

COUNCIL: 25 JANUARY 2024

TACKLING POVERTY, EQUALITY & PUBLIC HEALTH STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH & EQUALITY

Participation Strategy 2023-27

The Administration's '[Stronger, Fairer, Greener](#)' policy statement, and the Council's [Corporate Plan 2023-26](#), include the commitment to: *"Introduce a new Community Participation Strategy, amplifying the voices of people who are currently less likely to get involved in the decision-making process.* This complies with the legal requirement in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for local authorities to produce a Participation Strategy. In developing the strategy, officers have engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including elected members and the Council's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, as part of an 11-week period of public consultation. The online survey was translated into a number of community languages and hard copies were printed and made publicly available across the city. I am pleased to say that we received over 1,300 responses and face-to-face engagement was undertaken with more than 200 people from under-represented groups. The draft Guide to the Constitution also formed part of the public consultation process, which is all about helping people understand how the Council works so they can get involved. I am particularly pleased with the extensive engagement work that has been done with seldom heard voices and we have received lots of insight into what we can do as a Council to improve engagement and drive-up responses from the under-represented groups. The Participation Strategy 2023-27 was approved by Cabinet on 18 January.

Measles Mumps and Rubella Vaccine

There has been a recent outbreak of measles among young children in Cardiff and so I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of parents making sure that their children are up to date with the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine and that new parents make sure that they are taking up the opportunity in the first place. The MMR vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine that protects against three highly infectious diseases, which can easily spread between people who are not vaccinated and can potentially be fatal or lead to medical complications, including encephalitis (swelling of the brain) and hearing loss. The full course of the MMR vaccine requires two doses which is given at 12-13 months of age and at age 3 years and 4 months. If anyone has missed doses of the MMR vaccine for their children, they can still have it at any age. It is never too late to catch up on missed doses. If anyone is unsure if they or their child(ren) have had both doses of the vaccine, then they should contact their GP practice. I would urge everyone to protect themselves and their children.

Shingles Vaccine

I would also like to take this opportunity to raise the importance of ensuring that those people who qualify should take up the shingles vaccine. Shingles is an infection that affects many people as they get older and is caused by the same virus that results in chicken pox. Unlike other infectious diseases, you don't catch it from someone else. Most people had chicken pox when they were young. The virus that caused chicken pox can stay in your body for the rest of your life without you knowing it is there and it can then become active again later in life.

About 1 in 5 people who have had chicken pox will develop shingles. This means that every year in England and Wales, tens of thousands of people will have shingles. Although shingles can occur at any age, the risk, severity and complications of shingles all increase with age. Each year, a number of people aged 65 and over are admitted to hospital with shingles in Wales.

The eligibility criteria for a free shingle vaccine changed on 1 September 2023. Following this date, people are eligible for a free shingles vaccine when they become aged 65 and will remain eligible until they become 80 years of age. However, if someone was aged 65 before 1 September 2023, then they will have to wait until they reach 70 years of age in order to be eligible for the vaccine. Even if someone has already had shingles, they should still get the vaccine as it will reduce their risk of getting shingles again. The shingles vaccine will help to protect people by boosting their immunity and reducing the risk of getting shingles. If someone does go on to have shingles, then their symptoms may be milder and the illness shorter.

If someone meets the age criteria, or are severely immunosuppressed and aged over 50, then their GP practice should get in touch with them to arrange an appointment if they are eligible. If this doesn't happen or anyone thinks that they might have missed the invitation, then they should contact their GP practice and tell them that they think that they are due for a shingles vaccination. If anyone has any questions or wants more information, they can visit the [NHS 111 Wales website](#), talk to their doctor or nurse, or call NHS 111 Wales.

HIV Support Group

HIV continues to be a major global public health issue, having claimed approximately 40.4 million lives so far. There is no cure for HIV infection; however, with increasing access to effective HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care, HIV infection has become a manageable chronic health condition, enabling people living with HIV to lead long and healthy lives.

Over the past five years, the Welsh Government, working with other partners, has made huge progress in improving access to HIV testing and treatment in Wales, and also published the HIV Action Plan for Wales 2023-2026 in March 2023. The Council has worked for some time with partners as part of Fast Track Cardiff & Vale who are passionately committed to making a difference to people living with HIV in Cardiff and achieving the goal of zero new infections by 2030. The Fast Track Cities initiative is a global partnership that works towards zero new infections, eliminating HIV related stigma and improving the quality of life of people living with HIV.

The Council's Community Volunteering Team, together with staff at Central Library Hub, have been working to develop a HIV community group, with the ethos being that it is 'run by and for people with HIV'. In line with this ethos, as part of the early stages of developing this new community group, a survey was undertaken to find out what people with HIV wanted from such a group so that the structure of the group could be tailored according to need. Peer support is important in helping people to share their own experiences and knowledge to support each other and improve wellbeing. Support groups are also safe spaces for people living with HIV to make connections with other people living with HIV, share their experiences, and get connected to resources that promote healthy living.

