

TACKLING POVERTY, EQUALITY & PUBLIC HEALTH STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH & EQUALITY

Covid-19 Booster Vaccination Programme (Autumn 2022)

The Covid-19 booster vaccination programme in Wales commenced at the start of this month for adults aged 50+ years of age, those who are in high-risk groups or severely immunosuppressed, and for health & social care workers. The plan is to offer all booster vaccinations by the end of November 2022.

Following the closures of both the Splott and Bayside Mass Vaccination Centres (MVCs) in Cardiff, a new MVC has been established in the car park at Woodland House on Maes-y-Coed Road in the Heath Ward, which opened on 5 September 2022. The MVC is open seven days a week from 10am to 7pm for vaccination by appointment only, for which those who are eligible will receive an invitation by post. The MVC at Woodland House has the capacity to vaccinate 12,600 people per week and can increase capacity if a surge response is required.

The Community Team will deliver the autumn booster vaccination to all care home residents, housebound citizens (whose details have been forwarded by GPs) and hospital in-patients. 17 GP surgeries are participating in the vaccination of the over 80-year-old cohort in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. In geographic areas not covered by the participating GPs, Community Pharmacy will vaccinate this cohort, as well as all the social care workers in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

A Well Pharmacy mobile vaccination unit will also be based at the Ikea store in Grangetown, which can vaccinate 1,000 individuals a week. This location was chosen as uptake in the community has been low in the past and it is hoped that this will assist in improving uptake of the booster vaccination locally.

Ukraine Refugee Crisis

As the devastating war in Ukraine has continued, the Council has maintained its high-quality support service for Ukrainian nationals seeking sanctuary in Wales. The wrap-around support services have reached over 1,000 Ukrainian nationals arriving through the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, Family Visa Scheme and the Welsh Government's Super Sponsor Scheme to date. Thousands of Ukrainian nationals have also been welcomed via the city's arrival hub and assisted with their onward travel to their future homes across Wales.

As of this month, Cardiff has over 200 active sponsors who between them have assisted over 400 Ukrainian citizens to find safety in our city. As we approach the end of the minimum six-month sponsor period for the earliest arrivals, the Council's Ukrainian Support Team has worked hard to identify those in need of housing advice and assistance, helping families to find alternative sponsors or source their own accommodation to ensure that they do not fall through the gaps as the conflict continues.

Communities across Cardiff have shown their support for Ukraine through sponsorship – welcoming Ukrainian citizens into their homes as family, by volunteering, and through everyday gestures of kindness. This collective work has touched the lives of many seeking sanctuary in our nation and should be a source of great pride for our city.

Welsh Government HIV Action Plan Consultation

HIV continues to be a major global public health issue, having claimed approximately 40.1 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 partners, has made huge progress in improving access to testing and treatment in Wales. There has been a significant reduction in the number of new HIV infections in Wales, with new diagnoses of HIV decreasing by 75% between 2015 and 2021.

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. In October 2020, the Fast Track Cardiff & Vale Leadership Group, consisting of senior stakeholders from Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, Public Health Wales, Cardiff University and other key stakeholders was established to oversee the work of Fast Track Cardiff & Vale. Successful campaigns and projects have included testing week and Texting for Testing, which supported GPs to send HIV testing messages via text, as well as links to access home testing.

The Welsh Government has recently produced a draft HIV Action Plan, which has been subject to consultation. The action plan covers five key areas: prevention, testing, clinical care, living well with HIV and tackling stigma. The Cabinet is due to consider a response to this consultation on 28 September 2022. The Council very much welcomes the action plan and the report to Cabinet setting out the Council's response to the consultation makes clear our support for work being done in this area. We have also put forward areas where we believe local authorities could get more involved in delivering the ambitions set out in the action plan if additional funding was made available. This could include, for example:

- Providing home tests via a “click and collect” service
- Reaching under-served communities
- Provision of peer support

We have also identified the need for a more specific focus on the needs of older people with or at risk of HIV. Our response also stresses the importance of a properly funded public awareness plan that reaches all our citizens. Overall, we welcome the Welsh Government's action plan and commend its ambition. We will continue to work in partnership to raise awareness and prevent the spread of HIV within the city.

