

Explore Careers with Money Advice Camden- Transcript

Zoe Tyndall 0:12

Amazing. Thanks, Elsa.

Is that everybody?

In.

As you can see.

Elsa Bardout 0:22

I think actually I might need to admit some more people.

And.

If you want, we can wait a minute for more people to join.

Zoe Tyndall 0:34

Yeah, let's just wait more one more minute and then I'll get it going. But hi, everyone who is here. Thank you so much for joining.

And we will get going very quickly.

Maybe. Well, we've got a gap if I could just ask everyone to put themselves on mute, if that's OK.

As you can see on the screen we're recording.

And that's just for people who aren't able to join. But if you don't want to be on record.

Please turn your camera off.

So.

Elsa Bardout 1:26

And apologies in advance if I mute some people I know. Sometimes we cannot realise where I'm muted, so sorry if I mute you. I don't mean to be rude, we're very happy to hear from you at the end.

Zoe Tyndall 1:44

Amazing, in which case I'm gonna get going. 'cause. I don't wanna keep people.

At their screens too late on Monday evening.

But yeah, thank you everyone for coming for this to this open session. We really

appreciate your interest in the roles and in the new service we're developing. So I'm just going to move. I've got to ask you to move on the slides, Elsa, but it's me.

So.

We're going to hear from a couple of us today.

And Elsa, who is very kindly organising us all but as Sarah and Ed come in, I'll get them to do a quick introductions. My name is Zoe. I joined Camden a few months ago to set up this new service, Money Advice, Camden. And in this new post for the organisation called head of Debt and financial resilience. So what we're going to do this evening is.

Nicola 2:38

And.

Zoe Tyndall 2:40

Try and give you a little bit more context.

To what you'll already have seen on on job ads, on the Guardian and other places about the roles.

We do these sessions because I know, particularly for people who don't work in councils or never have worked in councils, councils can be a bit of.

A harass is politely difficult to understand from the outside, so wanted to just take a bit more time with this recruitment to to demystify some stuff and and if if our jargon has crept into our job adverts.

Call us out on it now and we'll do our best to explain.

So I'm going to run through this really, really quickly.

Most of this information is available on our recruitment site, so if you haven't seen that, please do take a look Money Advice camden.co.uk, but I'm going to run through quickly partly so you can all go and have some dinner and partly so we can have time for questions.

So there is AQ and a Elsa to start the Q&A with a question of my own how do people put a question in?

Elsa Bardout 3:44

So I think you should be able to see AQ and a button at the top so you can keep that open if you want throughout the presentation or open it when you have a question

and you can pop your questions in throughout the presentation and then we'll get to them at the end.

Zoe Tyndall 4:01

Lovely. Thank you.

So for those who know Camden Council already, this will be very familiar to you. If it's not a problem, but Camden, over the last couple of years has really moved how it thinks about its big Council wide goals and and place wide goals to to emissions based approach.

So that's that's called we make Camden and if you're interested in applying to these roles from outside of Camden, I would definitely make. I definitely recommend having a look at the we make Camden.

Website. It tells you a lot about the big strategic goals of the organisation.

Up there, I won't talk too much about that because it's a whole other session, but there is a challenge within that strategic plan around debt which is, which is the sentence on the screen at the moment, and it's that challenge that the the political and officer leadership of the Council put in place which led to the creation of this service that we're recruiting for today.

So I'm going to talk to you a little bit about what we understand about debt in Camden at the beginning.

And then a bit into what our plans are. So there's been a huge amount of research Co production with communities looking at best practise desk research from Elsa and her colleagues in the strategy team and and Sarah and her colleagues, who've been doing lots of cost of living response work since the cost of living crisis started. And I think this and I want to reduce all of that. But there's probably four key points that we've taken from all of that, which is really informing how we're designing our service.

So poverty in Camden, poverty in the UK is increasing. Poverty in Camden is massively, massively driven by welfare reform.

And insufficient welfare. So we know for us benefits uptake is a really, really it's not the only thing, but it's a really, really important starting point for tackling poverty and and debt in Camden, we know as well that poverty premium is is a huge issue and a lot of our communities are ironically paying much higher costs for things than their higher income peers.

And and so thinking about helping people with energy, dirt and energy costs in

particular is huge priority for us.

Third thing, which is really important about Camden people who don't know again, sorry, I'm preaching to the choir for people who do is if you are on a low income or struggling with debt in Camden, you are likely to be on a very low income. So this is not a sort of squeeze middle in general. This is not squeezed. Middle set of communities. This is destitution that we're talking about often.

And what that means for debt is that people often don't have access to consumer credit in Camden. So what we're really, really looking at and seeing a huge rise in is priority bills arrears. That's what debt looks like in Camden. So that's a real focus for us and our role as a creditor is, is, you know, the person who people owe to is as important as the role we might be able to play in in providing advice.

Finally, what we all know in in in debt is, is that people tend not to access debt advice until they reach crisis point. And there's a massive opportunity here for early intervention.

We need to think about how we do that differently, so therefore of the like big challenges that starting all of our thinking about this work.

So I'm not going to go through this slide in a lot of detail, but just for full transparency, when I talk to my bosses and say This is why I need all this money to recruit staff, this is what I said to tell them that that we're going to be doing so we've got two big goals, as I say. One thing is to make sure that people in our communities in Camden can access good debt advice at the right time.

But then the other goal is also at the second one on the left hand side there is that we collect our own debt as ethically and effectively as possible. So it's not just about fixing the problems once we've created them. It's also about thinking about how we can stop the problems happening in the 1st place when we think about rent, debt, Council tax, parking, social care, etcetera. So there's four sort of areas that we're really focusing on there. I won't go through all of these as I say, but what's what's really key probably.

For these roles is #1 and #4 and #6, so #1.

What we are not trying to do is recreate an independent advice agency within the Council.

