

## Learning Example – Effective Multiagency Working and Early Intervention - Camden Council

### Introduction

Following on from [our first learning example](#), this learning example is focused on Year Two of Camden implementing their new short breaks provision through their involvement in the Department for Education's Short Breaks Innovation Fund. Their project, **Rebuilding Bridges**, is delivered in partnership with health and education (Camden's [Mosaic CAHMS](#) and Camden's [Educational Psychology Service](#)) and the voluntary community sector provider Play, Adventure, and Community Enrichment ([PACE](#)), and supports children and young people aged 6 to 25 with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs, autism, and learning disabilities. In Year Two, they have expanded their support by developing two additional strands *Count Me In* and the *Independent Living Hub* in partnership with Camden's [Integrated Youth Support Services](#) and [WAC Arts](#) to further enhance their short breaks offer for young people.

Camden's Rebuilding Bridges project is focused on improving school attendance and emotional well-being and reducing behaviours of concern through 1:1 and small group support, and holistic joined-up support to (often hard-to-reach) families. In Year Two, additional outcomes have included to reduce social isolation, improve access to universal services and support preparation for adulthood. Camden are working together with delivery partners to design and implement this project, with the aim of providing support to children and young people who otherwise might not have met the threshold or eligibility criteria for a service.

This learning example will explore how Camden's project has developed in Year Two of their funding, highlighting the changes that they have made and how this has built on the learning from Year One. This will be focused particularly around two themes of innovative practice: effective multiagency working and early intervention.

### Aims and Objectives

Following their successful bid for continued funding into Year Two of the Short Breaks Innovation Fund, Camden were focused on ensuring that the project built on their learning from Year One and identified further areas for development. In Year One, Camden carried out a thorough review of their support pathways to inform their Rebuilding Bridges project and the findings of this review remain at the heart of the project's second year.

The project remains focused on supporting children and young people with additional needs to improve their school attendance and emotional wellbeing, as well as providing a break from caring responsibilities to parent carers. They have also extended the upper age limit from Year One up to 25 years old for Year Two, to expand their project to better incorporate older young people on the pathway to adulthood. These new project strands aim to help these young people gain independence and feel more confident, in addition to being better connected to community services.

Year Two has seen Camden focus particularly on children and young people with emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA) or at risk of educational placement breakdown, as they identified this cohort was a growing area of need requiring additional support essential when not attending school. This has fed into Camden's wider aim of creating a short breaks pathway that enables early intervention and prevention from more complex needs being presented later on.

Camden have also expanded their collaboration with their delivery partners from the first year of the project, as well as bringing in more partners such as WAC Arts and the Integrated Youth Support Services. They recognised how vital effective multiagency working had been to their success in Year One, and identified areas where they could grow this network of partners further to improve the project's support offer and outcomes.

## Approach

Camden's approach in Year Two was focused on iteratively building upon the support that they provided in Year One by testing approaches on what worked well previously and identifying areas for improvement and expansion. This led to the development of three key strands for support which are underpinned by a golden thread that targets the outcomes of children and young people as well as respond to gaps in service provision where the need is high.

- Strand 1: Rebuilding Bridges (Mosaic CAMHs, EP Service and PACE)
- Strand 2: Count Me In (Integrated Youth Support Service)
- Strand 3: Independent Living Hub (WAC Arts)

Through collaboration and utilising the expertise of internal and external delivery partners such as Mosaic CAMHS, PACE and WAC Arts has enabled Camden to provide children, young people, and their families with support from experienced practitioners. In doing so, they have expanded their reach by enhancing support towards independence and wellbeing outcomes in the community and/or the family home.

We will be exploring in more detail how Camden has used effective multiagency working and early intervention approaches to innovatively shape their short breaks service, highlighting how transformative their focus on shared responsibility and identifying gaps in their provision has been to the success of their Rebuilding Bridges project.

## Effective multi-agency working

Year One of the Rebuilding Bridges project demonstrated how Camden's pre-existing effective multi-agency working relationships between the local authority, PACE, health and children's social care helped shape how they designed and delivered the project. The work carried out in Year One to further develop these relationships has created a strong multi-agency network of partners that then fed into the design and delivery of Year Two. Camden sought to strengthen and develop these multi-agency relationships further, as well as bring more partners on board, with the aim of ensuring that their short breaks model continues

to be well integrated between health and social care and the voluntary community sector. By involving wider partners like Camden's Integrated Youth Support Services, the project has focused on and addressed the gaps that were present in their current offer.

