

Social isolation in Camden

Social isolation refers to a lack of contact with family or friends, community involvement or access to services (26). It is different to **loneliness** which is described as a feeling associated with lack or loss of companionship. Social isolation can be a predictor of loneliness (23).

Loneliness and isolation increase with age and among those with long-term health problems

Camden has an ageing population - Just over one in ten residents in Camden are aged 65 and over (28,000 (12%)) and this is expected to increase by 25% (to 35,000) in the next ten years (1).



Falls can lead to social isolation because they can result in reduced independence, pain, loss of confidence and mortality. An estimated one in three people aged 65 to 79 fall each year, rising to one in two people aged 80 or over – around 10,100 falls per year in Camden (2016) (1,27).

Frailty is a loss of resilience that means people living with frailty do not bounce back quickly after a physical or mental illness, an accident or other stressful event. The Frailty Index can be used by GPs to identify patients most at risk of frailty. The tool is based on a range of symptoms and conditions and categorises people into: “mostly healthy”; “mild frailty”; “moderate frailty” and “severe frailty”.

1/3rd of older people aged 65 and over in Camden are classified with **mild frailty** (6,964 people) based on analysis of the local population (2).



Social isolation and loneliness are associated with increased mortality. In Camden, **6%** of residents report to have **bad or very bad health**. This is higher than London and England (5%) (3).

Loneliness is strongly linked to perceived poor quality of life (24). The Personal Wellbeing Survey shows that **Camden residents have lower levels of life satisfaction and higher levels of anxiety** compared with London and England (5).



Loneliness is a strong risk factor for depression (25). **Almost one in six** (27,494) adults in Camden have a common mental illness (CMI). **Women** account for about **60%** of all people with CMI (2).

6,000 of the population registered with Camden GP between the ages of 25 and 64 had **more than one long term condition** in 2015 (2).

Relationships and social contact are essential in preventing isolation and loneliness



70% of Camden residents are single, separated, divorced or widowed. This is higher than London (60%) and England (53%) (6).

Camden is ranked **16th** out of 33 London local authorities for **predicted risk of loneliness in people aged 65 and over**(where 1 is the highest risk) (7). This indicates that Camden has an average risk of loneliness in this age group for London.

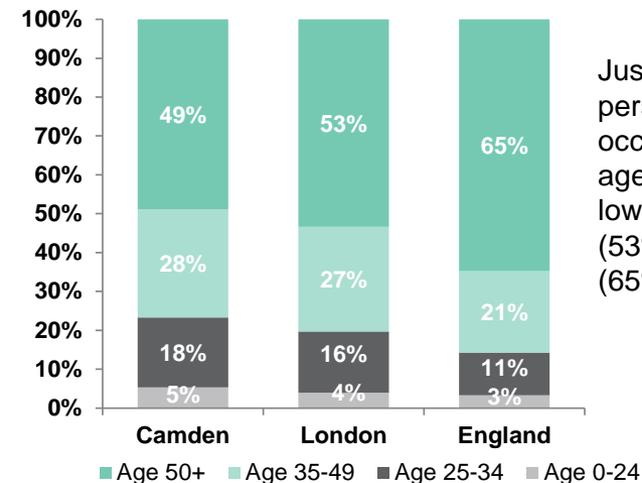
Camden has the **2nd** lowest proportion of social care users in the country (36%) that have as much social contact as they would like.

Housing tenure and composition is a contributory factor in social isolation

The amount of time spent alone is a predictor of loneliness (23)

Camden is ranked **4th** in England and Wales for the proportion of **one person households** (41%) (10). Over a third of one person households are in **social housing** (37%) (11)

Age breakdown of one person households, Camden, London and England



Just under half of one person households are occupied by people aged 50+ (49%). This is lower than London (53%) and England (65%).

There is a correlation between low wealth and loneliness

1/3rd of people in Camden (32%) **own their homes**. This is lower than London (49%) and England (65%). A higher proportion (35%) **live in social housing** in Camden than in London (23%) and England (16%) (9).

Some ethnic groups are highly concentrated in social housing – 83% of **Bangladeshi** households and 76% of **Black African** households live in social housing compared with 33% of the population as a whole.

Periods of transition impact loneliness at all ages

The 'transitions' or 'circumstances' in life can often lead to social isolation and loneliness. Such transitions include: going to university, children under care and leaving care, retiring from work, losing a job, living in sheltered housing or homelessness, getting divorced, becoming a carer or suffering a bereavement.



As a central London borough, Camden experiences a high degree of **population churn**. Camden has the **third highest rate of people migrating to the borough** from other countries (non-UK) with a rate of 83 per 1,000 resident population in 2015 compared to 36 and 15 per 1,000 for London and England respectively (13).

There are **25,300 Camden students in higher education**. This is the largest student population in London; 49% are from overseas (14).



