
TACKLING POVERTY, EQUALITY & PUBLIC HEALTH STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH & EQUALITY

Stonewall Workplace Equality 2023

I am pleased to say that the Council's submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2023 demonstrated the significant and continued progress on LGBTQ+ equality in the workplace and in service delivery. The result places Cardiff as the highest-ranked local authority in the Stonewall Top 100 employers in 35th place, a huge leap from 113th last year, and means that we have already achieved our 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' commitment to become a Stonewall Top 100 employer and the highest ranked local authority in Wales. On top of this fantastic achievement, the work of the LGBTQ+ Employee Equality Network resulted in them receiving the Highly Commended Network Group award. The Council is committed to equality for all employees and this result is confirmation of the work across the Council to make Cardiff an employer of choice where equality and diversity is celebrated.

International Women's Day

A wide range of events organised by various organisations were held in Cardiff on 8 March 2023 to celebrate International Women's Day and the accomplishments of women in areas like culture, politics, the economy and society at large. It was great to see the #EmbraceEquity gesture being promoted widely by both councillors and employees, and Cardiff Castle being lit up in purple at night thanks to the Council's Women's Employee Network. The Council was also pleased to support an International Women's Day event held at City Hall on 13 March 2023, which was organised by Women Connect First and celebrated women from Wales and around the world.

Holi Festival

I was pleased to join hundreds of people in celebrating Holi, the Hindu festival of colours, at Cardiff Castle on 19 March 2023. Holi is always a very colourful festival, which sees people throwing perfumed and coloured powder over each other as part of the celebrations. This was a spectacular event filled with music and fun, which was organised by the Honorary Consulate of India in Wales and the Shree Swaminarayan Temple in Cardiff.

Food Strategy

As part of the Council's Food Strategy and work to support local communities to be healthier, the Council is working with Cardiff & Vale Public Health Team on healthier food advertising. This will focus on advertising on Council-owned assets and seek to restrict advertisement of foods which are high in fats, salts and sugars. The first advertising contract to be subject to the restrictions is the one for bus stop shelters and there has been positive feedback from other local authorities who have implemented similar restrictions.

Move More, Eat Well

Move More, Eat Well is a health programme that was launched in July 2020. It has brought together partnerships across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, including the Regional Partnership Board and Public Services Boards. Together, the partnerships have pledged to support and enable those who live and work across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to move more and to eat well through driving forward the partnership plan with co-ordination provided by Cardiff and Vale Local Public Health Team.

There is a lot of good prevention work taking place in Cardiff as part of this programme, including an 'Eat Well, Work Well' workshop event that took place online on 23 March 2023, which council employees were invited to attend. The Council's Hubs are also supporting this programme by providing a varied programme of activities, including fitness and dance groups or classes. In addition, an NHS cardiac exercise referral programme is taking place at Llandaff North and Gabalfa Hub, which is providing rehabilitation for members of the community who are recovering from heart attacks. This is a pilot project, which will remain under review by the Council and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board in terms of demand for such direct health interventions and any further roll-out across the city.

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

I would also like to draw everyone's attention to Bowel Cancer Awareness Month which is taking place in April. Bowel cancer screening helps to detect cancer at an early stage when treatment is likely to be more effective – at least 9 out of 10 people will survive bowel cancer if it's found and treated early. It's quick and easy to use a test kit at home and return by freepost. If anyone between the ages of 55 and 74 would like to request a test kit, they can visit the Public Health Wales website or, for more information, contact the Bowel Screening Wales Freephone helpline on 0800 294 3370 or email: phw.bsw@wales.nhs.uk If anyone has any bowel symptoms or are worried about their family history of bowel cancer, they should speak to their GP.

TACKLING POVERTY & SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Into Work Advice Service

The Mentors in Independent Living & Employability (MILES) youth mentors are always looking for ways to increase positive engagement in hostels and get young people through the doors. Mentors at Northland, our young person's supported accommodation, recently hosted a Valentine's themed drop-in session. Young people were invited to discuss their ideas and understanding of love and healthy relationships and reflect on what self-love looks like for them. One of the youth mentors has been focusing on men's mental health issues in recent months and hosted hostel drop-in sessions during February. The team provide a safe space for young men to discuss their wellbeing with the mentor and each other, and exchange tips for selfcare. Sessions like this are an important part of developing rapport with supported accommodation residents and engaging them in positive activities as a first step, with the goal of encouraging them into employment, education or training.

