



County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting WEDNESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2021, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

12 April 2021

Councillors Susan Elsmore & Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Sent via e-mail.



Dear Councillor Elsmore & Councillor Thorne,

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2021 – ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISOLATION & LONELINESS FACED BY CARDIFF RESIDENTS FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee to both you and officers for attending the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on the 3rd February, providing Members with an opportunity to discuss and assess how the Council is addressing and mitigating social isolation & loneliness faced by Cardiff residents following the outbreak of Covid-19. Our thanks also go to the external witnesses who attended the meeting, all of whom are copied into this letter. Their contribution both verbally and through their written submissions which were incorporated into the meeting papers were sincerely valued by Committee Members.

In a bid to assist you in addressing this challenging issue, Members of the Committee have requested that I feed back the following comments and observations from the meeting:

- **Ongoing Broadband Costs** – When exploring the tablet gifting scheme and its sustainability, a Member asked if the Council had incurred any associated broadband costs. As offered at the meeting, Members would be grateful if any broadband costing figures, which have been incurred to date, along with the value of any ongoing monthly subscriptions within the scheme could be provided.
- **New Schemes** – Given the breadth and nature of isolation and loneliness, it was queried if the council are continuously looking to introduce new schemes which address the impact of this issue amongst a broader demographic. Members heard that a number of different initiatives were planned in order to support a range of groups affected, however the detail of the planned schemes were unclear. If possible, Members would be grateful

if a list of the new schemes that are planned, including detail on how they will operate, who they will be aimed at, costs and scheduled start date could be provided.

- **Task & Finish Exercise – Loneliness** – Given how the pandemic has propagated the issue of loneliness and isolation, a Committee Member has suggested we run a Task & Finish inquiry into loneliness and isolation which looks to stimulate the production of a recovery plan to specifically tackle the long term well-being impacts of Covid-19. It is felt this could provide an opportunity to expand on the work undertaken at this meeting, to engage further with the witnesses present, make contact with additional witnesses and consider in more detail how we engage with partners and reach and support all aspects of the community. A potential task & finish exercise into loneliness will be added to our work programme list and discussed at our next work programming session. We would welcome any thoughts you have on this matter and will keep you informed if this topic is chosen; and indeed of any other priorities that we decide to scrutinise.
- **Number of Vulnerable People** – As requested at Committee, Members would be grateful if figures could be provided around those known to services who are classified as vulnerable and also information on who is receiving support now, and prior to the pandemic outbreak. Members appreciate the advice provided at Committee that a range of individuals' access support through Adult Services or Independent Living and those same individuals may also be attending online courses. However, in order to understand the scale of the challenge facing the Council, it would be appreciated if further information could be provided. For instance, a list of the vulnerable categories the Council uses; the numbers of people on each of those lists; information on who is receiving support now, and prior to the pandemic outbreak and if possible identify where any duplicates may have taken place.
- **Supporting New & Future Covid Issues** – It is acknowledged by Members that various research publications has found that social isolation brought forward by national restrictions has a significant negative impact on physical and mental well-being and can also have an exacerbating impact on pre-existing mental health and well-being conditions. Due to this likely increase in demand, concerns were raised this would put pressure on future Council budgets in addition to lack of resource availability (for instance if some services return to normal thereby reducing staff resource). As such, Members wish to seek assurance that the Council is adequately evaluating current services to ensure they can meet increased demand. Members would appreciate information on how this projected demand is being both forecast and addressed and

would welcome information on the Council's formal analysis of projected demand on services and anticipated resources requirements and how sustainability is planned to be achieved.