Cohesion Cup Final

I was pleased to attend the Cohesion Cup Final cricket match on 14 September 2022, which aims to encourage community cohesion through sport. Launched in 2016, the first Cohesion Cup had six teams competing and this then grew to eight teams in 2017, with 10 teams competing since 2018. The cup culminates in a local final between two community teams followed by a grand finale at Sophia Gardens where the winners take on a mixed team of South Wales Police officers and former Glamorgan players.

Regional Food Challenge Project

Cardiff Council, in collaboration with Monmouthshire County Council, has been awarded £2.6 million from the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Challenge Fund and Welsh Government to jointly run a Food Challenge project. The project will be a competition inviting the market to identify and develop innovative solutions that significantly improve the sustainable production and supply of food. More specifically, the project will look for applicants to harness the potential of land, technology and people to increase the sustainable production and supply of locally grown food in the Cardiff Capital Region, while addressing economic, environmental and social aspects of the food system in Wales. The Food Challenge will be launched early next month and will run for up to three years.

Pride Cymru 2022

Pride Cymru 2022 returned to the capital over the August Bank Holiday weekend for the first time since 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I was delighted to march alongside the Council's LGBT+ Employee Network in the parade from Windsor Place before heading along Queen Street towards City Hall. This year, the parade celebrated 50 years since the first-ever Pride march in the UK. I also spent time on the LGBT+ Employee Network's stall on City Hall Lawn and was pleased to be part of such an important event, which celebrates diversity and inclusion in Cardiff and across the nation.

TACKLING POVERTY & SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Cost of Living Support

The Council's Advice and Benefits Teams are continuing to work hard to support those affected by the current cost-of-living crisis. They are experiencing a high demand for services and have recently seen a 107% increase in the number of people contacting the advice services. They are continuing to assist people financially with over £171,000 already being paid to households from Welsh Government's Cost of Living Discretionary Scheme.

To further support residents, a new Cost of Living Task Force has been set up with internal departments and external organisations, including Citizens Advice, C3SC, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Welsh Government, Cardiff Foodbank and Registered Social Landlords. All parties are working together to share best practice and raise awareness of the support on offer.

New designated cost of living 'information stations' have been placed in every Hub across the city, which provide information and practical tips on how to reduce costs and save money, and the use of volunteers is being increased across the service to help support paid staff and deal with the increased demand on the service.

It is important that people are aware of the help available to them during these uncertain months. A wide-ranging publicity campaign is to be launched, which will include local newspapers, radio and social media. Information is to be sent to every household across the city on how to access help. A specific cost-of-living support leaflet is also being produced, which will be placed in all Foodbank bags.

As demand continues to increase, the service will be constantly reviewed to ensure that there are adequate resources to support all the residents who need help and bids for external funding will continue to be made as and when it becomes available.

New Food and Fuel Champions

The new Food and Fuel Champions are providing practical advice across the city's Hubs. They have helped over 270 people so far and attended numerous community events in order to publicise the service. The new staff will shortly be attending specialised National Energy Action training, which will assist in providing further support to service users with food and fuel poverty queries.

Visit to Community Hubs

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Llandaff North & Gabalfa Hub and also the new integrated Wellbeing Hub at Maelfa, an exceptional facility which includes access to GPs, NHS clinics, Youth Services, library provision and advice services. I was able to witness first-hand the exceptional advice and support that advice staff in our Hubs are providing to assist people through the cost-of-living crisis. I spoke to the Food and Fuel Champions who advised me that the number of people they are seeing now is increasing as people are worried about how they will heat and eat over the coming months. I also saw residents provided with tailored money advice to ensure that they are maximising and receiving all the help to which they are entitled.

