

# Camden Sure Start

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**Consultation on early years nursery  
provision and a proposed new approach  
to early years investment in Camden**



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# Foreword – Councillor Angela Mason

Camden has a proud history of supporting families of children aged under five through our Camden Sure Start services - and we know how important it is for their future to give children the best start in life.

Due to changes in Government funding arrangements and a drop in the birth-rate, we now have too many nursery places in Camden. This means we have to make some challenging choices about how we deliver early years services.

While Camden children are achieving in line with others across the country by age five, there is still a significant gap between the achievement of disadvantaged children and others in the borough. This gap needs to be narrowed if Camden is to deliver on our commitment to be ‘a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where nobody gets left behind’.


Attending a high quality nursery helps children achieve well but we also know that the time from pregnancy to the age of two is really important in ensuring that children get the best start.

We are proposing some changes to early years services in the borough, which we think will help all children to achieve well.

We want to ask for your feedback on these proposed changes.

Please take the time to respond to our consultation questions on pages eight and nine.

I look forward to hearing your views.



**Councillor Angela Mason**

Cabinet Member for Best Start  
for Children and Families,  
Camden Council



Please read this document carefully and fill in the questionnaire on pages 8 to 10 - then post it back to us using the freepost address on the back page.

Or you can complete the questions online at [camden.gov.uk/early-years-proposals](https://camden.gov.uk/early-years-proposals)

Responses need to be returned by 5pm on **Wednesday 12 February**.

## Introduction

Camden now has more nursery places than it needs. This is due to changes in funding arrangements for nursery places introduced by the Government in 2017, and a fall in the number of children in the borough. While we do not have direct influence over private, voluntary and independent nurseries, we do know that school and Council maintained nurseries are no longer full. As nursery places are funded on a 'per pupil' basis, the spare capacity creates significant pressure on budgets.

The high number of vacancies in the Council's primary schools and maintained nurseries means that we need to review our early years services and ensure that Council funding is being used in the way that best supports Camden families.

In the last 20 years, we have learnt more about the importance of a child's experience in the first 1001 days (from conception to age two) and the positive impact that having the best start has on future outcomes.

Investing more resources in delivering Sure Start services for families with a focus on the first 1001 days (conception to age two), would ensure that children have not already fallen behind by the age of two. Increasing services such as bump to baby, stay and play groups, helping with benefits and getting into work and more help to support speech and language development will help children to thrive and be ready for nursery.

We want to provide more services for families in their child's first 1001 days by making changes to the Council's maintained nurseries.

The changes we are proposing to nurseries are part of our wider family-focused Camden approach.

### The importance of the first 1001 days

The early years are a crucial time for children's development. The foundations of virtually every aspect of development (physical, intellectual and emotional) are laid down in early childhood.

From birth to 18 months, connections in the brain are created at a rate of one million per second. The earliest experiences shape babies' brain development and have a lifelong impact on mental and emotional health.

Increasing evidence shows that a child's lifelong outcomes can be reliably predicted from their level of development at aged two.

### What is this consultation about?

The consultation is about proposed changes to the Council's maintained nurseries. This would help to address the current over-supply of nursery places in the borough and enable the re-allocation of funding to support the development of additional services for families in their child's first 1001 days.

The additional services would be delivered in 're-purposed' buildings that are currently used as nurseries.





## Why are we proposing to change nurseries?

There are four main reasons why we are carrying out a review of our early years services.

### 1. We have too many nursery places in the borough for the number of children

Camden currently has more early education places for three and four year olds than are needed. There are two main reasons for this over-supply.

#### Changes to funding

A new national funding formula for nursery places introduced in 2017 meant that Camden had to withdraw its offer of 25 hours early education for all three and four year olds in school and Council-maintained nurseries.

All nurseries now receive funding for a mix of full and part time places. This has led to a significant number of 'unfunded' places in school nurseries, as many families do not meet the criteria for full day-care provision.

#### Population change

The number of three and four year olds in Camden has decreased by about 500 overall since 2013 - with some areas of the borough seeing a drop of 20% or more. The Greater London Authority (GLA) population projections suggest that the number of two, three and four year olds is unlikely to grow significantly between now and 2028.

### 2. The cost of running services and the need to make savings

Nursery places are funded per child. Camden's maintained nurseries are providing for fewer children than previously, with current demand down by about 150 children as a result of the overall decrease in under fives described above.

Releasing funding that currently supports the running costs of these nurseries will enable Camden to make necessary savings AND invest in new services for families in their children's first 1001 days.