- **Welsh Government Funding Options** – The Welsh Government Deputy Director for Enabling People, Social Services & Integration spoke at length about the challenges caused by Covid, and went on to provide a summary of the financial support options that the Welsh Government has put in place to tackle loneliness. Members wish to request a list of new and existing financial schemes that the Council and its partners are able to access to help tackle loneliness and isolation. In addition, Members would **recommend** the details being circulated to the relevant staff, partners and Elected Members so that they are aware of the support available.
- **Resilient Families** – At the meeting, I commented on a number of occasions about the stresses and strains placed on families during the pandemic, and the importance of making sure that the correct support is in place to prevent family units breaking down. Schemes such as the Resilient Families Service have worked well across many parts of Wales, and it seems vital that this type of initiative is properly supported for the rest of the pandemic and into the post Covid period. I would be grateful if details of the types of programmes and projects that the Council already has and is planning to put into place to support family resilience could be shared.
- **Communication & Partnership Working** – One of the main themes raised repeatedly during the scrutiny was communication and partnership working. Some witnesses felt that communication could be better between the Council and partners, for example, through establishing communication channels through University networks. Others felt that existing networks could have been better used to amplify a range of messages to local residents. One witness suggested that engaging with the Council could sometimes be overly complicated, meaning that certain partnership working opportunities were missed. While another witness explained that whilst there were lots of examples of good will and people working together to help, if this had been organised differently more could have been achieved. Members understand that the Council, its partners, and many residents have provided invaluable support right across the community during an incredibly unprecedented period, and this is both acknowledged and commended. However, improving cross Cardiff communication between the Council, its partners and local residents would deliver improvements in addressing this challenge, and its impact, both now and in the future. With this in mind, the Committee **recommends** that the

Council review how they can better communicate key public health messages, raising awareness of service offers, particularly among those harder to reach, and support opportunities with its key partners. It is anticipated that this review may lead into the establishment of a formal 'communications plan' which will help ensure partners are aware of services, initiatives and actions which are both underway and available to them; helping to ensure the Council leads, and facilitates a multi-agency approach to this significant challenge. It is advised this review should look at what has happened, include a lessons learnt analysis and identify how a range of information channels and resources can best be used in future. Once complete I would be grateful if you could share the findings with the Committee.

Being mindful that this is a relatively lengthy letter, and for ease of reference, the requests and comments made in this letter are listed below.

Request:

- 1) **Ongoing Broadband Costs** - Please confirm any broadband costs incurred to date, along with the value of any ongoing monthly subscriptions.
- 2) **New Schemes** – To provide the Committee with a list of the new schemes planned for dealing with loneliness, along with some detail around how they will operate, who they will be targeted at, costs and scheduled start date.
- 3) **Number of Vulnerable People** – To provide the Committee with a list of the vulnerable categories that the Council uses; the number of people on each of those lists; numbers of people using services both pre and post the outbreak of Covid-19, and if possible identify where any duplicates may have taken place.
- 4) **Supporting New & Future Covid-19 Issues** – To confirm the new challenges that you believe will be placed on Social Services as a consequence of Covid-19, how projected demand is being both forecast and addressed along with the anticipated resources required to deal with them.
- 5) **Welsh Government Funding Options** – detail of new and existing financial schemes that the Council and its partners are able to access to help tackle loneliness and isolation.
- 6) **Resilient Families** - To provide the Committee with details of the types of programmes and projects that the Council already has, and is planning to put into place to support family resilience.

Recommend

- 1) **Welsh Government Funding Options** – Ensure formal communication to relevant staff, partners and Elected Members of new and existing financial schemes that the Council and its partners are able to access to help tackle loneliness and isolation.
- 2) **Communication & Partnership Working** - The Council review how they can better communicate key public health messages and support opportunities with its key partners. It is anticipated that this review would likely lead into the establishment of a formal 'communications plan' to ensure partners are aware of services, initiatives and actions which are both underway and available to them; helping to ensure the Council leads, and facilitates a multi-agency approach to this significant challenge. Such a review should look at what has happened, include a lessons learnt analysis and identify how a range of information channels and resources can best be used in future.

I hope you found the discussions held within Committee, along with the comments, observations and recommendations captured within this letter of use.