Members of the Into Work Advice Service were also on hand, assisting clients with CVs and job searches. I was particularly struck by one client who informed me that their Into Work Mentor had done more for them than anyone ever had in the past. This client had secured their first-ever qualifications and had reached the final point of an interview for Cardiff Bus, which is testament to the excellent service that they received. The visit reiterated to me that our Advice Teams are extremely dedicated to providing a range of support to suit all customers. It is clear how much these services are valued and much needed during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Into Work Advice Service Community Outreach

The Into Work Advice Service concluded their busy summer outreach programme, with the Young Person Transition Event. A huge range of providers attended to ensure that young people have full knowledge and information of what is available to them on their next steps in life. This included Ministry of Life, Cardiff Commitment, Cardiff Works, Onsite Construction Academy, Volunteer Cardiff, Cardiff Cares Academy, Adult Learning, Careers Wales, Cardiff and Vale College, ACT, ITEC, University of South Wales, Cardiff City Foundation, Llamau, Learning 4 Life, Business in Focus and Princes Trust. Young people were supported throughout the event by Youth Services and Into Work Youth Mentors to ensure they could engage with all providers and get the most out of the opportunity. Throughout last month, the Into Work Advice Service held a number of engagement events, which saw over 300 residents attending and enjoying different activities including those for children. Partners taking part in these events included the Police, Fire & Rescue Service, DWP, and Cyber Security. Their feedback was very positive, especially in terms of raising awareness of support available for Cardiff citizens in these challenging times.

Youth Services

Whilst schools had a break over the summer, it was a key period for our Youth Services. Year 11 learners identified as vulnerable needed to be supported to realise their transition plans, and young people (11+) needed activities which were exciting, sociable and engaging. Not all young people are lucky enough to go on family holidays and even those who do need other opportunities to engage with friends and benefit from new experiences. Some activities were designed and led by the service and other activities were open to the public, but facilitated by the service – transporting young people, ensuring safety and safeguarding, and contributing to the costs, where necessary. This summer saw the first residential trips arranged for young people from all across Cardiff since before the Covid-19 pandemic. Groups engaged in overnight trips and experienced activities that undoubtedly improved their wellbeing and social skills, as well as being fun. Some examples included:

- **Summer Camp 2022**

This year's summer camp took place at Picket Pods in the Vale of Glamorgan. Throughout July and August, Youth Services provided seven camps which have allowed young people to gain new experiences in the outdoors. This included planning, delivering, and evaluating youth work activity whilst having fun and meeting new people in and around camp. Skills learnt included setting up tents, camp craft, cooking, wellbeing sessions and teamwork. A number of groups also tried out new activities such as surfing, kayaking, gorge walking and team building, and visited local places of interest.

- **German Exchange (26 July – 5 August 2022)**

Young people who access North Ely Youth Service and Cardiff's wider Youth Services provision embarked on the 41st youth exchange with young people from Stamheim Youth Centre in Cardiff's twin city of Stuttgart in Germany. The group of eight 13-17-year-olds spent 10 days enjoying a range of indoor and outdoor activities, as well as visiting the Mercedes Benz Museum and a theme park.

- Post-16 Summer Transition Support**
 Youth Services organised a series of ‘taster’ sessions designed to give 16-25-year-olds first-hand experience of a wide range of careers. These sessions included Taste of Construction, Taste of Beauty, Taste of Hospitality, Taste of Sport, Taste of Being Your Own Boss, Taste of Digital, Taste of Music, Taste of Theatre and Taste of Animal Care. The sessions ran on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays during three weeks in August. The free sessions (including lunch and transport if needed) each featured a chance to tackle a trade and receive expert advice on training opportunities.
- Pride Cymru 2022**
 Youth Services had an area within the Pride Cymru Youth Zone this year, which provided a safe space for young people to relax, meet up with friends and receive information, support, and guidance from a qualified youth support worker. The ‘Umbrellas Allies’, Youth Services’ LGBTQ+ youth group, also offered a range of wellbeing activities. In partnership with the Child Friendly Cardiff Team, Youth Services were able to provide 100 free Pride Cymru tickets for young people aged 14-25.
- Wellbeing Group – Eastmoors Youth Centre**
 The Wellbeing Group was held every other Monday at Eastmoors Youth Centre. The group provided an opportunity for young people to meet like-minded people who wanted to explore emotional health and wellbeing, and participate in events and activities, including volunteering opportunities and training to become young leaders.
- Grangetown Girls Club, Thursdays**
 Young women and girls were invited to attend Girls Club at Grange Pavilion on Thursdays between 21 July and 15 September 2022.
- Business Bootcamps**
 Business bootcamps were held between 8 and 12 August 2022 for Cardiff teenagers who aspire to become entrepreneurs.

Councillors Julie Sangani & Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Members for Tackling Poverty, Equality & Public Health (Job Share)
23 September 2022