#### Supporting school nurseries

The high level of vacancies in some primary school nurseries creates significant additional pressure on school budgets. Due to the new national funding regulations, Camden primary school nurseries have seen a decrease in the funding of nursery places by about half a million pounds. This is likely to mean that some school nurseries will become unsustainable.

If Camden decreases the number of nursery places it directly provides then parents whose children attend the nurseries proposed for re-purposing as Sure Start centres would be encouraged to take up alternative provision in nearby primary school nurseries. This would decrease the vacancy level in school nurseries and help make them viable in the long-term.

### 3. Investing in the first 1001 days

An enhanced 1001 days pathway offered through a stronger network of Sure Start children's centres across the borough would support Camden's aspiration to be a 'borough where everyone has a chance to succeed and nobody gets left behind and everybody has a voice.'

Developing an enhanced 1001 days pathway would build on the original Sure Start programme, which placed children and parents at the centre of service design, delivery and evaluation. This approach would embrace these principles and build on the very successful work to establish a team of Camden Parent Champions, and ensure that service development is based on local knowledge and informed by the communities that they serve.

# What are the proposed changes?

Three options have been identified that would help address the over-supply of places and, in one case, enable the development of the new services to support families in their child's crucial first 1001 days.

These options are set out below.

## Option 1. Close two nurseries

Closing two nurseries would make a modest impact on the over-supply of places and long-term sustainability of primary school nurseries.

## Option 2. Reduce the number of places and introduce cost-saving measures across Camden maintained nurseries.

This option could also make a modest impact on the over-supply of places but may affect the quality and sustainability of the Council maintained nurseries.

## Option 3 (preferred). Re-purpose four Camden maintained nurseries.

The nurseries would become Sure Start children's centres and we would look to re-provide nursery places for these children in Camden primary school nursery classes.

The four nurseries no longer providing childcare places will instead offer a range of new services to support children from birth to age two and their families, in line with evidence showing the importance of child development in the crucial first 1001 days of life (see page 4).

These services would be offered in addition to the comprehensive range of services already available at the Sure Start centres, including family support and health visiting, welfare rights and employability support, stay and play drop-ins and wrap-around services, child mental health, and speech and language therapists. The additional space will also provide accommodation for midwifery clinics, health visiting 'hubs', and services provided by partners such as the Anna Freud centre.

The remaining five Council nurseries would continue to provide high quality early education and childcare as they do now.

## The nurseries that would convert to become Sure Start children's centres and offer these new services would be:

- Gospel Oak
- Hampden
- Kilburn Grange
- Konstam

The numbers of children taking up places in these nurseries in the summer term 2019 is shown below.

Summer term 2019	Funded 3 & 4 Year Olds	2 Year Olds
Gospel Oak Nursery	44	22
Hampden Nursery	26	19
Kilburn Grange	32	13
Konstam Nursery	21	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>67</b>

## What would the new children's centres do?

The proposed new approach of an enhanced 1001 days pathway will be offered through a stronger network of Sure Start children's centres across the borough and funded through a reduced maintained childcare offer.

The new Sure Start children's centres would provide a 'one stop shop' for all families with children under five. They would be a safe place where families could come and play, make friends and get information about services that help their children to thrive.

Together with the five existing Sure Start children's centres, the new ones would increase our capacity to identify families who need a little extra support and provide venues for additional services.

The additional services would be developed in partnership with parents but may include:

- Expanded 'Bump to Baby' ante-natal programme to provide more families with support as they prepare for the birth of their baby.
- Sessions for families 'graduating' from 'bump to baby' that will enable parents to build on the relationships they have made and support each other through their babies' first few months.
- Specialist communication and language support services, developed and supervised by the speech and language service for children aged 12 to 24 months.
- Sessions that support parents of babies from six months to a year to recognise and respond to their babies' cues.
- Family learning sessions, like those recently run in the Euston area.
- Implement the 'HENRY' healthy start programme to support the development of healthy lifestyles (for more details, visit [henry.org.uk](http://henry.org.uk)).
- Support the national 'Hungry Little Minds' initiative with local publicity (for more details, visit [hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk](http://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk)).
- Maintain the Early Help family support offer managed in an integrated model with health visiting.

### How long are we consulting for?

**This consultation will run from 2 January to 12 February 2020 and you will be able to give us your views during this time.**

What people tell us during this consultation will be reported to Camden's Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families, the Council's Executive Director, Supporting People (Deputy Chief Executive) and Camden's Cabinet to help them make their decision. This decision will also be scrutinised by the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee.