Yours,



COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS

Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

cc. Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities
Jane Thomas, Director, Adults, Housing & Communities
Alistair Davey, Deputy Director Enabling People, Social Services and Integration
Kate Griffiths, Director for Wales, British Red Cross
Project Hope, Naomi & Nirushunda
Jeff Hawkins, CEO, Age Connects Cardiff & Vale
Carol Corbett, Church in Wales Co-optee, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Patricia Arlotte, Roman Catholic Co-optee, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

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SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM45598

Eich Cyf / Your Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

Dyddiad / Date: 02 July 2021

Councillor Shaun Jenkins
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088
www.caerdydd.gov.uk
County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087
www.cardiff.gov.uk

Annwyl / Dear Cllr Jenkins,

Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee 3 February 2021 - Addressing and social isolation & loneliness faced by Cardiff residents following the outbreak of Covid-19.

Thank you for your letter dated 12th April 2021. We would like to thank the Committee for inviting us to present on the good work that has been done during the pandemic to prevent social isolation and loneliness.

I have provided responses below to the Committee's requests and recommendations, which I hope will be helpful.

Requests for Information:

1) Ongoing Broadband Costs - Please confirm any broadband costs incurred to date, along with the value of any ongoing monthly subscriptions.

No ongoing broadband costs have been incurred as part of the distribution of tablets. Officers have found that most of service users already had mobile phone contracts or home wifi that were used to connect to online activities/events

If older citizens do not have a broadband connection the Independent Living Services will carry out a "what matters" conversation, part of which would look at income maximisation. If the individual wanted a broadband connection, they would also be helped with price comparison to identify a package that is suitable for them.

Advice Services would help people who didn't have broadband to do a better buy comparison of broadband providers, and BT provide a reduced rate unlimited package for people on means tested benefits, the cost of which is capped at £15.16 / month and this also includes telephone calls.

For those who do not have Broadband, and needed a quick solution, the Into Work Digital Team were able to procure fixed data packages (SIM cards) for up to 6 months if required, as part of the tablet gifting scheme. Clients are aware that they will need to top up the SIM cards once the data allocation has run out, however, if a client does not

have the funds to top up they can receive further financial support through various Into Work projects or through Digital Communities Wales initiatives. The costs for top ups are currently £5 for 3GB data, £10 for 10GB data £15 for 20GB data. The Digital team continue to work with BT and EE to procure data allowance and devices at a reduced rate.

2) New Schemes – To provide the Committee with a list of the new schemes planned for dealing with loneliness, along with some detail around how they will operate, who they will be targeted at, costs and scheduled start date.

Existing services will continue and will be extended during 2021/22. New Groups planned include:

Gardening hints and tips – Independent Living will be working with the Community hubs to deliver an online group where citizens share gardening advice, hints and tips.

Creative writing in partnership with Sherman Theatre – Discussions are underway to develop a scheme which will initially be delivered online, helping people to develop their creative writing skills. The group will be run by Independent Living Services and the writers of “Love Letters to Cardiff”. The aim of this group is to become intergenerational, where school children will be able to share their creative writing with older people and vice versa.

A **Summer Active body, Healthy Mind Festival** is planned for the August 2021/22. This will be online and hopefully face to face. There will be lots of information, advice and activities available for over 50's to attend. If restrictions allow it is also proposed to include a reunion event at the festival where all the people who have met through digital events can meet face to face for the first time.

Virtual walking group called Cardiff Steps. – This group commenced on 1 April 2021. The group meets online weekly to encourage people to be active. Members of the group have been provided with pedometers by the Community Hubs, to count the number of steps they walk each week. When the group meet online they catch up on their week and share how many steps they have walked. As a group the aim is to walk the equivalent length of the Welsh Coastal Path.

New Cardiff Wellbeing Support Team

The new Cardiff Wellbeing Support team will be launched in June 2021, the team will comprise of a Health and Wellbeing Officer, Wellbeing Mentors, Volunteer mentors and a Digital Support Officer.

