
SOCIAL SERVICES STATEMENT

ADULT SERVICES

Improving conditions for Care Workers

Private sector care provision is of course vital to the support of many vulnerable people in Cardiff, and we work closely with the sector to promote good practice. We recognise what a challenging time this is for both providers and for care workers, and while provision of care in Cardiff is currently not an issue, I understand the overall fragility of the care market both locally and nationally. I have written to Welsh Government ministers to make clear our concerns about this and to raise the need for more funding to ensure more sustainable care provision into the future.

In the meantime, I would like to set out the progress that has been made to date in improving conditions for care workers. Cardiff, along with all other local authorities in Wales, has implemented the Real Living Wage as it was in April 2022, and funding for this purpose was made available by the Welsh Government. All care providers have been asked to accept a contract variation which includes the commitment to pay the Real Living Wage and have been asked to confirm that they are passing this on to their employees. All domiciliary care providers in Cardiff have agreed to this contract variation. Officers will be checking this is the case during contract monitoring visits. If it is found that providers are not passing this on and this is not rectified, appropriate action will be considered, including ceasing providing future work to those providers and recovering the additional funding they have received.

The new Real Living Wage figure announced on 22 September 2022 will be considered in the next round of increases in April 2023. I fully understand the pressures at present; however, the Council does not have the funding to consider without support from the Welsh Government. Whilst the Living Wage Foundation is calling for employers to implement the increase as soon as possible, it recognised the challenges this may present, and employers have been given until 14 May 2023 to comply.

Our contract monitoring arrangements check that appropriate training and support is provided to staff and ensures that health and safety measures are in place. Direct support is also provided through our Social Care Training Unit. As part of the grant funding received from Social Care Wales to support the training and development needs of the wider social care workforce in Cardiff, a Social Care Workforce Partnership Coordinator and a Registration and Qualification Support Officer have been put in place whose remit is to work closely with commissioned social care providers to ensure their staff have appropriate training opportunities that support their continued professional development.

In addition, the Cardiff Cares Academy continues to support new carers with the training needed to enter employment. To date the Academy has trained 206 potential carers and helped 107 new carers into employment.

Visit to the First Point of Contact Team

I met recently with the Independent Living Services First Point of Contact Team. This is a team of multi-skilled telephony officers who are the first point of contact for new referrals into the Independent Living Service and Social Care. Officers work in partnership with the client to support them to identify and remove barriers which may be preventing them from reaching their well-being goals. They provide valuable information, advice, and assistance to avoid people getting into crisis by identifying “what matters” to them, helping them to remain independent for as long as possible. It was extremely interesting to see how First Point of Contact officers, social workers, and community occupational therapists all work together to support vulnerable citizens in the city. The team also works within the hospital setting, where they are known affectionately as the ‘Pink Army’, finding community solutions to help people leave hospital safely.

Community Resource Team

I was able to see first-hand the excellent work being done by the Community Resource Team on a recent visit. During the visit, I met with Home Care Managers and Home Carers and heard what their hard work entails. It is great to see the tremendous work they do and improvements that have been made, and I look forward to seeing even further development of the service.

Recruitment of home carers has shown to be extremely challenging in recent months, with the Community Resource Team receiving very few applications for advertised positions. However, after partnership working with Cardiff Cares Academy, part of the Council’s Into Work Advice Service, the service is now starting to see a significant increase in the number of applications received in a single month. Whilst this will by no means solve what is a national recruitment issue, it will go a long way to getting the Community Resource Team closer to the staffing resource it needs to deliver a first-class home care service.

Complex Needs Day Service

I was pleased to visit the Complex Needs Day Service earlier this month, which supports people with a learning disability who have complex support requirements. During the visit, I met with staff and people who use the Day Service and had the opportunity to participate in a lively music session, as well as join a sensory room session. I was so impressed by the positive impact that the Day Service is having on the people who use it and their families, as well as the outcomes that we are helping them to achieve, including our work to involve people in valued community-based opportunities, to reduce restrictive practice and to provide daytime respite for carers.