So lots of people who have backgrounds in independent advice provision, whether that's welfare rights or debt or both, will have a lot of relevant skills here. But we're not just trying to replicate that because our voluntary sector partners do that work really, really, really well.

What we're trying to do is think about where we can add something into the sector where other people can and what we think that we can do. There is use our data to intervene as early as possible so we can see indicators in all of the data that that Councils hold that someone might be trapped starting slip into financial vulnerability or debt. So that might be people who always paid their council tax on direct debit and have recently cancelled that direct debit.

All sorts of small indicators like that. So that's really why we're bringing. Senior data analyst and in time and more junior data analyst into the team. Because we know that being data-driven is really, really critical for what we're doing.

Do both.

And fifth one there, sorry, it's extra than what I said. I'd talk to this. So this is on making sure that we collect our debt effectively. So anyone who's worked in revenues in councils will know that single view of debt is the sort of Holy Grail everyone everyone's aiming for that where we can see all of the debts that someone owes to a council in one place that is something that we're looking at. But but beyond that, what else can we do to become a better debt collector as a Council. It is a really big focus of work for us over the first year.

And then finally, again, for those who know Camden, you know it's an ambitious council. We are very, very fortunate to have political confidence amongst our political leaders to want to be ambitious and innovative. We're also very, very fortunate not to be in the sort of financial.

Constraints that a lot of local government is in at the moment and that gives us. We think a sort of responsibility to support the rest of the sector with trialling new things. We're looking at different ways of working.

As I said earlier, welfare reform is absolutely huge for our communities. So particularly now with the new government coming in, we're really, really looking at how we can use some of our resources to pilot and help make the case with academic partners, with campaigning partners to help make the case for really key areas of welfare reform. So the bread and butter of of the service is is is delivering our work for our clients, but we've got a sort of eye on the bigger picture as well as we go through.

So that's that's a very, very big picture and and that and that's what I sort of agree with.

The the sort of powers that be in the organisation.

What does that mean in terms of the day-to-day?

Sarah will talk in a second, a bit about how we've developed as a team out of the Council's cost of living response, and even before that response to various other crises of the past few years, we we have a grants team or we've always had a grants team delivering our local welfare assistance.

As I said, we're very lucky in Camden to have more generous budgets than than many, many other places. So we have about £5 million in local welfare assistance in Camden, which which is a very different situation to to many others around us. So that Orange grants team has a huge focus on can we use that money strategically and and target people who need it most. What we're developing at the moment is this welfare and advice team who will help do all of the.

Advice and support with debt.

I won't talk about this too much, so I think it's online, but we have advice model that we're developing at the moment, which will be very familiar to people.

But I think what would be helpful to talk about now is for, as I said, Sarah, to come off and just talk a little bit about how the team who are already in place got to this point and a bit about the culture.

That we've at the moment.

Sarah Sedley 12:42

Lovely. Thank you. Sorry.

Zoe Tyndall 12:42

Thanks Sarah.

Sarah Sedley 12:45

I'm Sarah sedley. I am the local welfare assistance programme manager.

As I said at the grant side of the team and I've been in the team for a few years, that it feels like a lot longer. So I started during the pandemic managing the COVID support line, which as in many local authorities then transformed into a welfare support line.

And we were given later. We were given the Household support fund to manage and we had three members of staff and all of that 2,000,000 for that six months had to go out in a £150 payment in direct awards.

People. So that was very challenging and a lot of payments that we had to process.

Later, we've been really lucky in cams and like Zoe said, we were given another cost

of living crisis fund locally, which is a £2 million budget and we were given 1/4 of £1,000,000 for resettlement grant for people leaving along Stanley Institution or being homeless.

Just to help them settle in and reduce the risk of them becoming homeless again. And we've always had an ethos of wanting to reach residents that are harder to reach, and we've done our absolute best to deliver outreach in communities where we might find them.

This is our team is obviously growing at this point because we can't do outreach and process all the awards and applications. So it starts to grow. We do outreach, we offer support through face to face appointments.

And appointments, we've done everything we can to sort of open up doorways to get the support that we need.

We also work with a lot of partners in the voluntary community sector and we've spent a lot of time building those partnerships and growing that. At the moment, we've got about 500 accounts that don't fit within the Council.

Or they might be frontline services in other departments in the Council and we make sure we're very clear on our briefings what people can get, what the support is.

And and.

After doing all this, our demand grew more and it was a lot of pressure on our partners. So we then opened up self referral pathway and but we decided at that point that we didn't want people just applying for grants that it was really important that people didn't really just fill an application and they get a grant. We want to give more sustainable long term advice. So at that point we started training up our staff to be able to do income maximisation advice, which is.

A very long.

Job with a lot of input. We are very lucky with the manager we have with a debt background, he was able to do that.

And we were able to sort of control the flow of applications that way. So that's.

That's how we got to where we are now.

The majority of our staff has been recruited externally. They're not redeployed from other areas of the Council or structured into our service.

They've been very adaptable.

Key thing is being a relational service showing empathy for residents.

But also really learning when we can't help anybody anymore. And that's a really difficult thing when you've spent a lot of time developing empathy in your teams.

So we are in a really good position where we've been able to develop the culture ourselves within the service because it is new and we're still at a point with Zoe coming in and this sort of.

Big transformation and having a permanent staff and structure where we get to shape what the culture is going to look like. So it's a really great time to come into the service with ideas and creativity to sort of inform what this is going to look like down the line.

So yeah, that's that's for me.

Zoe Tyndall 16:54

Amazing. Thank you, Sarah.

Oh, I've got a lot of noise.

Lasantha 16:59

I.

Zoe Tyndall 17:02

From somewhere.

Thank you.

Thank you, Sarah. And for all of that work to get the team to where we are at the moment, which is no small feat.

So.

There's AI won't.

Go into detail here, but we'll we'll share the slides afterwards, so we thought it would be useful for people to go to see afterwards just in real life case studies of where the team are at the moment. So you get a bit of a flavour if you come from an advice background about the kind of work that we're doing.

