on **020 3317 3400** or ask your GP for a referral. You can find more information about CICH at cnwl.nhs.uk/services/community-services/camden-integrated-primary-care-service

Getting out and about



Travelling around our local area can help us connect with others and build support networks in our community.

You may be nervous about travelling independently or worried about the cost, but don't worry. There are lots of low-cost travel options and ways to build your confidence.

Free and low cost travel

Here are some of the free or low cost travel options that may be available to you in London and across England.

London travel passes

- The Older Person's Freedom Pass and Disabled Person's Freedom Pass offer free travel across London and free bus journeys across England, to anyone who is Disabled or of retirement age at: londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/freedom-pass
- The 60+ London Oyster photocard offers people over 60 free travel on London buses, Underground and some National Rail services. Search '60 plus' at tfl.gov.uk or call **Transport for London (TfL)** on **0343 222 1234**.



For help with the Freedom pass or support for Blue Badge and Green Badge holders, you can contact Camden's accessible travel solutions team by calling **0207 974 5919** or by email at cats@camden.gov.uk

- If you are younger than 60 and claiming certain benefits, you may be able to get 50% off London bus and trams with the Bus & Tram Discount photocard.

Find out more at

tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel or

call **0343 222 1234**.

- The Senior Railcard is for anyone over 60 and offers 1/3 off train fares throughout Great Britain.
- If you have a disability that makes it difficult to travel, you may be eligible for a Disabled Person's Railcard, which gives **a** 1/3 off your train fare as well as the fare of the person you travel with.



Apply for a Senior Railcard or a Disabled Person's Railcard at railcard.co.uk or call **0345 3000 250**.

You can also speak to a member of staff at any National Rail station.

Coach travel

- The Senior Coachcard offers 1/3 off National Express coach fares all year round for anyone over 60.
- The Disabled Coachcard offers 1/3 of all National Express coach fares to anyone who is registered as Disabled.



Apply for a Senior Coachcard or a Disabled Coachcard at

nationalexpress.com/en/offers/coachcards

Door-to-door travel

If you are not able to use public transport you may be eligible for one of the following options:

- Taxicard is a scheme that provides subsidised taxi and mini-cab travel for London residents who cannot use public transport, for example, if they have a physical disability or sight loss.
- ScootAbility loans scooters and power chairs to people who need support with their mobility. You can find out more at: camden.gov.uk/scootability



For Taxicard and ScootAbility support you can contact Camden's accessible travel solutions team by calling **0207 974 5919** or by email at cats@camden.gov.uk

- Dial-a-Ride offers free door-to-door minibus service for those with permanent or long-term disabilities.

To find out more search for 'dial-a-ride' at tfl.gov.uk call **0343 222 7777** (please note that charges may apply) or email dar@tfl.gov.uk

Planning your journey

You can find lots of tips for planning a journey on the Transport for London (TfL) website, including:

London travel passes

- wheelchair access and step-free journeys
- ‘please offer me a seat’ badges
- a ‘travel support card’ to show TfL staff you have specific requirements
- getting help from staff, including a staff member to accompany you to the train and help you on board
- advice and support for people with sight and hearing loss
- station closures and planned work to lifts and escalators.

To find out more or to book assistance on the London Underground and TfL rail, call **0343 222 1234**.



Travel mentoring

Transport for London (TfL) offers a free **travel mentoring** service to help you start using public transport. They can advise on planning a journey using an accessible route and provide a mentor to go out with you to practise a journey a few times to help you gain confidence and become an independent traveller. Call TfL on **020 3054 4361** or email travelmentor@tfl.gov.uk to find out more.

Using your computer, mobile or tablet

There are lots of websites that can help you plan your travel routes in advance, and then you can print off or write down the directions for yourself.

- citymapper.com: type in your destination and see options for getting there on public transport, which bus or train to take, and how much it will cost. If you download the 'app' to your mobile, you can also follow the route as you go, and it will send you an alert when your stop or station is coming up.
- google.com/maps: shows you different possible routes to get to your destination, a choice of travel options and how long it will take. You can also download the Google Maps app on your mobile to follow your route as you go.
- London Live Bus Countdown at bustimes.londonbusapp.com gives you live bus times and nearest bus stops. You can use the 'app' to check the times on the go.
- tfl.gov.uk/maps/tfl-go: Transport for London have created the TFL Go app, to help you plan your journey on bus, trams and tube trains.

All of these websites are free to download onto to your mobile device as apps (applications) from the App Store (for iPhones or iPads) or the Google Play Store (for Android phones and tablets). Just search for the name of the app to download.

