

COUNCIL: 25 NOVEMBER 2021

FINANCE, MODERNISATION & PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Living Wage Week 2021

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Living Wage movement and, during this year's annual Living Wage Week (15-21 November 2021), Cardiff has celebrated one of our most successful years supporting organisations in the city to become Living Wage employers. In 2019, Cardiff's Living Wage City Steering Group set out a three-year plan, which included three key targets: to increase the number of accredited Living Wage employers; to increase the total number of workers employed by Living Wage employers; and to increase the number of workers receiving a pay rise to the real Living Wage. I am pleased to confirm that all three of these targets have been met ahead of schedule, with two of them having been substantially exceeded, which is a remarkable accomplishment considering the difficulties and impact of Covid-19.

Cardiff has reached its target of 150 accredited Living Wage employers and the capital city now has over half of the total number of accredited Living Wage employers in Wales as a whole. We have surpassed our target of increasing the total number of workers employed by Cardiff-based accredited Living Wage employers to 48,000, with more than 61,000 people now working for a Living Wage employer. In addition, a total of 7,894 workers in Cardiff have received a pay rise to the real Living Wage, exceeding the target of 6,500 that was achieved last year.

In what has been a challenging year for many sectors due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a total of 32 new organisations have become accredited as Living Wage employers in 2021, including the Wales Millennium Centre. While previous years have seen public sector organisations making up the majority of new accreditations, it is important to highlight that 2021 has seen a crucial and timely growth in accreditations from the hospitality and care sectors. Our success in supporting more local businesses and organisations to become accredited has also put an extra £39m in people's wage packets and the local economy. We are keen to achieve more though and we will continue flying the Living Wage flag here in Cardiff and supporting organisations across the city on their own Living Wage journey so that even more people in the city get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

The Council's Living Wage accreditation scheme supports small local businesses to commit to pay their own employees the Living Wage by offering financial support to those who become accredited Living Wage employers. Further information about the accreditation scheme and the real Living Wage can be found at:

<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Strategies-plans-and-policies/Living-Wage/Pages/default.aspx>

Into Work Service

With the easing of Covid restrictions and the end of the furlough scheme, the Into Work Service has been busy organising local recruitment and partnership events across the city. In partnership with the Communities for Work employment project, the Employer Liaison Team organised a Jobs Fair at Llanrumney Hall to showcase local employers in the hospitality, security and care sectors, including Euroclad, Rubicon, Tesco, McDonalds and Revised Recruitment. Over 60 jobseekers attended the event and were supported by employment and training providers including Careers Wales, Cardiff & Vale College, Cardiff Works and the Adult Learning Team. Many people signed up with the Into Work Service at the event and were supported to create their CVs and apply for work.

Website

The Council's website (www.cardiff.gov.uk) had 194,367 visitors in October 2021 who viewed 655,248 pages of information, with the most visited pages relating to waste & recycling and schools information. Nearly two-thirds of visitors chose to visit the website using a mobile device. A total of 5,845 online forms were completed via the website, with 48% of these being forwarded on to C2C and 30% to the Council Tax Team. In addition, 97.6% of recycling centre bookings and 90% of requests for waste bags were made online. To further demonstrate the increasing channel shift, last month also saw the highest percentage (84.1%) of fly-tipping reports being made online, which coincided with the lowest number of reports made via C2C (Connect 2 Cardiff) since the online reporting service was implemented in 2018.

In October, the Council improved the accessibility of its website, with increased compliance of webpage content against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Accessibility AA and AAA standards to 99.2%. Cardiff is currently third in Wales on the Silktide Index.

CardiffGov Mobile App

The total number of downloads of the CardiffGov mobile app has now passed 50,000. A small app update was released in mid-October 2021 that delivered improved accessibility, drug-litter reporting and added useful information about recycling centre bookings. A further release this month will include the new service for checking parking permit types available by property. The app project manager is currently engaging with council services that are not currently represented within the app, including Planning, Social Care, and Housing Benefits. All of these will feed into a phase of activity to broaden the app's capabilities.

BOBi Chatbot

At the end of October 2021, the Council's online chatbot, BOBi, hit 90,000 conversations since being launched. Comparisons with similar digital offerings indicates that uptake in Cardiff is significantly higher than in other local authorities around the UK. Nevertheless, we continue to undertake communications activity to broaden the public's awareness of BOBi and to promote the channel's accessibility, efficiency and simplicity for a broadening range of tasks. Feedback scores remain strong, with 85.37% of scores recorded as Very Good, Good or OK. The corporate trainees continue to use constructive feedback from customers to modify content and drive continuous improvement through AI training.

Throughout October, the Development Team has been designing and creating a chat-based service for reporting missed waste collections. This re-uses the technical infrastructure developed for the app and web reporting service, and will be deployed this month to provide another, simple and accessible route for this common enquiry type. Parking permit type look-ups and a graffiti reporting service are now in the design and development phase and are expected to be released towards the end of the month.

Councillor Chris Weaver
Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance
18 November 2021