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## **SOCIAL SERVICES STATEMENT**

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### **ADULT SERVICES**

#### **Social Care Week 2023**

Last week, as part of the events being held to mark Social Care Week, I was delighted to attend an event at City Hall to celebrate the work of the Adult Services social workers and the staff who support them. The event was an opportunity for all social work staff to come together, meet their colleagues and celebrate the great work they are doing across the city. Our social workers and the teams that support them make a huge contribution to supporting the most vulnerable people in the city and I was very pleased to be given the opportunity to personally thank them for their hard work, dedication, and the resilience they have displayed in increasingly challenging times for the sector.

#### **St David Awards 2023**

The manager of Ty Canna Mental Health Outreach, Nia Bannister, has been shortlisted as a finalist in this year's St David Awards for her work supporting clients during the Covid-19 pandemic. Nominated in the Critical Worker (Key Worker) award category, Nia manages the Ty Canna service which supports hundreds of individuals across Cardiff. She has more than 35 years' experience in social care and her commitment has helped people through recovery to reach their potential.

The St David Awards are the national awards of Wales and are nominated by the public. The critical work award is for those who have gone the extra mile to provide an exceptional service to the people of Wales. The finalists and winners of the St David Awards are decided upon by the Welsh Government First Minister and his advisers. Winners will be announced at a ceremony on 20 April 2023.

It is amazing to see the hard work of our staff receive national recognition and I wish Nia good luck for the awards ceremony next month.

#### **E-bikes for Care Workers**

Care workers deliver some of our most essential services day-in, day-out, keeping vulnerable people in our communities safe. However, with the cost-of-living pressures we're experiencing, the cost of fuel presents a significant challenge to domiciliary care providers, impacting on the recruitment and retention of care workers.

To help alleviate some financial stress, with funding from Welsh Government, the Council invited care providers across the city to apply for grants to purchase electric bikes for staff to travel between clients' homes. A total of £41,000 was awarded to 14 domiciliary care providers in the city to buy 41 bikes for their staff. The initiative seeks to improve the capacity of the city's domiciliary care support service by boosting the health and wellbeing of some of the city's most essential workers, as well as helping tackle the climate emergency.

For those care workers who would like to drive, but are unable to afford the lessons, a driving lesson scheme is also being developed. This scheme will financially support care workers to learn to drive up to the value of £570.

### **Care'Diff News**

Unpaid carers make an amazing contribution to the wellbeing of citizens by providing care and support to relatives, families and friends so that they can live independently in the community. I am therefore very pleased to announce that, as part of the Council's Ageing Well Strategy, a detailed action plan has been developed which aims to improve services, listen to unpaid carers, and help them access help and support.

As a first step, Care'Diff News has been launched, which is a quarterly newsletter for unpaid carers in Cardiff containing news, events and useful information to help with their caring role. Copies of the newsletter will be distributed to GP surgeries, Hubs and libraries, day centres and other community locations across Cardiff and will also be available digitally. Care'Diff social media accounts have also been established, and these will be used to highlight useful information and to promote events. I am also pleased to announce that, next month, Care'Diff support groups will be launched within Community Hubs, which will provide carers with an opportunity to take a break from caring and meet other carers.

### **Caring for Carers**

We want to improve the support we offer to unpaid carers and to do this we need to understand their needs. Our Caring for Carers consultation was aimed at unpaid carers and organisations that provide or signpost to respite services. The consultation took place in December 2022 and January 2023 and aimed to learn more about the lives of unpaid carers and what options are available in Cardiff for them to take a break from their caring responsibilities. There was a great response to the consultation with 656 responses received – 98% of which were from unpaid carers. I would like to thank everyone who made time, often under difficult circumstances, to give us greater insight into their challenges. The consultation report and the findings will be published in due course.

### **Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Independent Living Services**

As part of the Ageing Well Strategy, the Independent Living Service recently recruited a specialist officer to improve the use of Technology Enabled Care and Assistive Technologies (TEC), which can promote strength-based practice and positive change in people's lives, helping them to retain their independence for longer. The TEC specialist will work with the Occupational Therapy Team, ensuring there is proper professional oversight in the use of this equipment. The project will consider the impact on both service users and staff, and the findings will be used to embed good practice.