Finding a toilet

For many of us it's important to know we will have access to a toilet along our route and there are several ways to help you plan this into your journey.

The **Great British Public Toilet Map** has a map of all public toilets in the UK and shows the nearest public toilets to you: toiletmap.org.uk

Many of the toilets marked on the map are shops and buildings in Camden that have joined the **community toilet scheme** – they have agreed for their toilets to be accessible to everyone during normal opening hours. Businesses that are part of the scheme will display a sticker on their door.





Some people cannot use standard accessible toilets. This includes people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, as well as older people. Changing places toilets have essential equipment and more space – you can find a list of them at changing-places.org/find



Long-term conditions



Long-term conditions are illnesses that are controllable, but not curable. There are many ways to manage a long-term condition. These include medicines, therapies, and making decisions to have a healthier lifestyle. It's also important to make regular visits to your GP so they can review your condition.

The sooner you begin to understand and manage your condition, the better this will be for your health and your sense of wellbeing. This might start with getting a formal diagnosis through your GP.

Diabetes

Diabetes doesn't have to stop you living the life you want to live. You will, however, need to pay close attention to certain aspects of your life:

- **Eat well** – follow a balanced diet, low in fat, sugar and salt and high in fruit and vegetables. There is lots of advice on eating well at [nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well)
- **Stay active** – get at least half an hour of exercise that's right for you, every day. Visit [camden.gov.uk/keep-active-healthy](https://www.camden.gov.uk/keep-active-healthy) to find out more.

- **Go smoke free** – see page 35 of this booklet for information about how to stop smoking.
- **Maintain good mental health** – The Mental Health Camden website, mentalhealthcamden.co.uk provides information about local mental health and wellbeing support services in Camden.
- **Attend your appointments** – this is important so medical staff can check your diabetes is being managed.

The signs of Type 2 diabetes may not be obvious, or there may be no signs at all, so it is important to know your risk.

Your risk increases:

- with age
- if you have a first-degree relative with Type 2 diabetes (parent, sibling or child)
- for certain ethnicities, including South Asian descent and African-Caribbean or Black African descent
- if you have ever had high blood pressure
- if you are overweight, especially around the middle.



If you have been told by your GP that you are at high risk for developing Type 2 diabetes you may be eligible for the Diabetes Prevention Programme.

Ask your GP or nurse to refer you to the **Healthier You** programme in Camden. For more information, visit preventing-diabetes.co.uk

Shortness of breath and coughs

If you are struggling to breathe well, tell your GP as it might be a sign of a long-term illness.

Tell your GP immediately if you have breathing difficulties, chest pain or you cough up blood.

Call 999 immediately if you have sudden severe shortness of breath, as there may be a problem with your lungs or heart.

Camden Musculoskeletal (MSK) team

A musculoskeletal (MSK) problem may relate to a variety of symptoms or conditions arising from muscles, bones, joints, nerves, tendons or ligaments. Many MSK conditions can be treated by you at home.



As a first step to managing your MSK condition at home, visit camdenmsk.co.uk. The website also provides information about where to get support if you need it. You can also self-refer into community physiotherapy services by calling **020 7871 0545** to make an appointment.

If you'd like to speak to your GP first, just make an appointment with your doctor and they can refer you to **Camden MSK**. You will be given a named care co-ordinator who you will be able to contact with any questions about your care.



Heart health

To help reduce your risk of heart attacks and stroke:

- **go smoke free** - see page 35 of this booklet for information about help to stop smoking.
- **Cut back on alcohol** – see page 36 of this booklet for information about alcohol consumption.

Heart attack

The signs of a heart attack are chest pain, weakness and shortness of breath, as well as pain in other parts of your body such as your arms, jaw, neck, back and abdomen. These symptoms may be accompanied by coughing or sweating. You may also feel sick, lightheaded, dizzy or anxious.



A heart attack is a medical emergency.

Call 999 immediately if you suspect a heart attack.

Stroke

Stroke requires immediate medical attention.

Watch out for any of these signs in yourself or others and act **F.A.S.T**

- **Face** – has their face fallen on one side?
Can they smile?
- **Arms** – can they raise both arms and keep them there?
- **Speech** – is their speech slurred?
- **Time** – time to call 999 if you see any one of these signs.



A stroke is a medical emergency. Call **999** immediately if you suspect a stroke.

A stroke can be life changing. If you have had a stroke, you may need support from a range of people, including other stroke survivors.