The team will offer low level person focussed support for those who feel their wellbeing has declined and who suffer poor mental health, devising individual tailored action plans to assist the client with improving their personal Health & Wellbeing. This will include 1 to 1 tailored support along with personalised action plans; consisting of online and in person activities that cover social, creative and physical aspects will be put in place to assist in enhancing the customers overall wellbeing.

Referrals into the service will come from council services and external partners.

While this is a small team, it will work alongside the Hub Community Inclusion and the Advice services which will be able to provide additional support and activities.

A number of changes to Advice Services which will assist with addressing social isolation, this includes:

Enhanced Community Digital Team

The current digital support service will be expanded by June 2021, engaging with more individuals actively and using digital platforms as a solution to address social isolation. A new digital officer and 3 new trainee digital assistants will be recruited.

The team will work with organisations such as Cardiff People's First, Innovate Trust, the new Cardiff Wellbeing Support Team, Independent Living Services, BAWSO, Age Concern, Youth Services, Oasis and Cardiff Council hostel's, supporting those who are most likely to be suffering from isolation and loneliness.

Digital Activities to Real Friendships (Social Isolation and Loneliness in Veterans project)

This project, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, started on 1st April 2021 and delivers weekly virtual activities that get the whole family involved to help the extended Armed Forces community build friendships and support networks with the wider community and each other. Uniting people through interactive, engaging activities the project empowers members of the Armed Forces Community to get involved, socialise and feel part of their local community. The project removes barriers by providing shared experiences that can act as icebreakers towards building real connections. Digital tablets will be gifted to participants, enabling them to partake in sessions and provide opportunities to continue socialising between workshops and after the project's end

Befriending Support

Cardiff Council bid for and were awarded funding from Age Cymru to support the integration and delivery of the Friends in Need programme through expanding the wellbeing phone call provision in response to the pandemic. The team recruited 23 Volunteers making contact with 474 people that had previously identified as requiring more support from the shielded calls that were carried out by the Adviceline.

The project was funded from November 2020- March 2021. However due to the ongoing need and success of the project, the Into Work Volunteering team will continue to provide a befriending service which will then integrate with the new Community Wellbeing Support Team from June 2021.

Hostels Tablet Gifting Scheme

Adult Learning successfully bid for an additional £20,000 of funding from Public Health Wales. The project initiative focussed on working with hostels in Cardiff supporting individuals who were socially isolated. Fifty-five tablets were purchased to gift to individuals alongside three months of data. Alongside the tablets, Adult Learning delivered a range of wellbeing courses which included ; digital health and wellbeing, confidence building, stress management, online blogging and digital photography using

your phone/ device. This project will continue into 2021 using Digital 2030 funding.

3) Number of Vulnerable People – To provide the Committee with a list of the vulnerable categories that the Council uses; the number of people on each of those lists; numbers of people using services both pre and post the outbreak of Covid-19, and if possible identify where any duplicates may have taken place.

The Independent Living Service initially targeted people known to the service who either live alone or have little contact with anyone, primarily this was former or existing service users of the Day Opportunities team.

In addition if the First Point of Contact team had a call from a person and the “what Matters” conversation identified social isolation, regular welfare calls were offered and arranged.

Service users were contacted as often as they requested, intervals were usually weekly, fortnightly, or monthly.

During the first 6 months of the pandemic only service critical data was collected and therefore there is no information available on the number of people supported in this way. However on average the Day Opportunities Team were doing 15 welfare calls a day and during peak lockdown periods this increased to 20 a day.

The First Point of Contact service carried out 6,315 new assessments in 20/21 compared to 4,989 in 2019/20.

Adult Services reviewed existing clients and evaluated each citizen in terms of their need. A Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system was used looking at each citizen to consider their risk level in respect of their emotional, physical and mental wellbeing. Their own support networks and their potential to be socially isolated were key factors. Practitioners considered all cases across the Adult Service area looking at these broad categories and on a case by case basis.