The work with TEC has already started and is generating great results, as evidenced by a specific case study involving Mr M, who is 96, lives at home and is cared for by his daughter during the day and son overnight. He sleeps safely downstairs, where a living and sleeping space has been created for him. An Occupational Therapist met the family and was advised that Mr M's son was sleeping on the sofa downstairs close to his dad, as he was worried about him getting out of bed and falling. This was causing Mr M's son a great deal of stress and affecting his sleep, which in turn was impacting his performance at work. The Occupational Therapist, in liaison with the TEC Specialist, decided to trial bed sensors in Mr M's bed. These sensors send a message to a pager, informing Mr M's son if his dad is getting out of bed. Thanks to the technology and specialist knowledge of the TEC Specialist, Mr M's son is now sleeping in his own bed upstairs, assured that his dad is safe and well.

### **Community Resource Team Home Care Service**

The Community Resource Team's Home Care service is working to improve the way that it provides care and support to service users. On 30 January 2023, the team introduced a new electronic call management system, which is already having a positive change in how the Community Resource Team delivers home care. The new system is delivered through a mobile application, which is reducing paperwork and administration, providing real-time information sharing and more effective rostering of care calls. Carers now know where they will be providing care in advance, allowing them to provide a more person-centred service. Feedback from carers has been excellent. They enjoy seeing all their care calls for the day in advance and, in addition, they feel communication between the office staff and care staff has improved greatly.

### **Age Friendly City Update**

I am delighted to be able to announce that Cardiff Council has been recognised as an Age Friendly Employer and been accepted to the Centre for Ageing Better's Pledge scheme. The Centre for Ageing Better is a UK-wide organisation that is at the forefront of the ambition to make ageing well a reality for everyone. This includes ensuring that the value of older people in the workplace is recognised by employers and that organisations build multi-generational teams. The Centre's Age-Friendly Employer pledge is a nationwide programme for employers who are committed to improving career development opportunities and support for those aged 50 and above. I am pleased to say that Cardiff Council's application to join the scheme has been accepted.

By signing the pledge, the Council is demonstrating its commitment to older workers and making workplaces as age friendly as possible. Furthermore, our commitment to improving career opportunities for older people in Cardiff is underlined in the new Corporate Plan 2023-26, which includes the ambition to roll out the pledging scheme across the city. Officers are working closely with the Centre for Ageing Better so our age friendly progress can be tracked in the coming months.

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

### **Social Work Week 2023**

Our Social Workers and other staff across Children's Services regularly go over and above to support and safeguard our children, young people and their families. Too often we forget to recognise and celebrate the hard work they are doing on a daily basis, which is why this month's Social Work Week is so important. As Corporate Parents, I would encourage Members to go a step further and take every possible opportunity to engage with and thank our fantastic workforce. Finally, I would like to put on record my personal thanks to all staff – from our frontline staff and business support staff, to our management and our Director of Children's Services.

### **Feedback from Families**

I would like to share with Members a selection of good news stories from Children's Services:

- Two young people who the Youth Justice Service were working with have been successful in securing early revocations of their 12-month Referral Orders due to their hard work, engagement and the progression that they made. Staff from the Youth Justice Service worked so well with both of them that both parents commended the Youth Justice Service for their work and commitment. The parents shared that they were able to see changes in their children after the Youth Justice Service sessions and that they were considering and reflecting on their actions. The mum of one of the young people said that Lab7 has been a fantastic opportunity for her son and that he has continued to engage with the service following the end of Youth Justice Service involvement. Lab7 provides creative workshops and tailored support for young people with poor mental health or at risk of criminal and anti-social behaviour. The mum of the other young person has also shared that she would like to become a volunteer with the service and to support parents due to her own lived experiences.
- One of our Teen Scheme foster carers recently provided us with a heart-warming update about how the placement is going. She wanted to say thank you to the fostering and case management social workers for all their hard work. She reported that the case management social worker has been a "star" with the paperwork and acted incredibly fast on everything they have needed. They had an amazing Christmas – the young person was spoilt! They also noted that contact is going very well, and that the young person's birth mother has worked very well with the carers. Mum went to the young person's Christmas concert with the social worker, and the carers supported him to purchase his family Christmas gifts, which apparently made mum cry! At the time of writing, he was very excited about his first ever sleepover and birthday party on the weekend coming.