A volunteer facilitator has been recruited and the new HIV community group was launched this month. It will provide a safe space for people to connect with others who are going through similar experiences. Fast Track Cymru kindly funded training for the volunteer and staff involved in the setting up of the group, who also attended an HIV awareness session delivered by the George House Trust. I am very excited about the future of this group and hope that it will impact positively on all those who attend. Anyone interested in attending the group should phone: 07970 283 132.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers Update

In August 2023, the Council established a dedicated project team to respond to the exceptional new demand generated by the Home Office's Streamlined Asylum Processing initiative. This team is providing support to new refugees who have received a positive decision on their asylum application whilst living in asylum accommodation in our city, helping them to start their lives in the UK. From August to the end of December 2023, the team has already supported 500 people, helping them to secure suitable accommodation, find employment, access education and English classes and much more. This support helps them on their way to independence and achieving their potential as new citizens, as well as feeling welcome in both Cardiff and Wales. This work benefits from strong partnership working with the voluntary sector and effective cross-departmental working within the Council, which ensures that we provide the best start for people who have experienced multiple disadvantage and barriers, and recognise how these issues are connected. In 2024, we anticipate further demand from Streamlined Asylum Processing and the Council is putting in place plans to increase the availability of temporary accommodation in the city.

Food Strategy

Round two of the CCR (Cardiff Capital Region) Sustainable Food Challenge has commenced. Twelve applications were received involving a range of demonstrator projects focusing on innovative low carbon farming practices, dynamic trading tools and health benefits of sourcing from local supply chains. AMRC (Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre) Cymru was the successful applicant and has been awarded a contract to provide a number of smaller projects in the area of 'Innovative farming practices to reduce carbon emissions and increase yield'. Projects will include retrofitting agricultural vehicles and machines, and the use of Agri-Tech and Agri-Waste to lower emissions and increase production.

TACKLING POVERTY & SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Cost-of-Living Update

A refreshed Cost-of-Living publicity campaign was launched in December 2023 and will continue to run through to Spring 2024. The campaign will include a new animated video highlighting the help available. Households that received financial support under the Cost-of-Living Discretionary Fund last year have received a follow-up call from the Advice Team to check-in on them and to offer further money advice support. Given all the changes to bill, rents and mortgages, customers are being encouraged to speak to the team to have an updated financial health check and to ensure that they are accessing all the help that is available to them. Alongside this, a joint piece of work is being undertaken with the Council Tax team, supporting customers who are in Council Tax arrears and highlighting those who were previously supported through the Cost-of-Living Discretionary Fund with the hope of the Council being able to provide further financial advice and practical assistance. Food and Fuel Champions are continuing to provide support in the Warm Welcome Spaces in our Hubs and libraries and are assisting with the distribution of Winter Warm Packs, which include hot water bottles, winter clothing, (hat, scarf, gloves) and draught excluders.

Advice Services

Over the Christmas period, the Council's Money Advice Team at Central Library Hub supported the city's Foodbank by becoming a Foodbank distribution centre. The team provided food parcels to 30 families who were struggling over the festive period. The team also provided advice on income maximisation and obtained any emergency payments that the clients were eligible for. This included providing 80 Fuel bank vouchers. The Fuel bank voucher scheme has provided 210 vouchers to residents since the launch of the scheme in October 2023.

Adult Learning

In December, the Adult Learning Team continued to deliver Cooking on a Budget courses from a number of schools in Ely. Four courses were delivered, including a slow cooker session, as well as the popular air fryer cooking sessions, which were attended by a total of 73 people. Following the Cooking on a Budget courses, some of the participants have gained their accreditation in Food Safety Level 2 and are now volunteering with Dusty Forge Repair Café and the St Vincents Centre. One of the participants is now running the café at the Dusty Forge where they prepared and cooked 65 breakfasts on their first morning of opening.

Last month also saw the end of the 11-week term time childcare courses. The courses ranged from Level 1 to Level 2 and are accredited by Agored Cymru. Throughout the term:

- 78 people achieved Level 2 Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools (TA)
- 36 people achieved Level 1 Parenting Skills (Managing Children's Behaviour)
- 32 people achieved Level 1 Child Psychology
- 13 people achieved Entry Level Child's Play – Designing a Game/Childcare Taster

Most adult learners will be returning throughout the new term to progress on to other childcare courses and improve their knowledge and skills. Some of the learners who achieved the Level 2 Supporting Teaching & Learning qualification have been offered employment either in a local school or with a childcare agency.

Play Update

Children's Play Services embraced Christmas fun over the festive period, providing a host of Christmas activities for children attending play sessions across the city. The events included a range of arts and crafts, including making homemade snow globes, fridge magnets and tree decorations. The team also held a mini-Christmas party for the children and young people at Yr Hafan hostel in Grangetown.