Or or if you don't to to get more of a sense of what that is.

So so this is a pretty typical.

Case of the the kind of person that we're supporting.

In Camden and the the kind of work that the team are doing, so it's it's very holistic.

We're not able to do the specialist advice at the moment because we don't have those specialists in place. We're planning to recruit those in our next round of recruitment recruitment over the summer, but we have.

Financial support coordinators in place at the moment who can do the sort of you

know, advocacy and with internal council teams and money management support. So there's a couple of case studies when you get the slides afterwards, you'll be able to see in a bit more detail.

So we wanted to talk very quickly about what it's like to work here as well and sort of work we've done in the team on on what we can commit.

In terms of what working with us will be like for new joiners coming in.

So for me the the complete focus is on really, really, really good quality management and that means not distant managers who you never see and all on teams, but really in person, connected, available management.

We know in our team at the moment that peer support is so, so, so important.

For the staff, this is exhausting work.

Working for the frontline advisors working with people who are often in in real distress, so making time for that peer support is really, really important and that's something.

That anyone coming in in management roles will will be asking them to make sure that they provide for their staff.

That, you know, community engagement is, is, is absolutely critical. We're a place based organisation and that doesn't mean even just doesn't mean working from home all the time. And it also doesn't mean working just from our office in Kings Cross all the time. It means getting out like really close to work communities are.

We know that celebrating success is very important, particularly when the work is so difficult.

And then Elsa and her team and her colleagues from the design and strategy team are really, really great at keeping us on this sort of continual.

Improvement cycle, so not just designing everything and then leaving it the same for the next 15 years, which does happen from time to time in councils, but actually like continually hearing back from people and changing as we go.

So and and and Camden as well. Councillors do have really, really good capacity for learning and development, particularly through things like our apprenticeship levy, which we can talk about with people are interested.

So this is the structure. So I'm racing through to make sure we've got time to get to questions. This is the structure of the team.

So most of the people in on the yellow side under which is Sarah's half of the service. Are already in place because that's the the bit of the work that we've been doing for the longest.

The purple welfare team. This is the new area and the pink, the design and insight and transformation. I guess the key thing I'd say about this structure and Edward talked to it a bit when we talk about the how we work closely with the data community of practise, but we really don't want to make the mistake that sometimes people do where there's an operational team over here getting busy doing their stuff. And then there's people thinking about strategy over here but making sure they're really, really connected.

So that we're taking all the learnings from the delivery.

Into how we design what we do.

So these are the roles that we're currently recruiting to.

This is the first wave of recruitment.

We'll be opening more over the summer.

They are all new roles, just reading to check. I've that right? Yeah, they're all new roles. So these are, you know, one thing I think that's important to say before we get into the detail is.

These jobs will be right for people who are excited by the prospect of coming in and designing something new.

And shaping it as they go. I can't promise to people.

Smooth, serene, consistent, well planned out.

And Elsa and Sarah would probably reiterate that that's not what it's been like over the last couple of months, but that's the flip side for designing something new.

So yes, it will be our jobs and the people who come into these roles to create that smoothness for our more junior staff. But it's it's test and learn in the very real sense as we go at the moment.

So there's three there. I'm actually not going to.

What shall I say about them? So the debt prevention programme manager, so this is.

The this the on the delivery plan that I showed earlier, this is really about.

Leading our advice function but also working really closely with our revenues colleagues across the rest of the Council to do the influencing and transformation work to, to move to different ways of working.

So there's sort of two sides to this role. One is the operational delivery and one is the sort of.

Yeah, cross organisational influencing.

Work.

The Financial Resilience team manager, that's that's really, really focused. That'll be

reporting into the debt prevention programme manager and that's really focused on getting this new advice function up and running. It's about making sure we've got that coaching.

Model really embedded in our team, that's about making sure that everything we're doing is working in the open, so continually sharing with stakeholders.

Yeah, Ed, should I hand over you to introduce yourself and talk a bit about the data side of things.

Edward Purchase 23:37

Yep.

Sure. So I'm Edward pedge. I'm, I'm Edward purchase. I'm the principal data analyst here at Camden and I will be matrix managing the senior data analyst role that's advertised as part of this recruitment campaign. And as always, explain the ambition of the team is very much around the delivery delivery of targeted and preventative support and of course, data analysis plays a really crucial part in that in identifying where the financial pressures are being experienced.

Zoe Tyndall 23:40

Thanks.

Edward Purchase 24:08

Who needs support? What kind of support they need and then evaluating the the outcomes achieved by the support offered?

So the senior data analyst role that's that's advertised here sits with within the team and very much works as part of that multidisciplinary ethos, but also exists within a wider community of practise of data analysts within Camden and that community of practises still information. But as has come in part has come together over the last year or two through quite significant investment, the organisation has made in professionalising the data analyst roles.

And that investment exists primarily as a a structure, but then also a professional framework. So if we are able to go on to the next slide, I have some.

Very underwhelming visualisations to the slide, but hopefully helpful so that structure exists as five tiers, the senior data analyst role sits in the middle but the across the full expanse of the five tiers, so the associate is the is the entry level role and then the principal is responsible for.

Strategic leadership of the data analyst profession across the entire organisation, the senior data analyst role SIT, sits in the middle. It's the first role of seniority that holds line management responsibility. But then they're also responsible.

Outside of line management for leadership within the community of practise making connections between data analysts to leverage data from different sources to bring in different expertise from from different data analysts within the community, and generally speaking so that level, the senior data analyst level where a portfolio of work for a particular business area like this debt prevention is held the pink boxes if you have looked at the senior day channels job.

Profile. Those are all the 10 domains of our professional framework, so those have been inherited from the national DDAC capabilities framework. We have taken that and then cantonized it, so made the language and some of the concepts a bit more specific to local authority and even more so to to Camden. But that gives you a bit of a feel for the role in in terms of the professional capabilities that are required.