It was possible to RAG rate 94% of service users, of which 45% were assessed as green, 32% as amber and 17% as red. 431 people were contacted as deemed at risk of isolation and 203 continued to have calls twice a week or more often as needed,

The definition of each of the risk ratings are set out below:

RED: a person of high vulnerability. That vulnerability would have been evaluated by considering whether or not the person lived alone, the nature of the physical and mental well-being and the support network around them in their homes.

Citizens who were evaluated as being at high risk had named social workers. In the first lockdown in 2020 we contacted these citizens every week and increased care services to support if needed. They were linked into any available support from council colleagues and other partners. Informal carers were highlighted in this category where practitioners knew that the closure of key activities, for example Day Centres, would significantly impact not only on the service user but also their carers. This was particularly key where the household had an individual testing positive for Covid-19 and where self-isolation became a significant issue for the informal carer.

AMBER: a citizen with a strong network around them that appeared sustainable and where the impact of “lock down” was perceived as less likely to be a risk to their wellbeing. There remained a risk and some of our service users did move from amber to red if for example a key informal carer became unwell.

Citizens who were assessed as being at Amber level of risk of isolation were provided with all available links to council resources and links to partner agencies. If their position changed and became more complex we responded as required.

GREEN: service users who were in care homes or other types of residential placement were considered to be a low risk of isolation.

A very strong, existing informal network of support was also considered to be “Green”, for example a number of families chose to move in with relatives to offer support. If that situation changed we re-evaluated our assessment.

Some changes to our approach followed as the impact on citizens in care homes being unable to see loved ones became clearer. Practitioners used a variety of technological response, for example Ipads and Facetime to contact citizens in homes. We encouraged care services to use the same technology in placements so that families and friends could stay in touch wherever possible.

The Advice Teams were given the information via public health of those classed as ‘medically extremely vulnerable’ (those that were required to shield) this was a total of 14,161 individuals (over 18). Each one of these were contacted by letter initially and then were spoken to either by the Adviceline or by a home visit. Those people that were already known to adult social services contacted by Adult Services directly. Overall the calls to the Adviceline increased dramatically during the pandemic from 6,552 calls in 2019/20 to 55,264 in 2020/21. The Into Work mentors were also in regular contact with their more vulnerable clients including care experienced young people, refugees and people who are long term unemployed or economically inactive.

The Veterans Advice Team worked with the Ministry of Defence and other partners contacting over 200 veterans during the period of lockdown. Additional funding of £20,000 was bid for and awarded to the team from the Ministry of Defence to help facilitate this. Specific events were also held for this cohort including poppy tea afternoon, pottery, DIY and digital sessions (social media, emails, FitBits) in total 99 veterans attended these events.

4) Supporting New & Future Covid-19 Issues – To confirm the new challenges that you believe will be placed on Social Services as a consequence of Covid-19, how projected demand is being both forecast and addressed along with the anticipated resources required to deal with them.

It is very difficult to assess the new challenges that will be placed on services in the long term as a result of Covid. It is likely that there will be some impact of long covid both in terms of staff sickness and additional clients needing support. Additional funding

remains in place from the Welsh Government and this is expected to last until September. Contingency funding exists should significant unforeseen expenses occur after that date.

5) Welsh Government Funding Options – detail of new and existing financial schemes that the Council and its partners are able to access to help tackle loneliness and isolation.

While there is no Welsh Government funding specifically for addressing social isolation and loneliness, there is additional funding being made available to address the impact of the pandemic, and to help people into work, which can be important in addressing isolation.

More funding has been received from Welsh Government (£600k) for 2021 to help address poverty and unemployment in the city.

There are also 2 new funds that have been announced by Central Government set to be operational from August 2021.

