
SOCIAL SERVICES STATEMENT

ADULT SERVICES

Age Friendly Website

The Council wants to make it easier for older adults to find the help they need to live independently and stay engaged in their communities. I am therefore pleased to announce the launch of the new Age Friendly Cardiff website (www.agefriendlycardiff.co.uk), which offers a central location for information about local services, activities, and support which can help older people in Cardiff to live well. I want to thank everyone who took part in the consultation and whose responses were used to shape the content and structure of the website, which will be launched officially during the International Day of Older Persons celebration event at Central Library Hub on 29 September 2023. The event will feature a range of organisations raising awareness of their services, as well as some fun activity taster sessions for older people to take part in.

Cardiff Age Friendly Forum – Ageing and Climate Change Workshop

At the start of August, I hosted the second Cardiff Age Friendly Forum meeting at Central Library Hub, which facilitated the second part of a nationwide study on healthy ageing and climate change. Researchers from the University of York and Heriot-Watt University were joined by a range of stakeholders, including older people and representatives from various organisations, to capture the experience and opinions of older people relating to the challenges of global warming, climate change and resilience. The study will build on the World Health Organisation's [Age-Friendly Cities and Communities](#) work, which encourages people to age well by creating improved opportunities for health, community participation, and to enhance people's quality of life as they age. I want to thank all the members of the public who took the time to give their valuable insight and I am really looking forward to learning the results of the study when they are published.

Creating Dementia Friendly Communities

I am pleased to give you an update on the Council's work towards becoming a Dementia Friendly City. Dementia Friendly Ambassador Volunteers and Dementia Friendly Community Officers are supporting local shops, businesses, and organisations to work towards becoming dementia friendly. Volunteers and Community Officers help organisations recognise the impact of dementia, understand how it changes customer needs and how to support those affected by dementia. So far, 155 organisations in Cardiff have pledged to undertake dementia friendly action, which is a great step towards the Council's aim of becoming dementia friendly. Information about dementia friendly businesses in Cardiff can be found on the Dementia Friendly Cardiff website at: www.dementiafriendlycardiff.co.uk

Care'Diff

The Care'Diff team continues to host support groups for unpaid carers in Hubs across Cardiff. Groups meet monthly and provide an opportunity for carers to take a break, meet others who have experience of caring, take part in fun activities, and get support. There is no need to sign up; carers can drop in for as long as they like and are free to bring the person they look after. The third edition of the Care'Diff News has been published this month and distributed widely to ensure as many carers as possible have access to helpful advice and information. The newsletter is available via post or email. Paper copies are available from Community Hubs, GP surgeries, pharmacies, and other community locations across Cardiff. Carers can also sign up to receive future editions as they are published. To be included on the newsletter mailing list, carers can email: carediff@cardiff.gov.uk or phone: 029 2087 3419.

Grants for Unpaid Carers

I am pleased to inform you about three grants currently available to support unpaid carers living in Cardiff who are facing unprecedented pressures due to the cost-of-living crisis.

The first is Welsh Government's Carers Support Fund, where eligible unpaid carers are offered vouchers for respite activities or items that are most suitable to meet their individual needs and circumstances.

The second is the Amser Short Breaks Scheme which provides grant funding for personalised, flexible and creative short breaks by unpaid carers in Wales.

Thirdly, the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board has also provided funding for a short breaks grant scheme, which aligns with the 'life alongside caring' priorities proposed by Welsh Government. Funding will enable carers, including young carers, to access a range of enjoyable activities.

For more information and to apply for any of these schemes, carers can visit: <https://thecarecollective.wales> or contact the Care Collective's Carers Gateway by phone: 029 2192 1024.

Early Help Project with South Wales Police

The Council's Independent Living Service has recently commenced a project in partnership with South Wales Police with the aim of providing better support to Cardiff's vulnerable and older citizens who may have engagement with the police as either a victim or perpetrator. The project will see a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) refer directly to the Independent Living Service where lower-level interventions would benefit the individual, and a more preventative approach can be taken. PCSOs will meet with the service fortnightly to review referrals, and to share expertise in how vulnerable adults can be best supported. It is great to see that the Independent Living Service is building on the work that they already do to care and support the older citizens in our community.