Aside from the work directly with the team, there'll be lots of collaborative work across data analysts within the community, so pulling together data sets from social care, schools, housing and so on to do that, that kind of analysis to identify where resources should be targeted for preventative support across community of practise. We also have shared standards and shared tooling of.

'Cause the there's there's a benefit in terms of scalability of of two lane if we all adhere to common standards within our data, the interoperability between data becomes far more beneficial to everyday translist, irrespective of of their business area.

A quick word on tooling without going to detail. We are roughly half and half our programmers in Python. Programmers would generally aspire to be software agnostic in Camden and focus more on data than than the software.

And of course you have loads and loads of sequel databases across the organisation, built in lots of different software, mostly SQL Server, but lots and lots of Oracle as well. A few MySQL progress.

We have for business intelligence, we have click lots and lots of click apps and also some power BI apps, specifically JS software. We use qjs quite a lot and have recently procured.

Arc GIS online licences and we are increasingly working within as you're environment. We're building up our infrastructure into to be more focused on on cloud processing, also to mention data ethics. So we are very, very invested in doing our work with

data in an ethical way. And if you haven't seen it yet, I would encourage you to look up Camden's data charter. So that's a Co created charter which outlines the principles by which we ensure that our work with with data are ethical. So do do, give that a read.

I'm going to talk a little about how I would envisage the programmers work of of this senior data analyst. It's important to say that this is a senior role, so you will have autonomy and responsibility for developing your own programme of work. Start with a problem statement, source the relevant data, build the pipelines, build the data products and so on, and deploy those products, develop them iteratively. But the the kinds of things I would imagine existing within that work work programme would be quite a bit of work with external data sources.

Data from O NS data DWP data to better understand the landscape, how how the wider environment is shifting in terms of financial pressures on citizens. Lots of synthesis of internal data around a person entity and I mentioned previously schools, data, housing data, social care data and getting that benefit of the insight that can be derived from all the many, many touch points that Council has with our residents. Using those data to inform the targeting of operational.

Delivery. So I'd be envisaging and we've done a little bit in the past risk stratification modelling, potentially development of predictive models to inform that operational targeting and ultimately to ensure that the the operational services are data enabled and potentially developing things like single view interfaces for the operational staff which which we have across quite a few business areas, certainly evaluation work. So evaluation of the pilot work. So it was referring to previously to better understanding the outcomes.

Achieved and then a performance monitoring element. So just keeping on top of the operational activity being carried out.

That is a quick whistle stop tour of the role and the wider context of data analysis in Camden.

I'm around for the hour for any any specific questions around that role, so please do ask, but I will now pass back to Zoe.

Zoe Tyndall 30:39

Thanks, Ed.

Yeah. Maybe just one thing to add on the evaluation side of things is that we work with a couple of behavioural insights analysts within the team and when we're

looking at things like welfare reform trials.

We have already lined up and will hopefully do more sort of randomised control trial testing.

So that would be, yeah, it's a key role for the senior data analyst.

To to help lead on those types projects with our Behavioural Insights colleagues.

So I will, as I said, there's there's some other roles that we're recruiting to in the next round, which will be at the the sort of next round down in seniority. So we wanted to go out first and recruit the management team and then and then come to the the frontline roles. So you'll see.

Those come out later in the year.

But I don't need to look at those now. I don't think so. Yeah, I think that is everything we really wanted to talk through.

Actually, maybe one other thing. We'll just talk to her is a bit more about the recruitment process.

So.

The key thing here is.

Trying to take the bureaucracy and facelessness out of the recruitment.

To every extent possible.

So a couple of things that we do for people who are thinking, oh gosh, maybe this is a bit of a stretch for me or I'm not really sure if I.

Really cover all the bases there. You'll often see on job descript on job adverts.

People saying oh, just put in an application anyway, don't be worried but then they make the application process really long and you're sitting there on a Sunday night at 11:00 PM. So we're trying to get around that where we can and make it sort of as pain free as possible so that people do feel like they can put an application even if they're not entirely sure. So you'll find if you go on the Camden drops board and this is the same for pretty much all jobs that Camden recruits for.

We're not asking for lots of different documents and things, this is just a web form where you're asked for your sort of key bits of employment history and a couple of sort of supporting statements. But it's it's all pretty straightforward. I hope we're always interested in feedback.

Camden is really, I think, thoughtful and.

Leading within local government are really thinking about.

Correcting for biases.

And and genuinely inclusive recruitment where possible.

So applications are anonymized.

For level 5 roles and above, so the debt prevention manager and the senior senior data analyst, there's Camden policy that we don't do any all white short lists. We have diverse recruitment panels.

The interviews we will keep as streamliners possible.

Only one round of interviews.

One thing that we do for everyone at every level of applications is you'll get the questions from us in advance. Now it says 15 minutes here might be a little bit longer depending on the interview tends not to come a day in advance because I feel like sometimes that really benefits people without lots of caring responsibilities and other things going on in their week. But we'll always make sure at the beginning of an interview that the candidates have a little time to just look at the questions.

Pair and and and we say to everyone. That's because we're not recruiting you to be news presenters. We're not just looking for on the spot ability to rattle out a line.

We're looking for thoughtful engagement in the areas of expertise. The other really important thing that we're looking for is self reflection. So we say to everyone, it's the most normal thing in the world to leave an interview and think, oh, I wish I'd said or I wish I hadn't said so for all of the interviews we give everyone the rest of whatever that day is to.

Drop us a line.

You have to be an essay. In fact, it shouldn't be an essay. But this is what I thought went well. This is what I might have done differently, you know, and I've I've often. You know, made or changed recruitment decisions based on that self reflection. So it's not all about the stress of the interview itself.

And then finally, feedback we know is really, really important. So unfortunately, while we can't do feedback to everyone at application stage, we will do feedback for everyone at interview stage. So with all that in mind, like if you're interested.