Contact the Stroke Association by phoning **0303 3033 100** or visit their website stroke.org.uk

Cancer screening

Early detection of cancer is important. Screening detects early signs of cancer in people without symptoms. If you find any unusual lumps on your body or blood in your stools over a period of time, you should visit your doctor.

Bowel cancer

Bowel cancer symptoms include noticing blood in faeces, bleeding from the anus, fatigue and/or lumps in your abdomen.



Camden residents aged 55+ may contact their GP to receive free bowel cancer screening. To find out more about NHS bowel cancer screening, visit nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer-screening

Breast cancer

Women receive their first screening invitation before they turn 53 and they will receive invitations every three years until they are 70 years old. After 70, free breast screening every three years is available upon request.



You can contact **London Breast Screening Service** on **020 3758 2024** for queries about screening appointments. For more information, visit london-breastscreening.org.uk

Cervical cancer

Women are invited by their GP surgery for a cervical cancer screening (smear test), and the regularity of these will depend on your age. Women under 25 will be invited up to 6 months before they turn 25. Women aged between 25 - 49 will be invited for a screening every 3 years. Women aged between 50 - 64 will be invited every 5 years. Women aged 65 and over will be invited if one of their last 3 tests was abnormal.

Regardless of your age, see your GP if you're worried about unusual vaginal discharge or bleeding - between periods, during or after sex, or after you have been through the menopause. Do not wait for your next cervical screening appointment.



Dementia

Many of us forget things every day and mild forgetfulness is common in normal ageing. It's not usually a cause for concern. However, if you think your memory is getting worse or you find it hard to carry out everyday activities, talk to your GP.

If you have been diagnosed with dementia, there are many local services and support groups that can help you to continue to live well. This can include general information, advice and support as well as helping you and your family to access local services.



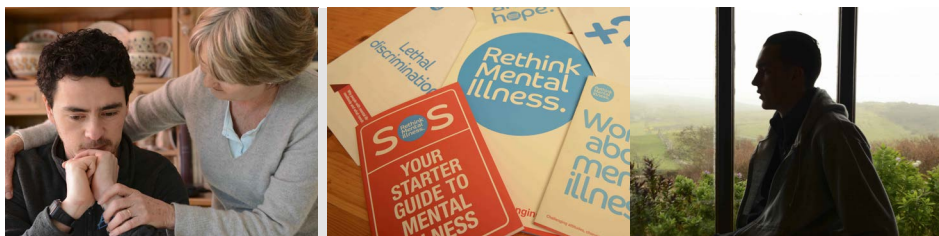
To find out about the dementia support and services available in Camden, visit camden.gov.uk/dementia-and-memory



If you are caring for someone with dementia, contact **Camden Carers** on **020 7428 8950** to find out how you can be supported. Also, you can visit camdenscs.org.uk for more information.



Mental wellbeing



Keep your mind healthy

Keeping your mind healthy is important. Here are some steps you can take to improve your wellbeing:

- **Connect** – feeling close to and valued by other people helps us to feel good. Talk to the people around you such as friends, family or neighbours, or maybe visit a community centre near you, they can be great places to meet new people (also have a look at ‘Getting involved in Camden’ on Page 43).
- **Be active** – regular exercise makes you feel good and improves your mood. Go out for a walk, alone or with a friend, use the stairs not the lift, go for a swim or to an exercise class – any exercise is good for you! Look at ‘Getting active and healthy’ on Page 37.
- **Take notice** – taking an interest in what is happening around you can improve the way you feel about life and put things in perspective. Make some time to enjoy the here and now: plant a seed and watch it grow, or try visiting friends or new places.

- **Green social prescribing** - Voluntary Action Camden have an online directory of activities taking place in Camden's green spaces. These include volunteering opportunities, wellbeing walks and creative sessions.



For more information, you can visit

directory.vac.org.uk/gsp, email communitylinks@vac.org.uk or phone **0800 193 6067**.

- **Keep learning** – learning throughout life can give you a real sense of achievement and boost your confidence: it might also be social and keep you active. Sign up for an adult learning class or join a book club and make new friends. Doing puzzles and crosswords are also a great way of keeping your mind active and they may also improve your memory and mood. Visit page 56 for more information about adult learning classes and courses.
- **Give to others** – people who help others are more likely to describe themselves as happy. Whether it's helping someone or volunteering, giving to others can improve your wellbeing. It can also help you make new friends. Have a look at the 'Getting involved in Camden' section for more ideas.

Everyone feels a bit anxious or low every now and then, but sometimes it can affect your general wellbeing and everyday life. Mental health problems are common, but they're also usually treatable.