Vision 21

Last month, I visited projects run by Vision 21, which is a social enterprise set up to provide training and day activity opportunities for people with Learning Disabilities. I visited a number of projects across the city where students with learning disabilities are supported by expert tutors in each area. It was a delight to be able to meet individuals taking part in a number of different activities in the projects across Cardiff. In the woodwork project, I met students who are working to refurbish park benches in partnership with the Council's Parks Service, as well as making a range of Christmas crafts that they then sell to support their project. The students taking part in the computing project are also learning to use a wide range of software, enhancing their skills and, clearly, forming close relationships.

In addition, I visited the Oaks Garden Project on Allensbank Road where individuals have opportunities to learn gardening and customer care skills, and the Sbectrwm Centre in Fairwater where I met individuals learning catering skills in the working café. In the pottery and craft projects, students were working very hard on a range of Christmas products. It was interesting to see the wide range of different pieces individuals were working on and how groups were working as an assembly line to produce items together. The products that the Vision 21 projects make to sell have a positive impact both in terms of student self-worth and helping to manage the costs of the service. It was clear that the schemes focused on students' interests and offered a wide range of skills development and social opportunities. More importantly, in addition to meeting individual needs, these services are offering vital respite to unpaid carers in the city.

Community Events

To celebrate Wales' participation in the 2022 World Cup, Independent Living Services and our Community Hubs will be co-hosting an Older Persons Winter World Cup event on 30 November 2022. The day will include activities such as Tai Chi, Low Impact Functional Training, Bowls, Local Walks, Singing, Dancing and Walking Football. Older people and carers will be invited to take part, whilst facilitators and organisations will be invited to provide a range of taster session activities, as well as a range of information stalls promoting the benefits of keeping active. A local school is also being invited to take part in an inter-generational sporting reminiscence session with older guests, which will include a talk from retired Cardiff City footballer, Gary Bell. This is just one of many activities that we are organising in the community to help people stay connected.

Age Friendly Cardiff

Cardiff was accepted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a member of the Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Key to membership is a dynamic action plan that aims to work towards improvements that will make Cardiff a great place to grow older. I am therefore very pleased to announce the following developments that will aim to improve the lives of unpaid carers and help those affected by Dementia live well within the community:

- **Carers Charter**

I am pleased to announce that Council has recently approved Charters outlining commitments to unpaid carers and young carers. The Regional Partnership Board – made up of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board – have worked with carers to develop the Charters. These Charters set out our commitment to work towards improving the support available to carers. The Charters will be officially launched in the New Year, and I am looking forward to delivering on these commitments which will include the development of a Carers Action plan for Cardiff and working towards making Carers in Cardiff feel valued and supported.

- **Respite Consultation**

Based on the 2011 Census, there are approximately 50,580 unpaid carers of all ages in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This figure is likely to be far higher when the figures from the 2021 Census become available in the New Year.

Unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting people to live within the community and the challenges they potentially face cannot be overemphasised. They can experience mental health issues, feelings of isolation, and sometimes struggle to cope. It is therefore so important that they become aware of services that help them to take a break and take time for themselves.

I am pleased to therefore announce a 'Respite Mapping' consultation, which is due to be launched on 21 November 2022 and will run until 8 January 2023. The consultation will consist of three elements as we look to capture as much information as possible, targeting organisations providing respite services, organisations signposting to respite services and the most important people of all, the unpaid carers themselves. The consultation will be available online via the Council's website and will also be available in paper form in our Hubs, the Memory Clinic at Llandough Hospital, GP surgeries, and many other community locations. There will also be consultation events taking place to ensure that the voice of carers will be captured. The consultation will aim to provide a valuable resource that can be used to improve the lives of carers in Cardiff.