And you're not sure that you cover all of the points on the on the job description of the person spec.

That's completely normal.

All of the evidence says that there are groups of people in society who are more likely to work in an interview anyway, so please, please do.

Apply if you're interested.

Not least because we'll be disservice will be growing and changing in lots of different ways over the next few years anyway, and it's always good to just meet people and

have C vs.

Yeah. So.

We'll finish there. Thank you for listening. Very happy to take questions.

Now, but also absolutely appreciate if you'd prefer to ask questions separately. So yeah, we'll take a bit of a moment, but if you'd prefer to drop me an e-mail, I think you've got my e-mail address.

On the recruitment site, or if not, I can put it in the chat and I'm yeah, very happy to take questions now or separately.

Elsa, Sarah. Ed. Have I missed anything? Just while we look at the questions?

Elsa Bardout 36:46

I don't think so, but we have one question for Ed from Mohammed. He says, what would success look like for the senior data analyst role?

What would you say in terms of success for the 1st 6 to 12 months?

Edward Purchase 37:06

So first month or so I said, I think certainly orientating yourself within within the organisation, within the community, within the team, but within the data where we're looking to leverage data from quite a number of sources. Of course those all come with their own complexities and nuance. So certainly a little bit of time to familiarise yourself.

With that.

In a in a six month period, I would definitely expect us to have at least the first iteration of some quite robust data products, whether they be routine monitoring reports.

Or or automated dashboards within click or power BI to support the operational services.

Yeah, a bit of an open, a bit of an open question in a way, because the the priorities will will be led by the work of the team as the team develops again in a six month period, we'd want to see some robust progress and and some tangible assets being developed even if they're their first iterations.

Hopefully that's helpful and R.

Elsa Bardout 38:16

Thank you.

Thank you. And Zoe, do you have anything to add from your perspective?

Zoe Tyndall 38:22

Yeah. Maybe just one thing I'd add to that is, so I think as you see from the structure like it's, I think it's really really important that we have genuinely multidisciplinary teams and that means, for example, some of our frontline advisors really thinking carefully about sort of agile approaches to continuous improvement of a service or really understanding user feedback. And similarly, I'd want someone coming in from a data side or or as Elsa has done from a service design side to really also start getting into the grips of the the policy area of debt and welfare rights.

Doesn't mean you need to go off and be an expert, but I'd I'd think as well like success for their senior data analyst would be if they don't come from a debt or welfare rights background. Really having built up some of their domain specific expertise, asking the right questions, getting really close to seeing the work that's being delivered in practise, because I think that's how we get a genuinely multidisciplinary team as if we all understand more and more of each other's. Roles and expertise as well.

Elsa Bardout 39:23

Thank you. Very. I see we have a hand up everness free also to just raise a hand if if you want to ask your question directly and then I'll go back to the Q&A.

Sorry I can't see, I I don't see your name. I think it's just market as SL. If you have your hand up, do you want to unmute?

SL 39:41

Alright, yes, just a question for Ed. Really. You've got a very ambitious programme of. Data products. So the question is really Jeff, the technical capability.

To create the data products in a sense for the technical infrastructure, I mean, do you have a enterprise data warehouse to integrate all of data?

Edward Purchase 40:09

Yeah. So local authorities have very, very many different data sources that we'll have over 100 databases within the organisation. And then you, it's considered external sources as well.

There, there's certainly variation across the organisation in terms of how well structured the reporting architecture associated with those are, and we've got lots and lots of different lines of ETL currently built in a couple different.

Softwares to expose those data and make them available for data analysis products. We are an early days.

In kind of piloting stage of developing a shared virtualized infrastructure.

So if if you're familiar with cloud architecture, it's it's a data mesh architecture. So essentially all the data are virtualized, so physical data are left at source and then the reporting logic is contained within transformation layers and then loaded through those transformation layers into a cloud environment. So that that is the vision that we're working towards over the next maybe two years across the estate. But it is a really quite significant estate in terms of number of data sources and the number and significant variation of business areas that are that are generating those data sources.

So yes, we do have the infrastructure that existed at the moment, but we are also investing in improving that infrastructure and these these products are.

Going to be new and amazing and innovative for the service, but there there is a precedent around the organisation for not not dissimilar products in other business areas.

And yeah, we absolutely need the capabilities. We do. We do have strong data analysis capabilities in the organisation in terms of people and skills.

But of course this the individual moving into this role will have to have a strong technical skill set to achieve the ambitions of the role.

Hopefully that's that's helpful.

Zoe Tyndall 42:14

Thanks, Doug. There's lots of other sort of data specific questions in the chat, so maybe Ed, let me take David's question, which is about the sort of deliverables for the team as a whole. Well, maybe you can organise some thoughts about lots of data questions.

So David, thanks for your question. So have you identified any key deliverables at this stage or is it in development?

So for example, are there targets around reduction in long term debt and if so, which types or improvement in debt resolution, time frames, et cetera? So yeah, really good question. We do have some headline.

Targets already, but certainly as all other team gets in place, we'll be fleshing them out and putting a bit more of like detailed planning around them. I think that the. The key thing to say about this is as we're sort of touching on it, when I talked about the delivery plan is we're we're not a debt advice agency. You know, it's not as simple as being Citizens Advice or Mary Ward or any of the other brilliant national local debt advice agencies. We're the people that people owe money to, and we have a responsibility to support people and that creates a really interesting, you know, some people look at that and say there's a conflict to attention. I think that it's it's it's more positive than that.

You know, we councils have this this issue across the board. You know we we want to help people look after their children really well, but we also have a responsibility to take children into care where we think that parents aren't like able to do that. We have it with we're a landlord, we want to support people to live in our homes. But we also unfortunately sometimes have to evict people.

So, so there's there's many, many complex.

Areas where we're trying to do book toast things at once.