More information can be found at the Camden Mental Health website
mentalhealthcamden.co.uk



Talk to your GP or visit **iCope** (Camden and Islington NHS Psychological Therapies Service) dedicated mental health website at
icope.nhs.uk You can also call **iCope** on **020 3317 6670**.

Talking can really help and there are services on your doorstep, so do not be afraid to ask for advice. The **Likewise hub** (previously known as Camden Hub) provides free prevention services and mental health support for people from all backgrounds, and circumstances.



Visit likewise.org.uk or call **020 7278 4437** to find out more about free mental health support and prevention services.

Mind in Camden provides a range of services for residents with mental health needs including people who hear voices and are struggling to cope. Support is also available for families and young people. Their Healthy Minds project supports adults who are feeling isolated and helps them to reconnect with their interests or community.



Visit mindincamden.org.uk or call them on **020 7911 0822**.



Mind also run **Outcome**, an LGBT+ mental health support service for people in London. It provides a therapeutic space and opportunities to socialise. The service runs every Tuesday from 11am to 4pm at The Mind Spa, 35 Ashley Road, London N19 3AG. Call **020 7272 5038** (select option 2 for London) for more information.

Support is also available from the Crisis Sanctuary, a safe place for people in mental health crisis and distress to go for support. Sanctuary provide short-term support for people and work with them to create support plans.



You can contact the Crisis Sanctuary about their walk-in service by phoning **07825 165464** or emailing Camden.CrisisSanctuary@hestia.org

Advocacy

Advocacy is having someone by your side, and on your side, when you want to be more involved in decisions about your care, treatment and living arrangements. An advocate can help you to feel more in control and speak up for you if you are not able to. They can also support you if you would like to complain about a service.



In Camden and Islington the Integrated Advocacy Service (CIAS) is delivered by Rethink Advocacy. CIAS can be contacted by phoning **0300 7900 559**, emailing advocacyreferralhub@rethink.org or by visiting www.rethinkadvocacy.org.uk

Carers



If you look after or help someone regularly, perhaps a parent, partner, child, sibling or neighbour, then you're likely to be an unpaid carer.

As a carer you play a really important role but it's equally important that you look after yourself. There is a range of support opportunities available for you including advice, emotional support, supportive groups and activities, breaks from caring, as well as volunteering opportunities. Carers also have a right to an assessment under the Care Act 2014, which in Camden is called a Carers Conversation.



If you think you might be a carer or would like more advice and support, Camden Carers can help. Visit camdencs.org.uk or call **020 7428 8950**.

Mobilise Camden offer a digital carers service which includes an online forum to connect with other carers, calls from their Carers Support Team, and access to free coaching sessions. To find out more visit mobiliseonline.co.uk/camden

Smoking and alcohol



Smoking and passive smoke

Even after many years of smoking, you can still improve your health and wellbeing by stopping.

Every cigarette causes damage to your body, and your passive smoke also harms the health of those around you.

Stopping smoking isn't easy, but greatly improves health and finances. You can expect a range of benefits, such as breathing more easily and feeling better. You are less likely to have cancer, a stroke, heart or lung problems. Any existing problems with your heart or lungs are less likely to become more serious.

There is no one way to stop smoking, so there is a range of options to help you stop. This includes free face-to-face or telephone advice and support and stop smoking medicines.



If you smoke and would like to stop, Camden's Breathe Stop Smoking Service can help. Visit breathestopsmoking.org, call **020 3633 2609**.

Alcohol

Alcohol not only impacts you in the short-term, but can also have an impact on your long-term health. Drinking increases your risk of stroke, high blood pressure, some cancers, heart attacks and liver disease. Older people are particularly at risk from the health effects of alcohol compared to younger people.

For men and women, it is safest to drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week. If you drink, it is better to spread your drinking evenly over the week rather than drinking heavily on one or two occasions. You should also be aware of the potential side effects if you are taking medications. Speak to your doctor if you are unsure.

14 units of alcohol per week

= 6 pints of beer (4%) or 7 glasses of wine - 175ml (11.5%)



If you're unsure whether you are drinking too much, you can take a free, confidential online test at drinkcoach.org.uk If you think you may be drinking too much and would like some support, speak with your GP or get in touch with Change Grow Live. Change Grow Live supports people with challenges relating to drugs or alcohol. They can be contacted at changegrowlive.org

Getting active and healthy



Discover your local area

Walking is healthy, free and enjoyable. We have over 69 parks and open spaces to explore. These include fantastic places like Waterlow Park, Regents Park and Hampstead Heath. Some of these have route maps you can follow.