- 1) Levelling Up Fund (will focus on capital investment in local infrastructure building on and consolidating prior programmes such as the Local Growth Fund and Towns Fund.)
- 2) UK Community Renewal Fund (to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022. This Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment)

A portion of the Community Learning Grant can be utilised to address social isolation using learning as a way of socialising and meeting new people. More courses will run in 2021/ 2022 with this focus.

It is often the case too that other funding streams will be available throughout the year. Officers will ensure that bids are submitted for any opportunities that arise.

6) Resilient Families - To provide the Committee with details of the types of programmes and projects that the Council already has, and is planning to put into place to support family resilience.

We are aware that the Resilient Families' service provides the Team Around the Family arrangements in RCT. It is the Council's recognised approach to delivering the early intervention and prevention agenda.

The Cardiff Family Advice and Support service (CFAS) is Cardiff's equivalent to 'Resilient Families'. CFAS provides the opportunity to deliver swift, effective, consistent and bespoke support to families. CFAS comprises of The Family Gateway, Family Help and Support4Families.

Cardiff Family Gateway

The Family Gateway, is a front door arrangement for all families. It is the first point of contact for information, advice and assistance and works with and alongside existing provision available from education and the health service.

Families who have any request for early help can access information, advice and assistance from the team of practitioners who have a range of skills and experiences in supporting families, including those with disabled children and young people

The Family Gateway provides information, advice and assistance on a wide range of topics and enquiry areas such as money advice, housing, welfare benefits, child behaviour, child care, school attendance, health and well-being, parental support and much more.

The Family Gateway Contact Officers are available to listen to the situation, identify what support is best and help to access it. The Gateway Contact Officers support families from the point of initial contact. This offers an inclusive approach with every family accessing the same initial service despite their varying needs.

To find out more go to: <https://www.cardiffamilies.co.uk/cardiff-family-gateway>

Cardiff Family Help Team

Cardiff Family Help Team are an early intervention service offering high quality information, advice and assistance to children and young people aged 0-18 (or up to the age of 25 in the case of a vulnerable young person) and their families living in Cardiff.

Working alongside a wide range of local community and partnership agencies, the team are able to tailor support to the many needs families face in their day to day lives, providing short term help (typically 6-12 weeks).

Support 4 Families

Cardiff Family Support Service can work with families facing more complicated issues.

Family Support Workers and Social Workers can work together with parents, children and young people to find the right solutions for them and their family in a number of ways including:

- Direct delivery of a range of evidence based family programmes
- Providing practical help and support
- Act as a key worker for a family
- Advise on a wide range of community based services
- Complete Family Based Assessments and support plans
- The team aim to meet families in a place comfortable for them, this could be the family home, the local Hub or school if this is preferable.

Cardiff Parenting

Cardiff Parenting deliver a variety of services for Parents and families across Cardiff with crèche facilities available. These services include:

- Gro Brain
- Parent Nurturing Programme
- Strengthening Families
- Parents First (Psychology-led 1:1 Parenting support)

The aim of the service is to work in partnership with families living in Cardiff to improve parenting confidence and skills, strengthen relationships and nurture wellbeing and resilience.

Through parenting positively and building meaningful relationships, parents can help raise healthy children, develop a more calm and peaceful household, with fewer arguments and conflicts. Research tells us that children who grow up with positive parenting are more likely to:

- Do better at school
- Have better relationships with family members and friends
- Have higher self-esteem and confidence
- Have fewer behavioural issues
- Be able to manage their emotions better

To find out more go to: <https://www.cardiffamilies.co.uk/cardiff-parenting-0-18>

As part of the recovery plan, Cardiff Parenting are offering vulnerable parents and their children weekly walking groups by invitation. Targeted Stay and Play outdoor groups are also being planned to commence in May, to support the developmental needs of young children who have not been able to socialise with their peers or have their developmental needs assessed by an appropriate professional.