O in terms of the deliverables for us, what is really, really important to me is that we have we have objectives which are about improving lives for residents, which is primarily like there's many ways that you can improve people's lives. It's actually not necessarily primarily by getting them more money in their pockets, through welfare rights work or debt reduction work in this role that I've done in, in previous councils, whenever you do lots and lots of research for people who use advice services.

The main driver, the main thing that they say about the service six months or 12 months or two years after using it is like how did that service make me feel at a time when I was in a very, very difficult place in my life? This the the people on the end of the phone are in the office, made me feel like this or like that. And that tends to be a much stronger driver of of outcomes than anything else. Obviously. Then we have a responsibility to make sure people are claiming the right benefits.

Some estimates say that £120 million a year goes unclaimed in benefits income just in Camden.

So that is a huge, huge issue and one of the main things we can do to support people is make sure they access the benefits they're entitled to so that incomes maximised for residents, either through benefits or through access to better work, is really important. That's definitely one of our drivers.

Debt resolved to us is also really, really important one and if we ever get into a place

where we're on the other side of the table from our revenues, colleagues, they're trying to collect money. We're just trying to stop residents paying it. We're not going to get very far. So we have to have a debt recovery.

Gold.

And you know, that's for me. That's also a really important thing that the most useful thing we can do for people is help them get into good money management behaviours.

There are a lot of people in negative budgets in the country at the moment, especially in Camden, so it's not always going to be possible and where people can't afford to pay their debts, their costs to us will take the right steps to write it off. But the bit collecting income for the Council is a goal for us.

And the debt prevention programme manager in particular will work with me and Sarah really closely to think about how we manage those goals in terms of the main debtor service stress points.

It's housing related costs, particularly rent is the biggest area of.

Income collection challenge for us and for lots of other councils, I said respect over time. It will become social care. We're very lucky though. We have really excellent revenues teams who are.

A lot further along than lots of other Council revenues teams, so I hope that's helpful as a big picture. So yes, we have some, some broad goals. We don't have all of it nailed down just yet, but it's something for the management team to do when they're in place. Sorry, I could talk about that for ages, but I'll stop. There's lots of other questions, sorry.

Elsa Bardout 47:09

Thanks a lot. Sorry, that's great.

Perfect.

I see there are some hands up, so maybe we can go to the hands up and then and if you want to look at the the other Q&A questions. So Daniel, first, all you have your hand up.

Daniel Kelly 47:27

Yeah, thanks very much. I mean, first of all, really exciting to hear about the initiatives that you're starting here and the team you're building and also incredibly refreshing, looking at your recruitment process, a very progressive approach and and really

really thankful for it. I think you more or less were touching on this because I'm interested in the programme manager position and how that's going to work with the revenues team. And just, I don't know if there's anything more you can say around that and.

Do you see that as almost like a 50/50 split, or is it a sort of 80% with the team and then this 20% on the revenue side?

Or, you know, can you give a bit more like, what is the responsibility precisely in that space? Is it just consulting in or is there some ownership there?

Zoe Tyndall 48:17

Yeah, good question. So I think at the beginning, I would suspect just because we're getting the new operational team set up, there will be a bit of a waiting towards the the delivery.

We do, though, have a sort of.

Not a nightmarish sort of bureaucratic one, but a project plan of a sort of 12 to 24 month plan for what? Working with our revenues, colleagues looks like in terms of sort of getting to best practise. So it's not starting from scratch and and the team's done a team's done a lot of work already.

Our revenues, colleagues, the good thing is we've got sponsors, the sort of senior sponsorship for the project is the, the chief executive is extremely invested in this work and.

The the Section 151, which the finance director.

Is is the sort of sponsor of this, so it's it's definitely, yeah, there's it's not a sort of thing that's been pushed up with no interest from the top.

It's similarly with our politicians being a bit of a change in in the political leadership of Camden.

Since the election, but the the cabinet leads that we still have are also really keen to see this go forward.

Daniel Kelly 49:31

Great. Thank you.

Zoe Tyndall 49:31

Hello thanks.

Elsa Bardout 49:34

Thank you. And then I think we have Turk.

Oh, you're on mute. Sorry.

Tarik 49:48

There we go. Yeah. Thanks a lot. Everyone. Just wanted to ask a quick question around the roles. So you've got 6 roles.

Each sort of role has a different agenda when making the application. If we are interested in the different sort of areas, do we have to apply for each one individually, or can we just maybe just give an order of our preference?

Zoe Tyndall 50:19

Good question. I think so. For the ones that are currently live, the three that are currently live it.

It's a good question which I should have thought about earlier. I think actually it will require you to do separate applications because the the questions on the thing will be slightly different.

But in the interest of keeping everything simple, if you are making multiple applications, please don't feel the need to rewrite all of the employment history out on each one.

Because we will have all of that already there, so feel free to copy and paste and and. Anything else where you can save time between the two, but I think the supporting statements.

Ask for will be a bit different, and we'll use that in the application process.

Tarik 51:04

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. That was just my question. And and yeah, it's just really exciting to see someone growing up and raised in Camden. It's nice to see what's happening on the other side. So thank you.

Zoe Tyndall 51:15

Right. Thanks a lot.

Elsa Bardout 51:17

Thanks a lot.

Edward, do you want to go to some of the Q&A questions about the data analyst?

Edward Purchase 51:26

Yep, sure. I was typing out an unhelpfully long response to Claudia, so I'll just say OK.

Elsa Bardout 51:31

Oh, that's fine. Thank you for doing that.

Edward Purchase 51:34

So speak more about how the CD data analysts work would work together across teams and how the larger data work works together and what I'd started typing was.

So we we work in a very deliberately relational way. So there's a real focus on data analysts being part of a conversation and we've we've tried very hard to avoid a transactional model of data analysis where there's a request and a response type interaction with data analysts. So being there at the at the start of the project.