Walking to places rather than getting the bus is also a good way to stay active. You can build walking into your life by getting off the bus or tube a stop early and finishing your journey on foot. If you'd prefer to walk in a group and meet other people, there are free guided walks you can join. You can find more information on this on the next page.



For information on how to get active in your area visit camden.gov.uk/sport-physical-activity.

This includes information and activities for older people, Disabled people and those living with long-term health conditions.



For more information on parks, walking and getting active, visit camden.gov.uk/en/wellbeing-walks-in-camden

If you're over 60, you can swim free of charge on weekdays from 6.30am to midday at the Oasis Sports Centre, Kentish Town Sports Centre, Pancras Square Leisure Centre and Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre. Bring your centre membership card to get free admission. Concessionary pay and play memberships are also available for other leisure centre services.

Find out more about swimming in Camden at better.org.uk/get-swimming

Visit camden.gov.uk/activities-for-older-people

You could also volunteer with The Conservation Volunteers who run **Camden Green Gym**. This involves outdoor activities like planting trees and establishing wildlife ponds. You'll warm up and warm down safely and there are activities to suit all abilities.



To find a Green Gym near you, visit tcv.org.uk/london/green-gym-london/camden-green-gym or call **07768 421 881**.

Eating well



A healthy, balanced diet is important for good health, an active life and protection against illness. Eating well means enjoying your food, eating the right amount for your energy needs and having variety in your diet. It doesn't have to be boring or expensive.

Food variety

Aim to eat foods of various colours and include fruit and vegetables with every meal. If you can, keep salt, saturated fat and sugar in your diet low. There is lots of advice on eating well at [nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well)

Know what's in your food

Looking at the traffic light food labels on the front of pre-packaged foods can help you make healthier choices. The traffic light colours, red, amber and green, show the levels of sugar, fat and salt in food. The more green lights, the healthier the choice.



The NHS Choices website, [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) explains how food labelling works.

Eating well on a budget

Planning your meals can help you to eat healthily while maintaining your budget. Sticking to a shopping list means that you only buy the food you need. Supermarkets often have free healthy recipe cards which can give you some inspiration. It's important for your health to eat lots of fruit and veg as well as starchy foods like rice and pasta, many of which store well. Your local supermarket may have promotional deals on fruit and veg, particularly those that are in season. Your local market may also be a good place to shop for cheaper offers on healthy food.



For more tips, visit [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) and type 'budget eating' into the search box. As an alternative to cooking, you may want to join one of Camden's lunch clubs.

To find a lunch club, please visit findfood.camden.gov.uk/directory and click on the Meals icon for a list of community lunch clubs.

The **Trussell Trust** offer help to those who need emergency food parcels. A referral from your GP, health visitor, social worker or Citizens Advice staff member is required.



Find Food is a website that connects people in Camden to food, and the network is made up of food banks, community organisations and charities. If you are an older person or are having difficulties leaving your home, they may also be able to organise a food parcel to be delivered to you. To find out where your local Find Food organisation is, you can visit findfood.camden.gov.uk

If you need food urgently, please call Contact Camden on **020 7974 4444**.

Staying hydrated

Water is vital for our bodies to work: drink about six to eight cups of liquid a day, more in hot weather. Varying your drinks between water, tea, coffee, fruit juice and sugar-free squash may help with this. Avoid sugary or fizzy drinks where possible.

Maintaining a healthy weight



Keeping to a healthy weight is important for our mental and physical health. MoreLife provide a free 12-week group programme for adults (18+) in Camden. The sessions are designed to equip people with tools and support to achieve their health goals. 'Getting Active and Healthy' section of this guide, on page 37.



For more information and to self-refer please visit [more-life.co.uk](https://www.more-life.co.uk) or call **0333 222 1333**.

Getting involved in Camden



Volunteering

If you have some spare time and would like to contribute to life in Camden, volunteering activities such as befriending, gardening or organising local events could be the solution.

Volunteering is a great opportunity to meet new people and develop new skills, and it can have surprising benefits for body and mind. Whether you're ready to make a formal commitment or just fancy lending a helping hand from time to time, lots of groups would love to hear from you.

The **Volunteer Centre Camden** holds regular events where you can get a feel for what's involved and find out how it all works, or you can search for an opportunity on their website.



Visit volunteercentrecamden.org.uk
or call **020 7424 9990** to find out more.

Employment and training

Camden Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are now open to anyone of employment age. They can be a great way for adults to get back into working, or support with a change in career.



Find out more at apprenticeships.camden.gov.uk

Kings Cross Construction Skills Centre (KXCSC)

KXCSC offer training, apprenticeships and employment advice and opportunities to people looking to start a new career with in construction or those who are interested in furthering their career with in the industry.