188 children were looked after as of March 2016 (40.9 per 10,000 under-18 population). This rate has remained relatively stable over the past 3 years. The latest comparable figures show Camden's children looked-after rate in 2014/15 (45.4 per 10,000) was lower than the national (60) and inner London (60) average rates in the same period.

Ethnicity and language barriers in social isolation

The elderly from Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups have higher reported rates of loneliness, especially those from China, Africa, the Caribbean, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Of those aged 65 and over in Camden, just under a fifth are from BME groups (18%).

Language is essential in interacting with a community.

77% of Camden residents have **English as their main language**. This is significantly lower than London (78%) and England (92%) (8).

Access to social capital like public parks has a positive impact

Camden is above the benchmark standard for public park provision in urban local authorities with **1.8 ha of public park provision per 1,000 population**. However, there is significant variation between wards, from no provision in Frognal and Fitzjohns to 2.7 ha per 1,000 population in Camden Town (15).

Social isolation is more common among people with limited education

59% of all working age people in Camden had degree or higher degree level qualifications in 2016, higher than London (52%) and Great Britain (38%) (16).

7.0% of all working age people in Camden had no formal qualifications in 2016, slightly higher than London (6.6%) and lower than Great Britain (8.0%) (16).

Fear of crime can drive social isolation

91% of Camden residents reported feeling safe in their local area during the day and 75% felt safe at night. Both figures were slightly lower than LGA benchmarks (95% and 79%, respectively) (22).

Turnouts in elections can measure social capital

Electoral turnout in 2017's General Election in Camden's two constituencies (Hampstead and Kilburn: 70.4% and Holborn and St. Pancras: 67.0%) was **in line with national turnout** of 68.7% (21).

Unemployment and low wealth can contribute to social isolation

5.8% unemployment in Camden in 2016, higher than London (5.7%) and England (4.8%) (16).

10.1% of all working age people in Camden claimed some form of benefits as of November 2016, slightly higher than London (9.4%) and lower than Great Britain (11.1%) (16).

Public transport allows people to participate in their communities.

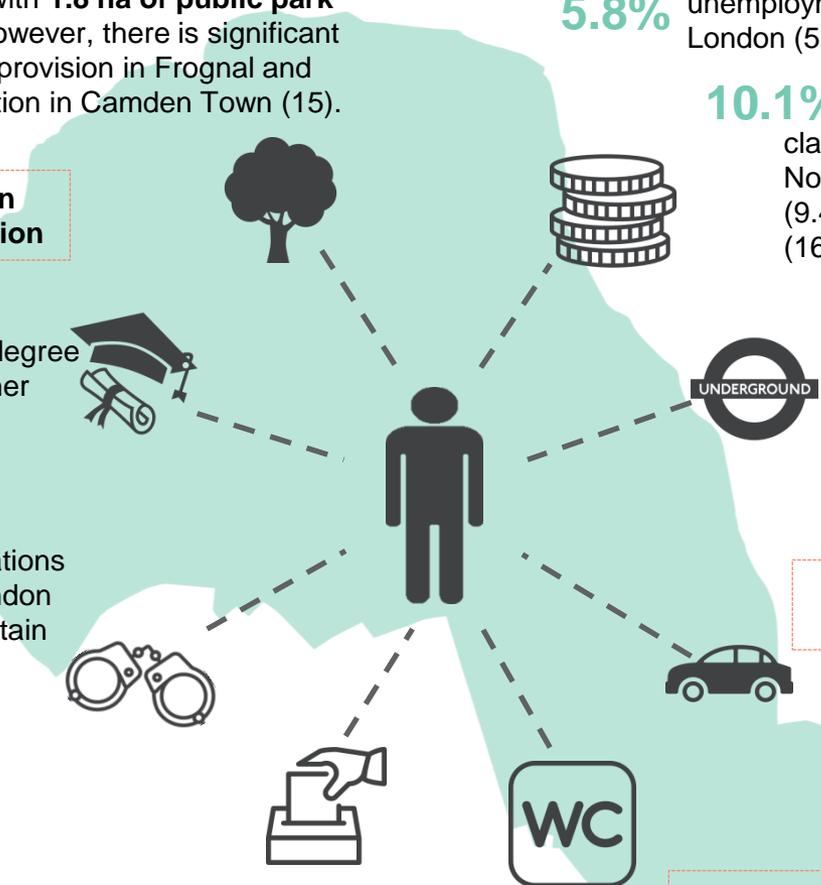
Camden has good links to public transportation and ranks among London boroughs ranked **third highest in London** for accessibility of public transport (17).

There are fewer social connections in communities with heavy traffic levels

In 2015, Camden's traffic levels were among the lowest in London (31 out of 33 boroughs), with **450 million vehicle kilometres** travelled by all motor vehicles and all cars (18).

The condition of the local environment, such as accessibility of public toilets, allows people to participate in their communities.

In 2011, Camden ranked **7th out of 33 London boroughs** for the highest number of public toilets (19). Since then, 15 have been added, bringing the total to 49 (20).



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