Supporting the South Asian Community

The Independent Living Service has created a new weekly coffee morning for older people and family members of the South Asian community living with dementia. This comes after the service attended an engagement event aimed at breaking down stigma and taboos about living with dementia within South Asian communities. The event saw several speakers from communities within Cardiff give first-hand accounts of family members living with dementia and the impact of cultural barriers on getting support. One speaker explained how despite trying to take her mother to participate in dementia groups, her cognitive condition and language barriers had caused this to be distressing. The Independent Living Community Co-ordinator engaged with the event facilitators and members of the Alzheimer's Society to discuss this identified gap in service provision which resulted in the launch of the coffee morning. Alongside this, the Independent Living Service is liaising with the Alzheimer's Society to offer training and awareness for volunteers and members of the South Asian Community to become Dementia Friends.

Ty Canna

It is an exciting time for Ty Canna as they continue to work with the IBI Group design team on proposals for a new building for the service. Volunteers, with lived experience of mental health issues, have been present in these meetings and provide input into the design for the new scheme. It is a very exciting time for the project, and I look forward to keeping Members updated as this work progresses.

In addition, Ty Canna has been awarded £4,000 from the Awards for All Lottery Grant to put towards the Family Project activities for the forthcoming year. Ty Canna's Family Project helps families where either a parent or guardian suffers from poor mental health. The activities delivered by the service provide an opportunity for parents/guardians and children to come together, and are important in developing social skills, gaining knowledge and self-confidence, and giving children the opportunity to make lasting friendships outside of school. A diverse range of activities is already provided by the service such as cinema trips, beach visits, and creative art workshops. With this funding, Ty Canna will now be able to expand the activities and events they provide and offer even more support and opportunities to families across Cardiff.

Falls Prevention

Falls and fractures are costly to the NHS, to social care and to the individual and their family or carer. In Cardiff, reducing the number of falls and improving quality of life is a priority.

This month, the Health and Wellbeing Engagement Team has built on its falls prevention work by linking up additional Council services with the Falls Prevention Team in Public Health Wales. This has included Telecare, who have recently improved their data collection and now produce monthly infographics detailing falls that they have attended. The information includes the time of the fall, the reason, and the room the person was in when they had the fall. There are opportunities to provide early interventions that could potentially stop people falling over again, which can have a big impact on an individual's further health and ability to remain independent.

Public Health Wales will now provide Falls Brief Intervention Training and information materials to Telecare and Meals on Wheels staff. This training will provide staff with practical information to identify those at risk of falling, give them an understanding of where people can get support to reduce their risk of falling, improve their skills and provide techniques that are useful in starting conversations about falls.

Training will also take place within teams in Adult Services who work closely with older people, with sessions booked in for the Independent Living Service and Occupational Therapy Teams.

FaME (Falls Management Exercise)

A new Falls Management Exercise (FaME) programme is being launched on 28 September 2023 at Ely & Caerau Hub following the success of the existing programme in STAR Hub. Run by Elderfit, the course will be delivered over 24 weeks in weekly one-hour group exercise classes plus directed home exercises. The course is a structured exercise programme for adults aged over 65. Clinical trials have shown that this helps to prevent or reduce falls, reduces the fear of falling, and increases habitual physical activity and fitness.

The evidence-based elements of the programme include:

- Functional leg muscle strengthening and balance retraining that progress in difficulty
- Functional progressive trunk and arm muscle strengthening
- Bone loading, targeted prime fracture sites
- Endurance/cardiovascular training (including walking) and flexibility training
- Functional floor skills and skills to rise from floor (preventing long lies)
- Adapted Tai Chi

If you know anyone that you feel would benefit from taking part in FaME, please encourage them to contact Elderfit by emailing: gareth.elderfit@gmail.com or by phoning: 07731 382224.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Youth Justice Summer Programme

Over the summer, Cardiff Youth Justice Services ran a successful programme of activities to provide young people with the opportunity to take part in constructive pursuits and group interventions. There were a range of options for young people to choose from, from sporting activities to sessions with animals and weapons awareness workshops. The most popular activities throughout the summer include go-karting sessions, fishing, and a trip to Cefn Mably Farm. For those who enjoyed creative activities, Youth Justice Services also hosted an art project at their offices to help design and decorate one of the rooms to ensure that they have an appropriate space for young people to learn and relax in. Staff found it very rewarding to be able to see young people being carefree and just enjoying being children.