Find out more at construction.camden.gov.uk

Kings Cross (KX) Recruit

KX Recruit is a friendly and professional recruitment service that aims to help Camden and Islington residents find jobs in King's Cross. There are also a range of roles available for older people who wish to utilise existing skills or learn new ones.



Find out more at kxrecruit.co.uk

Somers Town Job Hub

Somers Town Job Hub is located within St Pancras and Somers Town Living Centre. The Job Hub provides one-to-one employment guidance, CV support and access to training courses. The Hub also provides a place for you to meet and share experiences with people in similar circumstances.

Camden Job Hub

Camden Job Hub provides support to anyone that needs it, whether you're ready to work, need a little guidance on work and money or just don't know where to start.



You can also register by sending an email to: jobhub@camden.gov.uk or call **0207 974 1666**.

Activities

There is a wealth of activities and lots of groups ready to welcome you. These include healthy living, history groups, lunch clubs, dance groups, music classes and much more.

You can also visit the Voluntary Action Camden directories which have more information about what's happening in Camden vac.org.uk/our-services/directories

Community centres offer a variety of activities from art and bingo, through to yoga and music. They are also a great place to meet new people. Visit your local community centre to find out more. On the next page are examples of local groups and activities to get involved in.



The Camden Town Shed offers a workspace and equipment for practical projects or artistic work with wood or clay. Visit camdentownshed.org or call Mike on **07757 024 749**.



Age UK Camden run regular activities that include coffee mornings, book clubs and computer and digital inclusion workshops. Visit ageuk.org.uk/camden/activities-and-events where you can also find out about joining the Camden community mailing list to receive details of other events, such as concerts and fundraisers. Or phone **020 7239 0400** (Mon to Fri 9.15am to 5.15pm).



Camden's Home Library Service is a free service for people who are not able to visit their local library, for example if they are older, have mobility difficulties or are recovering from an illness. The library team can get you the books you would like and visit you every four weeks to collect books you have finished with and give you new ones.

To use this service please phone your local Camden library or email

homelibraryservice@camden.gov.uk

You can visit your local Camden library or call through to Camden libraries on **020 7974 4444**.

Social prescribing

Social prescribing supports people to improve and take control of their health and wellbeing. It connects people into non-clinical support in the local community so that they may manage their practical, social, and emotional needs.

The Social Prescribing service may:

Signpost to local wellbeing support, such as activity classes, befriending, volunteering, or other opportunities

Support to make healthier lifestyle choices, such as healthy eating, exercise, and stopping smoking

Connect to peer support groups to manage long-term health conditions such and other health needs.

In Camden, the social prescribing service is delivered by Age UK Camden, Voluntary Action Camden, and the Council's Wish Plus referral hub. Anyone may make a referral to the Social Prescribing service. To find out more, visit vac.org.uk/guides-and-resources/social-prescribing/



To make a referral to the service:

Email (secure health and care NHS email address):
nclicb.socialprescribingreferral@nhs.net

Freephone: **0800 193 6067**

For general enquiries, email:
communitylinks@vac.org.uk

Connecting Autistic adults to support

The Autism Hub

The Autism Hub Islington and Camden is an initiative led by and for Autistic adults who do not have an accompanying disability.

The Autism Hub's aim is to improve the quality of life for Autistic adults by connecting people to resources, services and organisations from a central point, "The Hub". The Autism Hub provides expert advice, information, support, and signposting to people, their families and carers, and other professionals.

The Autism Hub offers monthly peer-led webinars, peer-support drop-in sessions, Autism-adjusted counselling, advice, information and advocacy, skill-based workshops and social events.



You can contact them and find further information at their website: theautismhub.org.uk

Asperger London Area Group

ALAG (Asperger London Area Group) is a community organisation working in partnership with local authorities and the voluntary sector to highlight the needs of Autistic people. The ALAG monthly meetings provide peer support with opportunities to discuss common issues as well as access to researchers and specialist speakers who give talks on a range of Autism related topics at the meetings.



You can contact them and find further information: alag.org.uk



Safeguarding adults from abuse and neglect

Safeguarding adults means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Every person has the right to live in a safe environment free from the fear of abuse and neglect, to be treated with dignity and have their choices respected.

Abuse is when a person is treated in a way that harms, hurts or exploits them. Abuse can present in many forms, and it can include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- domestic abuse
- psychological abuse
- financial abuse
- sexual exploitation
- neglect
- self-neglect, eg. hoarding
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational abuse
- modern slavery
- honour-based violence
- human trafficking
- hate crime
- mate crime

It can happen in any relationship, and can take place anywhere.