Understanding the nomenclature of a particular business area, the culture, what the ambitions are, what the anxieties are, what the risks that are held are, are all really, really important to doing effective data analysis and then in terms of collaboration across the wider community of practise across the organisation. So there's now around 40 of us in total spread out in different parts of the organisation. There'll be occasions where there's formal collaborative working on potentially if there's if there's a project that leverages data from from different business areas.

And needs that expertise, but then more informally, day-to-day, there's there's more ad hoc collaboration. If you're aware of or not aware of, and sort of reach out to the community if, for example, you would like to do some natural language processing of of the data within your business area, but you don't have that skill set. It's a way of working to to go and reach out into the community. And of course there'll be more than more than one day training, less that has done natural language processing with council dated before and can jump in and share their codes.

Kind of gives you suggestions so that pertains to technical skill, but then also domain.

Expertise cause of course all our different data sources have their own complexities and nuance, so collaborating in a more ad hoc way so that you can jump in and out source data from from different areas and benefit from the diversity of skills and

experience across the wider community is is all.

Important features of the way of working for for data analysts.

Should I jump onto? That's helpful for for Claudia. I'll. I'll jump on to another one.

Elsa Bardout 53:46

Yeah, go for it.

Edward Purchase 53:49

So Julia split between the different parts.

It depends a lot where the.

A lot where where the business area is at in terms of its data maturity and the thinking in this business area area is very, very mature and the ambition to to use data in such a proactive.

Targeted preventative way.

Makes an environment for more exciting analysis, I think as opposed to potentially other other business areas that are less mature in their thinking.

So that characterises the work I would discourage you from thinking of. Of those 10 capability domains too much in isolation. Because of course, there's never really any point that you're doing one and none of the others. If you're, if you're leading a project to develop a new data warehouse, you're you're doing data management and project management. You're communicating with people so that there's sort of dynamism to the way that you'd you'd use your capabilities against those, those 10 domains.

So I'll jump onto.

A data dictionary one.

Uh, from Jesse. So it's a data dictionary process. We're seeing the data channels can understand what different fields in a table mean, what environment does the team use, Python. And so we are.

We're currently developing a lot of the formal formalities of data governance are roles, responsibilities and documentation. So we've started the process of documenting all our data within conceptual and logical entity relationship diagrams and also a data, an organisation wide data dictionary that's held within Microsoft per view, which is a data governance cataloguing software within Azure.

So I would envisage the senior data analyst participating in that and and building up the the chunk of that that pertains to the the cost of living data.

What environments do we use Python in? So currently we primarily run Python on our machines on our Camden laptops, but we are increasingly.

Running notebooks in Azure environments just to get the the scalability.

The processing.

And.

Elsa Bardout 56:20

Yeah, maybe you can take a just a question on carrier switching and then we can move back to the hands and if people need to go, feel free to. But we can stay 15 more minutes to answer questions.

Edward Purchase 56:34

OK, so we are not currently advertising an associate role, but we may well be in the future. It sounds like a really positive career progression. I'm slightly biased in that, but it sounds like you're doing all the right things, so certainly doing a data analysis boot camp, and there's lots and lots of resources available online. I really rate data camp if you're if you're trying to get to grips with with programming.

Yeah. So I'm. I'm worried. I don't do that question justice in the the short space of time, but maybe we can pick up outside.

Elsa Bardout 57:14

Yes, thanks a lot.

I'll go to Joel now. You have your hand up.

Joel 57:21

Hi there. Can you all hear me OK?

Elsa Bardout 57:24

Yes, perfect.

Joel 57:26

My question is very similar I think to Daniel's, but about the financial Resilience team manager role, so I what I see when I look at that description is someone that you want to be a coach, you want someone to keep them around and then the direction very, very clear on in the team. You want someone that's going to communicate very

clearly the targets that we need to meet.

You want someone that's going to be able to test things very, very quickly, see if they work.

My question is, what is there anything I'm missing? Really it sounds like a really exciting role, but is there anything else that you like that person to do and what do you want them to have done before and how important is that?

Zoe Tyndall 58:04

Definitely. Thank you, Joel. Great question.

Yeah, I think what, what you pulled out are definitely the main points I think.

It's.

I have to sound like I'm not being really mean about councils through all this. I love counsellors, I love working counsellors, but sometimes there is an attitude to management which is like the core bits of management, which is time sheets and annual leave and sick and telling people often they haven't done a letter correctly and I think just what we want to really stress in this is that this is a different type of team and a different type of management responsibility. And so as you said that coaching is really, really, really important, like as Sarah was saying, we've hired lots of young people.

Mostly from Camden, but often through the Council's own employment and skills. Team so she knows to people, particularly after the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. So they really know Camden communities. They're really empathetic. They speak the languages that our communities speak. You know, all these really, really important things. But they are learning a lot of new skills. And so that coaching is really, really important, which is not expecting everyone to be.

You know, 100% on day one, but how like using those really strengths based approaches to help people get there and help them support each other to get there. Especially I think, bearing in mind what I was saying earlier on as well, like, this is hard, exhausting work and one of the real challenges that any frontline advisors have is that they they take on the stress of their clients and they go home thinking about it. And often it it bumps up against people's own experiences as well. And it makes it really hard. So I think that.

Man, there's, you know, for managers really looking out for that, seeing where it's happening and making sure that we're we're creating a supportive space as possible to make sure that people are able to leave their work on a Friday afternoon and and

have their own weekends. I think it is very, very hard. I don't really have the answers on how to do that, but that's that's super important.

So the well-being of the staff.

Is huge and then then the other thing is like making sure it's a. It's a very, very inclusive environment and sort of actively inclusive rather than, oh, this is a diverse group of people. Therefore it is inclusive. Obviously our communities are very inclusive, are very diverse and and even if we didn't care about anything else, just to do a good job, we need to, we need to have a diverse range of staff as well.

So I think yeah, making sure that we've really got that that genuinely inclusive.

Culture being set, especially at the beginning and that support for well-being, obviously those two things go hand in hand a lot as well.