Grobrain, ToddlerBrain, Parent Nurturing Programme (PNP) and Talking Teens parenting programmes are available in group and 1:1 format, via a blended model (Video's and Teams/Zoom group meetings, with practitioners and parents). Triple P is being delivered on a 1:1 basis via video and practitioner calls to parents as well as PNP (Additional Needs). Cygnet, a programme for families with children with an autism diagnosis, is being delivered digitally on a 1:1 basis currently, with a face to face group planned to be offered in September.

A number of new programmes are in the process of being implemented digitally. These include, Playful Parenting & Mellow Mums and Dads to be.

For all programmes, programme packs with resources are delivered to every family prior to week 1 of each course and then certificates of attendance and family resource packs are delivered at completion of programme.

In addition a new course, Love Learning About Money, a course which helps parents support their children in developing knowledge around managing money, is being piloted. We are planning on running our first group in June.

Activity packs have been delivered to families across Cardiff during the school holidays. The pack resources have been supported with information and activities for families to try through our Flying Start and Cardiff Parenting social media pages on Facebook.

Cardiff Early Help successfully bid for 2020/21 Child Development Funding from Welsh Government to support families to digitally access parenting support and services. 100 tablets with dongles for data have been purchased to gift to individuals referred to the service, to enable them to engage digitally in parenting programmes or 1:1 support.

A further bid has been submitted to the Welsh Government for 2021/22 Child Development funding, to:

- Employ additional Parenting Practitioners to reduce waiting lists and to meet the increasing demand coming through the Family Gateway.
- Extend the availability of the Speech & Language telephone advice line to families and professionals, from 2 to 5 days
- Employ additional Family Help advisers to meet the increasing demand coming through the Family Gateway.
- Increase the number of families benefitting from the “Let’s Play Every Day” packs resource packs.

As part of their work with families, all of these teams above link up and have referral pathways with many other services where it is appropriate for them to do so, to ensure that families get the support that they need.

Recommendations

- 1) Welsh Government Funding Options – Ensure formal communication to relevant staff, partners and Elected Members of new and existing financial schemes that the Council and its partners are able to access to help tackle loneliness and isolation.**

The Housing and Communities team send out a communication on a monthly basis detailing the different funding opportunities available to a range of partners, third sector community groups and charities.

Grant funding and Support for Community Groups and Charities can be found via the following websites, and both are free to use.

Cardiff Third Sector Council

Cardiff Third Sector Council (C3SC) has a page dedicated to a wide range of funding opportunities, up to 80 plus funding opportunities are available here: www.c3sc.org.uk/support/funding/current-funding).

Funding Wales

Funding Wales is a new free to use funding search platform created by Third Sector Support Wales. <https://funding.cymru/>

We will make Democratic Services aware of this information so that it can be made available to elected members on request.

2) Communication & Partnership Working - The Council review how they can better communicate key public health messages and support opportunities with its key partners. It is anticipated that this review would likely lead into the establishment of a formal 'communications plan' to ensure partners are aware of services, initiatives and actions which are both underway and available to them; helping to ensure the Council leads, and facilitates a multi-agency approach to this significant challenge. Such a review should look at what has happened, include a lessons learnt analysis and identify how a range of information channels and resources can best be used in future.

Following the onset of the pandemic in 2020, the Council has worked closely with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and a broad network of partners, including places of worship, voluntary sector organisations and universities to achieve the effective dissemination of key public health messages. Strong partnership working has been a feature of Cardiff Council Communications' response to the Coronavirus pandemic. These partnerships have been formed to ensure all pandemic messaging across the health board region is simple to understand, agreed and delivered by all organisations in tandem.

The communications leads from Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, the three universities (Cardiff, Cardiff Met and USW), and C3SC meet as the Cardiff and Vale TTP "Comms Cell". The BAME sub-group also forms an effective network, through which messages tailored for those specific audiences are disseminated. Communications leads from Cardiff Council, Welsh Government, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, South Wales Police, British Transport Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue, Ambulance Service, and the other local authorities in the South Wales Police area footprint (Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, RCT and Merthyr), also met weekly at the height of the crisis, and currently fortnightly, as the South Wales LRF Communications Group.