Signs of abuse in others to look out for include:

- unexplained change in behaviour
- emotional lack of control
- isolation from friends and family
- exhibiting anxious behaviour
- worsening health or weight loss
- untreated or unexplained injuries, especially repeated injuries
- a sudden shortage of money for no apparent reason.



If you are worried that you are being abused or are at risk of harm, or that someone you know is, tell someone you trust. You can call Camden Council on **020 7974 4444** and when prompted, say 'Adult Social Care'. If there is an immediate risk of safety call **999**. For more information on safeguarding in Camden, please visit camden.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults-and-children



Camden Safety Net provides services to survivors of domestic abuse, and their families who live, work or study in the London Borough of Camden. Contact Camden Safety Net on **020 7974 2526**, or visit camden.gov.uk/camden-safety-net



GALOP is an LGBTQ+ anti-violence charity offering support for lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people who have experienced hate crime, sexual violence or domestic abuse, or have questions about the criminal justice system. Call the London LGBTQ+ Advice Line on **0800 999 5428** or visit galop.org.uk



Forum+ works to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Camden and Islington. If you are experiencing hate crime or discrimination, contact Forum+ on **020 7388 5720** or email info@forumplus.org.uk

You can visit forumplus.org.uk for more information.



Housing



A safe and stable home environment can help you stay healthy and independent.

Housing advice

The Homelessness Prevention Team can help if you are threatened with homelessness, eviction or are being harassed by your landlord.



You can contact the Homelessness Prevention Team by visiting www.camden.gov.uk/homelessness-in-camden or phoning **020 7974 4444**.



The **Outside Project** is a homeless/crisis shelter and community centre that supports LGBT+ people who are homeless or in crisis. Visit lgbtiqoutside.org



Stonewall Housing provides safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people. They work to ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people live in homes that are safe and free from fear. Contact them at stonewallhousing.org

WISH Plus

WISH Plus helps you access warmth, income, safety and health advice and services. You can apply for yourself or refer someone else. Examples of support WISH Plus may be able to connect you to include services to help with anxiety and depression, home safety checks, and signposting to financial support.



The WISH Plus team will put you in touch with services that can help. Use the online form at camden.gov.uk/wish-plus or call the team on **020 7974 3012**.

Fire safety at home

WISH Plus provides a single referral route to multiple and usually interlinked services, including fire safety and safety in the home.

Housing grants and disability adaptations

Grants are available to assist with some improvements to your home, including adaptations to help Disabled people live independently.



Visit camden.gov.uk/housing-adaptations-grants-and-assistance or call **020 7974 2543** for information on the latest grants available and eligibility criteria.

Private Sector Housing Team

The Private Sector Housing Team works with landlords and private tenants to ensure privately rented homes are safe, adequately heated and free from damp. The team licenses all properties occupied by three or more sharers (houses in multiple occupation or HMOs), and older converted properties where the flats are mainly tenanted. They will take enforcement action against landlords where properties are not licensed and where properties are badly managed.



If you're a private tenant and have any concerns, please visit

camden.gov.uk/web/private-renters-in-camden

or call **020 7974 5969**.

Sheltered housing

If you want to stay independent, yet enjoy a safe, supportive environment to live in, sheltered housing may be the solution. Support includes an on-site manager and a 24-hour community alarm service.



To find more information about sheltered housing, please contact the Sheltered Housing Team by phoning **020 7974 4764** or **020 7974 1991**.

You can also find out more information online at camden.gov.uk/sheltered-housing

Handyperson service

Camden's handyperson service is available to all residents who are over 65, have a long-term health condition or disability, or provide unpaid care.

The service helps with a range of minor repairs and maintenance and some home improvements. This includes things like home security assessments, child safety assessments, putting up curtains, repairs to door handles, replacing taps, putting up shelves or pictures. Some of these services are free but some may be chargeable. The chargeable services cost £12.50 per hour plus any materials that are needed. This will always be agreed in advance.

To contact the service:

Phone **0203 884 0468** on Monday to Friday between 9am-5pm

Email: CamdenHIS@mtvh.co.uk

Referrals to this service can also be made through our WISH Plus service. See page 53 for further details.

Courses and learning



There are lots of fantastic learning opportunities in Camden. Going on courses is a great way to gain new skills and meet new people.