### **Homes for Children**

Members will share my view that we need to provide the best possible homes, care and support for the children and young people in our care. Last month, it was fantastic to visit all of our Homes for Children, meeting with children, young people and staff, to hear about the kind of homes we are running and particularly the experiences of those children and young people in our care.

When a child or young person has to come into our care, we need to do all we can to make sure that we can find the most suitable placement for them – with family, foster carers or in a residential setting. All of those options should be of the highest possible standard, and all of our homes need to be safe, happy and welcoming. I look forward to working with current and future staff as we expand our residential offer through our Accommodation Strategy, supporting the Welsh Government's ambition to eliminate private profit from children's residential care.

### **Cardiff Youth Justice Service**

Members will know that the Independent Chair of the Youth Justice Management Board, Graham Robb, is due to stand down from the role at the end of this month. I would like to, once again, pay tribute to the work which Graham has undertaken over the last three years, steering the Board and the Youth Justice Service through the process of developing strategies and action plans, and preparing and responding to follow-up inspections by HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

A testament to the work of both the Cardiff Youth Justice Board and the Service itself is the most recent feedback from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, which rated progress against our Youth Justice Plan as "outstanding" with almost all actions "fully complete". Interviews for a replacement Independent Chair are due to take place in the coming weeks and I will update Members following completion of the process.

### **Expanding the Cardiff Family Advice & Support Team**

The new Early Help Academy has been launched this month, with the recruitment of a new Early Help Mentor and three new Early Help Trainees who will receive a comprehensive training package to equip them with a detailed understanding of Early Help teams and the roles within them. They will be supported by the Mentor who will also lead on the induction and ongoing development of these staff within the service. As well as adding additional resource to the team, this will create a pipeline of new fully trained staff who can apply for permanent roles within the service when they become available. A new corporate apprentice has also joined the team and will focus on content creation and website development for the service, with a view to increasing reach and accessibility for children, young people and their families across the city.

### **Cardiff Parenting**

I am delighted to announce that the Council's Parents Plus Team has been awarded the Association of Infant Mental Health – Together Award for 2023. The Association of Infant Mental Health annual awards offer three awards in recognition of individuals from the UK who have made important contributions to the infant mental health community throughout the course of their careers. The award was given in recognition of an Infant Mental Health Team that is working collaboratively and creatively to improve infant mental health outcomes for babies in our community.

## **Childcare Offer**

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the UK Government Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the expansion of funded childcare for working parents in England only, with the intention of providing 30 hours of free childcare for every child over the age of nine months by September 2025. The Welsh Government confirmed the following day that no decision had been taken as to how any consequential funding relating to the expansion of childcare in Wales will be utilised. The current position in Wales with regard to free or funded childcare for pre-school children is as follows:

- The expansion of Flying Start childcare  
The Welsh Government have committed to rolling out Flying Start childcare for 2-3-year-olds, on a phased basis, until the provision is universal. Flying Start childcare consists of 12.5 hours of funded childcare per week during term time. It is expected that full coverage will be achieved within the current Senedd term.
- 3-4-year-olds – The Childcare Offer for Wales  
The Childcare Offer for Wales provides up to 17.5 hours of funded childcare during term time for eligible parents, who are working or are engaged on Further or Higher Education courses. Along with the 12.5 hours of Early Education provided by Cardiff Council, this totals 30 hours per week of combined Early Education and Childcare during term time. Parents are also able to access up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week for 9 of the 13 holiday weeks.

To ensure that as many families as possible are aware of and take up childcare that is available, the Early Help Childcare Offer Team's Engagement Officer has been involved in a range of activities to promote the Childcare Offer and maximise uptake. Examples of promotional activity include the distribution of promotional materials to schools, stalls at job fairs and the Cardiff headteacher's conference, regular social media posts and attendance at school coffee mornings.

## **Childcare Capital Small Grants Scheme**

65 childcare settings, including full day-care providers, sessional settings, and childminders, have benefitted from just over £500,000 of grant payments from the Childcare Capital Small Grants Scheme. The grant provides monies for building works, outdoor furniture and large play equipment to improve the childcare environment and benefit the children attending. Projects funded include the development of garden areas to grow fruit and vegetables, rain shelters, water features, and eco-friendly solar panels.

**Councillors Norma Mackie & Ash Lister**  
**Cabinet Members for Social Services (Job Share)**  
**24 March 2023**