Cardiff Council Communications has played an active role in developing and delivering the Communication Plans for a number of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board projects, for example the launch of the Bayside Mass Vaccination Centre at the former Toys R Us site, the Mobile Testing Unit deployed to Channel View in the autumn, and Local Testing Sites. Throughout the pandemic Cardiff Council Communications has used its own channels to amplify the key public health messages from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

The council has also published its own content to provide the public, Elected Members and Community Councils, with a daily (Monday to Friday) snapshot of COVID-19 cases, tests and vaccination numbers. All the while re-enforcing key health messages and the strategic calls to action designed to tackle the pandemic, messaging formed through the partnerships described above.

Targeted testing and vaccination advertising, delivered by Cardiff Council Communications on behalf of Cardiff and Vale TTP partners, has so far generated 3,088,838 impressions on Facebook. To date, organic messaging (2,482 posts), which included sharing health partners' key messages and calls to action, has garnered 15,511,385 impressions and 95,439 clicks on Facebook and Twitter.

Just prior to Cardiff's local lockdown, Cardiff Council Communications took the lead in sending a letter to every home in the city. This was produced in partnership with Welsh Government and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. It was co-signed by the Leader of Cardiff Council and the Chief Executive of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

Cardiff Council Communications has also worked in partnership with local agencies, including South Wales Police and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to respond to out-of-hours public health emergencies, and IMT incidents whenever called upon. Examples include the Cardiff Bay mass gatherings over the Easter period, clusters in universities, schools, care homes and the community.

As the Capital Ambition: Organisational Recovery and Renewal Cabinet report states, the Council will continue to convene a city-wide recovery and renewal, with the scale and depth of the partnership working seen in the pandemic becoming business as usual. Cardiff Council Communications will continue to play an intrinsic part in ensuring this happens, building on the excellent partnership arrangements which have been put in place with other public sector communications teams during the pandemic.

In addition to our central communications through the Council's News Room and social media channels, our approach has also included bespoke partnership and task & finish models to reach key population groups wherever the evidence indicated that targeted engagement and communications were required e.g. ethnic minority groups, asylum seekers, people experiencing homelessness and students. For example, throughout the pandemic, a dedicated communications cell has focused on effective engagement with ethnic minority groups and the cell's membership includes several ethnic minority-led organisations and places of worship, along with Council and Health Board staff. The communication cell have worked to respond to relevant live partnership data and have co-produced video messages, translated guidance into the most prevalent community languages and coordinated the attendance of mobile vaccination teams at accessible sites to support vaccine take-up across ethnic minority groups.

As a core function, the Council's Policy and Partnerships team maintain a comprehensive directory of statutory, voluntary, private and community sector contacts, who have been key partners in delivering our response to the challenges of Covid-19. Staff across the department attend many multi-agency fora, at both a strategic and operational level, to ensure the effective alignment of resources and services across complex and cross-cutting themes as a matter of course, but our Covid-19 response has required new mechanisms of partnership delivery. Covid-19 has brought many challenges but has strengthened this collaboration and Cardiff's Public Services Board intend to share their respective strategic recovery plans across partner agencies to ensure this connected way of working continues in the months to come and achieves a collective city-wide approach to Cardiff's renewal.

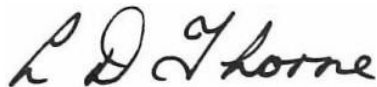
Whilst this will not equate to a full written review, much of the learning and methods tested during the pandemic will inform our future communications and partnership work, including the development of a Citizens' Engagement Strategy during 2021.

I trust this response answers the Committee's questions. Thank you once more for the opportunity to present on this issue.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely,



Councillor / Y Cyngorydd Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being
Aelod Cabinet dros Ofal Cymdeithasol, Iechyd a Lles



Councillor / Y Cyngorydd Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Aelod Cabinet dros Dai a Chymuned