Camden Adult Community Learning provide free courses on a range of topics including computer skills, learning English as a second language, creative writing and yoga. The timetable of available courses changes all the time, so the best way to find out what is happening near you is to visit their website, or to contact them using the details below:



Camden Adult Community Learning can be contacted by phoning **020 7974 2148**, emailing adultlearning@camden.gov.uk or visiting camden.gov.uk/adult-community-learning.



Lots of local organisations also have many learning opportunities. Ask at your local library to find out more. You can find your local library by visiting camden.gov.uk/libraries-local-studies or by phoning **020 7974 4444**.



The **University of the Third Age** offers a variety of courses for older people.

Call **020 7692 5440** or visit u3alondon.org.uk to find out more.



Age UK Camden also offer support to people aged 55 and over with using digital devices. This includes help with mobile phones, computers or tablets. To contact Age UK Camden, please phone **020 7239 0400**.



Benefits and managing your money



Money issues can cause anxiety and can be an underlying cause for other health problems. If you are having problems with money, it's important you seek help. From making the most of your money, better banking and dealing with debt, to managing benefits, there are organisations who can advise and support you. The advice is free, confidential and impartial and can be face to face, over the telephone or online.



If you need advice and support on **Universal Credit**, contact the **Universal Credit Help to Claim Service** on Freephone **0800 144 8444**, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. The service is funded by the government to provide support with making your application through to when you receive your first correct payment.



Citizens Advice Camden are also able to help with making **Universal Credit** claims and support you through to when payment is made. Citizens Advice Camden provide advice on other benefits too and managing your money. The advice line is open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm, on **0800 028 3146**. Visit camdencabservice.org.uk for advice services at Citizens Advice Camden and opening times.



The Camden Advice Network is made up of 12 organisations and offers free and independent advice to Camden residents. This includes advice about benefits, financial hardship, employment and housing. Further information can be found here camden.gov.uk/camden-advice-network

If you are a council tenant, and have concerns about benefits and managing your money, speak to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer and they may be able to help you or direct you to the council's in-house specialist welfare rights team.



For advice and enquiries about housing benefit or the council tax reduction scheme and discounts, you can contact the **Camden Council Benefits** team by visiting camden.gov.uk/benefits-support or calling **020 7974 4444**.



Advice Local is a website that provides advice on benefits, work, money, housing problems and more. You just need to enter a postcode and select an advice topic. Visit advice.local.uk

Support with the cost of living



Some people may need a bit of help due to the rising cost of living. If you're struggling to afford the essentials – including food, energy bills or housing costs – or if you're in debt, help is available.



Visit camden.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support, or call Contact Camden on **020 7974 4444**.

Free school meals

Free school meals could save you and your family money every year. If you have a school-age child and they are eligible for free school meals, it could save you money, give your child access to other support – like free breakfast clubs and activities – and help you access food vouchers in the holidays.

If you prefer to make your child a packed lunch, please still sign up, because the school will receive vital funding to pay for things like more in-classroom support and after-school activities.



Find out more and apply at camden.gov.uk/free-school-meals or call Contact Camden on **020 7974 4444**.

Bereavement and coping with loss



Coping with loss

Coping with a loss, whether sudden or expected, is difficult. We all grieve in different ways and talking to someone, whether they are a friend, family member or a counsellor, can help.



For confidential bereavement counselling, call the **Camden Bereavement Service** on **020 7284 0090**. Or visit bereavement-counselling.org

What to do after someone dies

Losing a loved one can be extremely distressing. It is still important to know about the necessary administrative duties. By law, you have to register a death within five working days, providing the information to the register office for the area in which the person died.



The Registrars service at Camden Council can help. Visit camden.gov.uk/register-a-death for more information or call **020 7974 4444** and say Registrars service when prompted.

Contact Camden

Contact Camden **020 7974 4444** and ask for the individual or service that you need. You can also look on the Council website on camden.gov.uk

If you use British Sign Language (BSL) you can contact Camden Council using SignVideo BSL Live, a specialist interpreting service. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is free to use. For support visit camden.gov.uk/accessibility or contact help@signvideo.co.uk

How useful have you found this booklet?

We welcome any feedback you may have. You can email us at camdencarechoices@camden.gov.uk

Write to us at

Camden Companion feedback
7th floor
Prevention and Wellbeing Service
Camden Council
5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG



Looking for information and advice about care and support?

Camden Care Choices is the Council's website for adult care and support in Camden. It provides information to residents to enable them to make informed decisions about health and care so that they can live well independently. The website provides information about:

- Giving, receiving and paying for care
- Health, wellbeing and care services
- Social activities to connect into the community and support your wellbeing.

Visit the website at camdencarechoices.camden.gov.uk