Alongside Christmas activities that took place throughout December, Children's Play Services, with the help of the Child Friendly City Team, were able to offer children and their families free tickets to the Bute Park at Christmas light trail. The teams were able to support over 150 children and their families within Riverside, Splott and Llanrumney areas, as well as children from the Rover Way Gypsy Traveller Site and Yr Hafan hostel. It is great to see the hard work of the teams being able to support families across the city, especially during the Christmas period.

Butetown Youth Development Project

In December, the Butetown Youth Development Project supported 12 local young people into employment, including positions at Cardiff Council, the Department of Work and Pensions, and in the security, retail and engineering sectors. In addition, 17 young people completed their Door Supervisor training, First Aid courses, and Customer Service and Digital Skills training. These young people will continue to receive bespoke support to source employment opportunities within their chosen career path. It is great to see the hard work of the Into Work Teams helping young people in the city to gain employment and enhance their skills.

Cardiff Youth Service Update

Cardiff Youth Service has had a busy period supporting young people throughout the communities of Cardiff, including in the city's open access youth clubs which have provided safe spaces for young people. Youth Support Workers in schools have also continued to support young people, either on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. This provides important support to our schools and other educational providers. The Youth Service also has teams on the streets engaging with young people and providing information, support and guidance. The service also makes an important contribution to young people's learning by providing bespoke activities and opportunities in schools and in the community.

Cardiff Youth Service Football Event

The joint partnership project between Cardiff Youth Service, Cardiff & Vale College and South Wales Police is supported by Cardiff City Football Club Foundation and aims to build positive relationships between young people who live in different areas

of the city. Teams from Gabalfa, Llanrumney, St Mellons, Powerhouse in Llanedeyrn, Eastmoors in Splott, North Ely and Caerau, as well as South Wales Police and youth workers competed in the tournament that was hosted at Cardiff & Vale College. Bringing young people together from so many communities enabled staff and young people to build relationships and partnerships that will continue to build community cohesion into the future. Young people enjoyed a competitive league format where an online application kept participants up-to-date with their results and league position. This excellent event will be replicated over the coming year and build on what was a successful start.

Christmas Activities

In December, staff and 15 young people at North Ely youth centre prepared and served a two-course Christmas meal for over 40 older people from the local community. They also provided entertainment and games. This inter-generational project helped to develop relationships, respect and understanding between different parts of the community.

The Youth Service Team also brought young people together from across the city's communities for an ice-skating event at Winter Wonderland. 304 young people were provided with a free skate, including many young people from the city's deprived communities who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to do so. This was an excellent way to finish the autumn school term and enable our staff and young people to come together to reflect on a busy and action-packed programme of activities.

Riverside Fitness Programme

Following on from the successful work with partners across Riverside over the summer months, the Council's Passport to the City Team, in partnership with Cardiff Youth Service, Riverside Warehouse and ION, is pleased to announce the launch of project Kickstart. This is a 12-week physical activity programme that is designed to engage young people and promote the numerous benefits of sports and exercise for their physical and mental well-being. The primary goal of the programme is to create a positive impact on the local community by providing a structured and engaging environment for young individuals, encouraging their active participation in physical activities. In collaboration with the Passport to the City Team and Cardiff Youth Service, ION will deliver a 12-week programme that aims to inspire and motivate participants and features influential individuals from both the sporting world and local communities in Cardiff, emphasising diversity in ethnicity and gender.

Digital Youth Work

The Digital Youth Work Team continues to provide a sector-leading service to the young people of Cardiff. The team's work continues to be recognised nationally with other local authority youth services seeking advice and support from the team as digital youth work continues to grow across Wales. The team is regularly asked to train and develop provision in other services and agencies, and this has also assisted in generating income for the Youth Service.

Youth Work Quality Mark

Cardiff Youth Service has been assessed by the Education Workforce Council and has successfully achieved the Silver Youth Work Quality Mark. Assessors undertook visits to a range of youth provisions to assess the quality of the work undertaken by staff. During their visits, assessors looked at the involvement of young people in designing, delivering and evaluating youth work provision. They also looked at the curriculum offer and the breadth of the activities and opportunities that are being delivered in Cardiff. Assessors were particularly complimentary about the support offered to the workforce and the processes in place to support staff wellbeing. The last part of the assessment looked at the Youth Service's approach to ensuring that activities and opportunities were providing support to the diverse communities of Cardiff. I want to say a big thank you to all the staff, students and volunteers that make Cardiff Youth Service the creative, innovative and dynamic service it is. I should also mention the involvement of the city's young people who are integral to providing a service that meets the needs of our diverse communities.

Councillors Julie Sangani & Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Members for Tackling Poverty, Equality & Public Health (Job Share)
19 January 2024