I guess the last thing is is just on, I think a big thing that that person will do the financial Resilience team manager is working on the welfare rights campaigns. So working with the debt prevention manager with the senior data analyst with Sarah to say, hey, we think there's a really big problem of underclaiming this type of benefit. We can see that in the data from our partners at policy and practise and and from our own internal data.

Let's design A campaign. Let's go out. Let's contact these people. Let's address it. So there'll be a bit of the inbound work that comes in, but also designing that sort of proactive work at the same time.

OK, quite a lot of things now I listen all apps.

Joel 1:01:30

Thank you.

Elsa Bardout 1:01:34

Thank you, Zoe. And I think we have one more hand up.

From King George.

I think you're on mute, sorry.

Sorry, I can see you muted or maybe I can unmute.

Zoe Tyndall 1:01:57

Oh, you're on mute.

King George Ahatsi 1:02:00

OK. Sorry, sorry.

Zoe Tyndall 1:02:02

It happens to the best of us.

Elsa Bardout 1:02:03

That's alright.

King George Ahatsi 1:02:04

Yeah, I would like to find out from you is a rule only open for those within. Calm them only.

Zoe Tyndall 1:02:15

With the sorry, what did you say the line broke up a little.

King George Ahatsi 1:02:18

I mean, I mean the rule is the rule open only for those we did come down only.

Elsa Bardout 1:02:25

It's not just for Camden residents. Anyone can apply.

King George Ahatsi 1:02:30

OK. Thank you.

Elsa Bardout 1:02:32

You're welcome.

And I think I saw one final question in the queue and they it's another question for Edward.

What are the main challenges the team is currently facing and how can this role help address them? And then there's a second point to that question.

Edward Purchase 1:02:57

Major challenges in.

In Camden, as an organisation.

From the state of Dayton analysts, data quality is certainly a challenge, and I think any any large organisation where you have.

Humans recording data about humans.

Within the context of quite complex business processes where there's change happening and quite a bit of nuance in the operational areas, that data quality is always a bit of a challenge. So that's something that we are.

Aware of and grappling with and looking at all the stages of of the life cycle of data to ensure that our data is robust as they can be and as useful for analysis.

And then the the second part was how does the data team collaborate with other departments within the Council?

OK so.

The data analyst community of practise model.

Is.

It's essentially a kind of semi centralised model where they try and sit out with within different business areas but then are are centralised in the extent that there's 11 central point, which is the principal data analyst sitting underneath our Chief data officer.

Our Chief data officer.

Also holds line management responsibility for the other principal versions of the other data profession. So our engineers are architects and potentially at some point in the future, our scientists.

And also sit within that central hub. There's also GIS resource in that central hub and it's where our Dbas, our database administrator, administrators sit. And so there's that semi centralised model where we have a core hub which includes all data, professions and kind of the centre of the data analysts. But then the data analysts are structurally split out across the organisation and that's to ensure that we we benefit from elements of centralization, standardisation.

Resources, shared processes, shared tooling, but then also that they need given data analysis close enough to the business area that they work in to to fully understand it, understand the relevant policy, the relevant legislation, the the people, the culture.

Because that that's so crucial to to doing data analysis properly. So that's very high level view of of how the how the the model looks and how data professionals work with other other departments in the Council.

Elsa Bardout 1:05:40

Thank you, Edward.

Zoe Tyndall 1:05:40

Maybe, maybe, maybe.

Maybe we can.

Elsa Bardout 1:05:42

Did anyone want to oh sorry. Did you want to add something so?

Zoe Tyndall 1:05:45

I I was just gonna say Nicola asked a question in the chat, which Sarah and I have put some answers in, but I thought unless there are any final questions.

Ed and Elsa, you might also like to give a one line answer to what do you enjoy about working for Canberra Council? There's a nice way to end our Mondays.

Might put you on the spot.

Elsa Bardout 1:06:09

Do you wanna go for sedward?

Edward Purchase 1:06:09

Did.

OK, I'll go first.

I think open House sessions, that's gonna be a highlight. That's my favourite thing.

So about working in Camden, aside from open house Sessions, Camden does really genuinely support innovation in a way that officers in all different roles.

Back end support kind of roles like data analysts but then also front end practitioners are given this space and the support to innovate and really own their their work. And we have lots and lots of team managers, service heads.

Who not only lead their services and do amazing work, but also very, very active in research communities that are in pH DS at the same time and are really developing, testing, implementing new ways of, of doing things. And it's great to be part of an organisation that the values that and the supports of.

I'll see you.

Elsa Bardout 1:07:07

Thank you. My answer is actually gonna be quite similar. I was thinking something along those lines, so I'm part of the strategy and design team in Camden. And I definitely agree with what Ed was saying. I think Camden has a four, is very innovative, really believes in what it's doing. The people really care. I think we have lovely teams of people in the Council and everyone is very open minded.

And willing to look for new ways of doing things.

Ways to improve our processes.

And that that's really exciting and it makes it really enjoyable working with people and creating services that that we believe in and that we can keep on making better over time.

Zoe Tyndall 1:08:02

Sarah, would you like to have the last word?

I'll put you on the spot.

Sarah Sedley 1:08:11

I mean I I do like I said earlier, this is just it's a great place to work, but it's been.

The last few months have been the best. Like I do love the emergency response, but that did go on for quite a long time and it and it's such a relief to have a permanent instructor in place, but something really innovative and new that we will just really excited about being part of really.

And they're really lucky position so.

We welcome welcoming our applications.

Zoe Tyndall 1:08:47

Amazing.

Thank you, Sarah and Elsa for staying late and for your time, and thank you everyone else for coming. As I say, if you did have any other questions that you wanted to ask, feel very free to drop me a note on LinkedIn or my e-mail address, which I guess we will send out afterwards because I can't put anything in the chat.

Elsa Bardout 1:09:10

I've added your e-mail in the chat for everyone to see.

End.