- **Dementia Listening Engagement**

As part of ongoing work related to the All Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards, a listening engagement campaign is currently taking place in Llanrumney. This project working with Public Health Wales and Citizens UK aims to listen to the voice of all ages within the community to find out what their opinions are of what good Dementia Care and support looks like. I am pleased to be able to say that there has been a fantastic response from the Llanrumney community already which includes children and young people from Llanrumney Youth Club and St John Lloyd Primary School, as well as involvement from our community inclusion groups. Opinions are being captured from the community that will potentially influence positive developments in Wales and Cardiff to support people and their families to live well with Dementia in the future.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

National Safeguarding Week

The annual National Safeguarding Week took place during the week commencing 14 November 2022 with a full calendar of events for practitioners and the wider safeguarding community. The focus of this year's regional theme was "The Fundamentals of Safeguarding Practice – Back to Basics". Topics were wide ranging and included the launch of the digital Practice Review Toolkit (the first of its kind in Wales), a Child Practice Review Workshop to share the learning and recommendations from a recently published historical Child Practice Review and workshops relating to professional curiosity and disguised compliance. One of the guest speakers was Ryan Hart – a White Ribbon Ambassador and Refuge Champion, who talked about his family's story of coercive control and domestic abuse/violence.

I would like to pay tribute and thank all those who are involved in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults on a day-to-day basis – from teachers, health and social care staff, and police officers, to those in the third sector. Safeguarding is everybody's business and it's vital that everyone knows and understands the basics.

Support and Induction for Newly Qualified Social Workers

Children's Services recognise the importance and value of providing high quality support, training, and development opportunities for newly qualified social workers. Over the past year, Cardiff has developed a framework to assist the development of newly qualified social workers as part of the recruitment and retention plan. All newly qualified social workers have a comprehensive induction plan. Along with a framework of mentoring and support, they now benefit from a dedicated practice lead who provides shadowing and learning opportunities. A community of practice has now been developed within Cardiff and this enables our newly qualified social workers to be part of a reflective practice hub, which supports the worker to have access to current research and practice information.

This base set the scene for Children's Services' first Practice Development Week that was held last month. I was pleased to join a variety of sessions during the week where a wide range of professional speakers shared their expertise, experiences and supported the continuous practice development journey. Sessions included hate crime and anti-extremism, giving evidence in court and participation of children, young people, and families. Feedback from the week was incredibly positive with staff sharing that the sessions were interesting, informative and very helpful, and I look forward to seeing practice development grow in the future.

Visits to Children's Services Teams

Over recent weeks, I have been pleased to meet with frontline staff, Team Managers and Operational Managers within Children's Services to understand more about their roles and responsibilities. These visits/meetings have included the Child Health & Disability Team, St Mellons Family Centre (East Locality), the Reviewing Hub, Cardiff Youth Justice Services, the Substitute Family Care Team, Hafan Gobaith (North Locality), the Intake & Assessment Team and the Interventions Hub.

It has been incredibly useful for me to learn about the teams I have visited so far and to hear first-hand about their successes, as well as the challenges they face. I would like to thank all the officers who took the time to meet with me for their honesty and insight into the vital work they do every day. My visits will be continuing as I am keen to understand every aspect of the work that Children's Services does and how that work can support children to achieve the best outcomes in life.

Good Practice in Children's Services

Children's Services have continued to receive compliments and feedback about good practice, including one example from a Child Protection Conference Chair. They noted that the social worker had clearly worked consistently and patiently with the family over the last six months to bring about significant positive progress to the families own commitment and motivation to change. The family also commented on their excellent professional relationship with the social worker and how that has empowered and enabled them to understand cultural differences and expectations. This has now reduced the risk of significant harm to a point where registration is no longer required, and the family will accept a wide range of voluntary services to meet their children's needs.