A rich network of effective multi-agency relationships has enabled Camden to tackle challenges with agencies working more independently from one another and not sharing as much as information as would be ideal. One of the relationships that they have notably developed is with Camden's [Educational Psychology Service](#). In Year Two of the project, educational psychologists (EPs) have been brought on board, after being identified as a vital link between schools and CAMHS, as well as with the wider network of partners. This became a particular aim for the second year of the project after Camden identified that EPs lacked resource to engage with children and young people that weren't attending school, but needed support from EPs to return to school settings. This cohort of children and young people with SEMH and autism who have emotionally-based school avoidance have formed the focus of Year Two, supporting them to re-engage with school and receive more tailored support from a multi-agency team of professionals. The EPs have been very passionate about engaging in the project and establishing relationships with the project's multi-agency partners. This has created a unique network of professionals working in a joined-up system, emphasising the importance of effective multi-agency working.

This has been further reinforced through Camden's monthly multi-disciplinary team meetings, which were introduced in Year Two of the project. These meetings bring together the different agencies involved in the project delivery to discuss and reflect on how they are working together as a team. These meetings take a creative and flexible approach to troubleshooting, identifying the areas that are working well, and the areas that still require some improvement. This approach is centred around the principle of shared responsibility, asserting that all partners and practitioners involved in the project are responsible for supporting this cohort to improve their school attendance and emotional wellbeing.

## Early intervention and prevention

Camden were passionate about prioritising early intervention and prevention in Year Two, utilising knowledge and information from early help services to continue to identify any gaps in Camden's short breaks provision. In Year One, they put in considerable effort with a range of partners to target children and young people with additional needs who were not known to children's social care and would need an intensive, preventative intervention. They made significant progress on this in Year One and have continued to work on this throughout Year Two, identifying children and young people that are likely to present more complex issues later in life if no intervention was taken.

Another gap that they identified during their analysis was lack of engagement with older young people. They have sought to address this gap primarily through their [Independent Living Hub](#) and involving Camden's [Integrated Youth Support Services](#).

[Count Me In](#) has been developed with the Integrated Youth Support Services in Year Two to support 13–25-year-olds that cannot access universal services without additional support. This part of the project seeks to

help young people access community youth services and education opportunities, in turn aiming to reduce social isolation and the chance of them becoming 'not in education, employment or training (NEET)'.

The Independent Living Hub is being delivered by WAC Arts, focused on extending the existing short break provision to particularly target those on the preparation for adulthood pathway. The programme being delivered by WAC Arts intends to help young people have a smoother transition into adulthood and develop their independent living skills.

Improving the support available for both cohorts has highlighted the importance of early intervention and prevention of referral to specialist services, with early intervention leading to long-term impacts on the outcomes for children, young people and their families. Through investing in empowering and developing resilience amongst young people and families, Camden have highlighted the cultural shift they are leading for future intervention and prevention across the borough. For example, the Rebuilding Bridges project has already helped inform new local guidance on school attendance and the EBSA pathway.

## Challenges and Successes

### Key challenges

- Camden sought to engage with a cohort of children and young people that were not attending school and therefore were inherently difficult to identify and reach. This meant that they had to work strategically with a wide range of partners to try and close this gap in their short breaks provision.
- Demonstrating the outcomes of those involved in this project is challenging, due to the complexity of the needs presented in this cohort. While there have been some initial positive short-term outcomes, Camden is considering how they will demonstrate the longer-term outcomes from the project.

### Key successes

There have been many successes in the second year of the project:

- **Strengthened multi-agency practice:** Camden have successfully brought together a unique cluster of professionals and partners to strengthen their multi-agency practice, and create an integrated, joined up system of support.
- **Engagement with the Educational Psychology Service:** The Rebuilding Bridges project team identified a key issue being faced by educational psychologists, namely that they weren't able to support children and young people with EBSA due to them not turning up at school. Camden has now successfully established links between EPs, schools, CAMHS and the wider short breaks partner network.

- **Knowledge and expertise of local partners:** Bringing on a wider range of partners in Year Two has enabled Camden to use a diverse set of professionals when designing and delivering their interventions, aiding their ability to be creative and innovative.

## Key learning

- **Identify gaps:** Camden have worked throughout Year One and Year Two of their project to identify any gaps in their provision, and create innovative solutions and interventions that can fill this gap as effectively as possible while continuing to be being child and family focused.
- **Embed multi-agency reflective practice:** This project has highlighted the importance of creating space for professionals to reflect upon the services that they are designing and delivering, and identify the areas that can be developed and refined.
- **Share responsibility:** Through their focus on supporting children and young people with emotionally-based school avoidance, Camden have recognised the importance of having a network of professionals that collaborate and share the responsibility for improving this cohort's school attendance. This cohort's needs are often entrenched and multi-dimensional and therefore require a multi-agency intervention.