This decision will be made on 1 April 2020.

### How do I respond?

- Answer the questions on pages 8 to 10 in this document
- Fill in the online questionnaire at [camden.gov.uk/early-years-proposals](http://camden.gov.uk/early-years-proposals)
- Email us your questions or comments to [IEYSCabinetProposal@camden.gov.uk](mailto:IEYSCabinetProposal@camden.gov.uk)
- Attend a public meeting. See page 11 for details or visit the website above.



# Consultation questions – have your say

**Q1)** Do you currently use a Camden nursery?

- Yes  No

If so, which one?

**Q2)** What is most important to you about the nursery you use?

**Q3)** Which of the options for changes to the Council's maintained nurseries set out above do you support?

- Option 1** – Close two of Camden's maintained nurseries and support families to take up alternative provision in a Camden primary school nursery.
- Option 2** – Decrease the number of places in all of Camden's maintained nurseries.
- Option 3** (preferred) – Close four Camden maintained nurseries and re-purpose the buildings as Sure Start children's centres.
- None
- Not sure

**Q4)** Please can you tell us the reason for your views?

**Q5)** What kind of early years activities would you like to see being provided within your local community?

**Q6)** Do you have an alternative idea as to what we could do to support children to thrive in their earliest years?

**Q7)** Do you have any other comments? Please use the additional space on page 9 if you need it.



# Further comments

Please respond to these consultation questions by 5pm on Wednesday 12 February 2020

Question number?	Any further comments?

The information you provide us with in this consultation will only be used by the council to make an informed decision on early years nursery provision, and to improve our services.

# About you

**Q1)** Are you responding to this survey as a

- parent/carer of a child under 5 years old
- parent/carer of a child over 5 years old
- voluntary or community sector organisation
- other

**Q2)** We would be grateful if you could provide us with your postcode. We will only use it to analyse the responses to this survey and will not use it for any other purposes.

**Q3)** Gender

- Male  Female
- Other  Prefer not to say

**Q4)** What is your age?

**Q5)** What is your ethnic group?

Please tick one box only

White

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish  Gipsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background  
(Please tick and write in box)

Mixed / multiple ethnic

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian

Any other mixed / multiple ethnic groups  
(Please tick and write in box)

Black or Black British

- Black or Black British
- Caribbean
- African

Any other Black / African / Caribbean background  
(Please tick and write in box)

Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese

Any other Asian background  
(Please tick and write in box)

Other ethnic group

- Arab

Any other ethnic group

- Prefer not to say

**Q6)** Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

(i.e. that you have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day tasks)

- Prefer not to say

**Q7)** Where did you hear about this consultation?

- Poster or flyer
- The Camden Magazine
- Camden website
- Your children's centre

Other (please say where):

If you would like to be kept informed about the outcome of this consultation please provide an email or postal address.

## Public meetings

### For each nursery:

**3.30 to 5pm on Tuesday, 7 January**

**Gospel Oak Nursery, 5 Lismore Circus, NW5 4QF**

(for Gospel Oak families and other interested parties)

**9.30 to 11am on Thursday, 9 January**

**Regent's Park Children's Centre, Augustus Street, NW1 3TJ**

(for Hampden Nursery families and other interested parties)

**3.30 to 5pm on Tuesday, 14 January**

**Konstam Nursery, 75 Chester Rd, N19 5DH**

(for Konstam families and other interested parties)

**3.30 to 5pm on Wednesday, 15 January**

**Langtry Nursery, 11-29 Langtry Rd, NW8 0AJ**

(for Kilburn Grange families and other interested parties)

### General public meetings - all welcome:

**5.30 to 7pm on Thursday, 23 January**

**Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, NW1 1BD**

**9.30 to 11am on Tuesday, 28 January**

**Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, NW1 1BD**

If you would like an easy-read or large-print version of this document, or you need it to be translated into another language, please email **[IEYSCabinetProposal@camden.gov.uk](mailto:IEYSCabinetProposal@camden.gov.uk)**

Please send your response to the freepost address below:

**Strategy and Change, Floor 5, 5PS  
Freepost LBC MAILROOM  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
London  
WC1H 9JE**

Alternatively you can complete this consultation online at  
**[camden.gov.uk/early-years-proposals](https://camden.gov.uk/early-years-proposals)**



**Camden Sure Start**  
Your journey. Our support.