Care Leavers Christmas Dinner

Christmas Day can be a very challenging time for young people who grew up in care. As Corporate Parents, we want to know that our young people are not alone on Christmas Day. Across the UK, the Gold from the Stone Foundation set up by Lemn Sissay has been supporting the delivery of Christmas Dinners for care leavers. This has never happened in Wales before. I'm proud to say that this is changing this year with local volunteers who have been working all year to set up a Christmas day event in Cardiff with dinner, gifts and entertainment for our young people. It is aimed at care experienced young people 18-25 (with flexibility in the age) who would otherwise be alone at Christmas. I am keen to ensure that we all play our part as Corporate Parents and support the event as much as possible. I would encourage Members to spread the word to organisations in their area or care-experienced young people you may know.

DIY Sessions for Care Leavers

It was great to meet a small cohort of care leavers who have taken part in several sessions with Wates Construction to learn and develop their DIY skills. With support from the Into Work and Care Leaver teams, our young people visited the site at Eastern High School and were provided with a variety of demonstrations and information sessions from skilled tradespeople. This included information on how to rewire a plug and what to do if a fuse box trips, what to be aware of when hanging things on walls, and general health and safety information. The young people also took part in practical sessions such as building flat pack furniture, tiling, painting, and decorating including how to measure correctly, how to cut in and how to paper a wall. The young people were also able to take home with them what they built on the day.

These valuable skills have helped to support our young people to live independently and develop knowledge of the construction sector. From the success of these sessions, two of our young people have registered for work experience with Wates Construction. To recognise and celebrate the achievements of those who took part, a

small certificate and a voucher were given to the young people to purchase items for their home. From the positive feedback provided by young people planning is underway for more regular sessions in the New Year.

Cardiff Family Advice & Support

Calls to the Family Gateway have remained at a consistent level throughout September and into October. However, in addition to the continued increase in the average call time reported last month, there was a 39% increase in the number of referrals made by the team during September. Family Help, Cardiff Parenting and Barnardo's Family Well-being Service remain the most referred to services. In September 2022, the generic Family Help Teams had a 45% increase in referrals and saw the average intervention period increase from 12 to 13 weeks. The waiting time for the team remains at 7 weeks. The Family Help Disability Team had a 20% increase in referrals and the average intervention period increased by 87% from 8 weeks to 15 weeks. This is indicative of the complexity of the issues which families are currently facing. Despite this, additional capacity within the team has led to waiting lists decreasing from 12 to 9 weeks.

Childcare Offer

Alongside my colleague Councillor Lewis, I was pleased to accompany Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services, in her visit to Darling Buds Nursery in Bute Street on 9 November 2022 to launch the new Childcare Offer Digital Service. I was pleased to hear from a parent about the importance of the Childcare Offer in helping families with childcare costs. Staff from the Early Help service highlighted the benefits to childcare settings of the single Digital Service.

One clear improvement for settings such as Darling Buds, who provide childcare for children within several local authority areas, is that they will be able to submit a single funding claim, as opposed to claiming to each of the local authorities in which the children live. 188 childcare settings in Cardiff have been registered on the new Digital Service. Since 7 November 2022 when the applications opened, thirty parents have applied using the new online portal for funding from January 2023, and six of these have been approved already.

I would encourage all Members to ensure that their residents are aware of the Childcare Offer so that as many children and families as possible can benefit from this fantastic offer.

Flying Start

The Welsh Government has recently released guidance to local authorities on the further expansion of early years provision. This relates to the Welsh Government's commitment to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision delivered to include all 2-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision. The vehicle for delivering this ambition is through Flying Start. Phase 2 of the expansion will focus specifically and exclusively on a phased roll-out of the part-time, high-quality childcare element of Flying Start to 2-3-year-olds from April 2023. Indicative funding of £1,575,633 will be made available from April 2023 to offer funded childcare places to a further 358 eligible 2-year-old children.

The method instructed for targeting newly eligible children continues to be targeting areas using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), broken down by Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). This uses income benefit data, a proxy indicator for poverty, to target areas with the highest proportions of children aged 0-3 years living in income benefit households.

Councillors Norma Mackie & Ash Lister
Cabinet Members for Social Services (Job Share)
18 November 2022