The Into Work Advice Service continues to provide a complete wraparound employment support to residents of Cardiff, including specialist support for refugees within the city. The Council's Adult Learning Team and Cardiff and Vale College are working together to provide training sessions for the group. Popular requests include mechanic and plumbing courses to allow progression into employment, while Into Work's Community Digital Team are delivering sessions providing digital support and enhancing the digital skills of the group. The team also continues to support refugee doctors on the Clinical Attachment Placement project, where they are supported to complete their Occupational English Test and Professional Linguistics and Assessment Board qualifications whilst gaining experience of being in a hospital setting. So far, 20 refugee doctors have been supported.

Money Advice

I am pleased to announce that Cardiff Council have been awarded funding to provide support to those in food hardship and poverty as part of the Welsh Local Government Association's Direct Food Award Scheme. The Money Advice, Advice Live, and Education's Child Friendly Cardiff Teams have been working hard to support families in financial hardship throughout the city.

The Advice Team identified areas of need where the funding could be used to support the most vulnerable. One area identified was families who were struggling to feed children due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the increase in food prices. The Money Advice Team worked in partnership with the Child Friendly Cardiff Team and contacted schools across the city to fully understand the need of families. Sadly, it was reported that many parents weren't able to provide healthy snacks for their children and would often ask the school for support.

Under the Food Award funding, two schemes were created to support schools and their families. Scheme 1 allows the individual school to apply for the 'snack voucher' from the Advice Team, detailing the number of pupils/families the voucher will support. The school uses the voucher to purchase food to ensure children have access to healthy snacks. The school is then able to create their own food parcels for families who have been identified as struggling.

For Scheme 2, the schools identify the families who are struggling through school pastoral/ wellbeing officers and provide them with a unique code to use when speaking to the Advice Line; a voucher is issued electronically for the family to use in their local supermarket, to purchase food for their children. Feedback from schools has been fantastic with so many showing their gratitude for the opportunity to provide much needed help for families.

It is vital that families are supported in all aspects of money management during these difficult times, so each family who takes part in the scheme is also referred to the Advice Service to provide ongoing support such as income maximisation and budgeting.

Money Advice Officers have been supporting families to apply for and claim previously unclaimed benefits, and with applying for grants, such as reduced water bills, warm home discounts and the discretionary assistance fund.

I am delighted that we have been able to support families in financial hardship while improving the health and wellbeing of children. At the end of last month, over £44,000 worth of vouchers have been issued, supporting over 1,700 families. There is currently £45,000 of the funding remaining which will be utilised to support even more families.

Youth Services

I am continuing to visit a range of youth provisions in the city, to build relationships with the Youth Work teams and explore the range of opportunities which are available to our young people.

I visited the centre at North Ely, which gave me the opportunity to meet the Digital Youth Work Leader, whose work was recognised as best practice by Estyn when they conducted their Local Authority Inspection in 2021. Digital youth work is a growth area for the service as young people increasingly lead more digital lives, using technologies many adults may not be familiar with. It is essential for youth workers to engage and support activities in this field or risk becoming irrelevant. I will be supporting the team as they continue to explore opportunities to progress and extend this work in youth workspaces, to support young people to operate safely and confidently in this digital world.

On 29th March 2023, I will be joining a group of partners at Cardiff West Community High School to investigate some recent challenges in the locality and consider opportunities to strengthen the range of activities and youth work support available to young people in Ely & Caerau. It will be essential for the Council to work in partnership to meet the range of presenting needs and offer young people positive opportunities to get involved with.

Earlier this week, I visited Grassroots, which is the city centre youth project for young people aged 16-25 years. Based on Charles Street for over 40 years, Grassroots offers a range of services to young people, many of whom are often in crisis. I was pleased to see the wide range of activities on offer, and I intend to build a closer relationship with the team operating there as we explore options to develop provision in the city centre.

Next week, I will be visiting Llanrumney Youth Centre, which is a busy centre in the heart of the community. Located in the Phoenix Boxing Club, the centre offers the community and local schools' fitness and wellbeing projects, including boxing, stronger minds and wider health building initiatives.

Beyond Cardiff, at the beginning of this month, I was part of a Council delegation that visited the Croydon Youth Zone in support of our 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' commitment to deliver a Youth Zone in Ely in Cardiff. The Youth Zone supports young people in Croydon aged 8-19 years and up to the age of 25 years for those with additional needs. It provides a multi-purpose facility for the young people to take part in varied activities that meet their needs and interests.

Cardiff City Community Foundation

Councillor Sangani and I both attended an event held on 24 March 2023 to celebrate the impact of the work of the Cardiff City Community Foundation, the official charity of Cardiff City Football Club. The event provided an opportunity for us to hear first-hand about the achievements of some of the Community Foundation's beneficiaries and to find out more about the breadth of the work being undertaken with children, young people and adults in Cardiff and surrounding communities.

Councillors Julie Sangani & Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Members for Tackling Poverty, Equality & Public Health (Job Share)
24 March 2023