Foster Wales Event

It was a pleasure to join the team at their fun day in Bute Park where I had the opportunity to speak to children, foster carers, and staff in our quest to continue promoting Fostering for Cardiff. The team hopes that their ongoing attendance at events such as this will result in enquiries from new families wanting to become fostering families as they continue to recruit foster carers to match our diverse and exciting city. The team welcome interest from all families, whether single, a couple, LGBT+ or with a disability – please can I ask for your continued support in promoting Fostering for Cardiff and encourage anyone who has an interest to get in touch. Information is available at: <https://cardiff.fosterwales.gov.wales/>

Bright Sparks Event

A special presentation was held during the summer to celebrate the achievements of a group of young people on the Bright Start scheme, a programme that provides training and work placement opportunities for care-experienced young people across a range of businesses and organisations in Cardiff, including roles in the local authority. There was great feedback from participants and it's good to hear that the Council is supporting young people with opportunities to experience the world of work and providing them with the assistance they need to have positive experiences in their traineeships.

Cardiff Family Advice & Support

I am pleased to announce that following an annual re-assessment, Cardiff Family Advice and Support has been successful in retaining the Families First Quality Award for a further 12 months. The award recognises the high quality of information, advice and assistance provided by the team and is testament to the hard work of practitioners across the service. My congratulations to everyone involved.

The Index

Following my previous announcement about the new online Index registration form, more than 100 new registrations have been received since the launch in mid-July. This has both digitalised and streamlined the process, and ensures that families have quicker access to information about specialist services, groups, and activities. The Index is Cardiff's voluntary register for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and is part of the Council's Cardiff Family Advice and Support Service. Caregivers and professionals working with children and young people aged up to 25 with disabilities or additional needs can register to receive an e-bulletin providing information about a range of services, events, and activities in and around Cardiff, including holiday provision. The new online Index registration form can be accessed at: <https://www.cardiffamilies.co.uk/the-index/>.

Cardiff Parenting

In July 2023, two Educational Psychologists from Cardiff Parenting presented about the work of the service here in Cardiff at the World Congress of the World Association of Infant Mental Health held in Dublin. The service is recognised as being an example of good practice in specialised parent-infant work in the early years.

Over the summer, Flying Start Parenting delivered the biggest and largest attended, programme of events in the history of the service! 3,392 parents and children attended a variety of family fun days in community venues and days out to local venues and some further afield, organised by practitioners for both Flying Start and non-Flying Start families.

Other Early Help teams also attended and engaged with families on the fun days. Families were grateful for the opportunity to access activities and trips with their children that they could not otherwise afford at the moment. In addition, over the summer, family fun packs were provided to more families temporarily living in hostels and hotels, offering additional activities to do together.

Childcare Offer

In August 2023, a total of 2,312 children were benefitting from the Childcare Offer, the highest this year. This represents a new 'high tide mark', exceeding the previous highest number of beneficiary children which was 2,149 in July 2022.

Flying Start

I am pleased to report that officers are making good progress with the procurement arrangements for the expansion of Flying Start childcare. Where possible, variations have been made to existing Flying Start childcare contracts to accommodate additional childcare places for eligible children. Letters have been sent out to eligible families in the city which provide a QR code and a link to a Council online portal. Here families can provide relevant information that will enable officers to offer them a childcare placement. Also included with the letter is an information leaflet provided by Mudiad Meithrin about the benefits of Welsh language education and bilingualism/multilingualism, along with information detailing the support that can be accessed by Hubs and the Council's Cardiff Family Advice and Support Service. Responses to date have been good and officers have been able to allocate their children a childcare place starting from this term.

Workforce Update

Work to recruit social workers continues and we have made good progress with the percentage vacancies falling from 27% earlier in the year to 15% in August 2023 – comfortably achieving our target level (24%). In addition to this, we have eight social workers appointed and due to take up post in the coming weeks with an additional 12 students also due to start in the next few months who will qualify later in the year. Five students have joined us as Social Work Assistants while they are waiting on their qualifications. This has had a positive impact on our agency social worker numbers – reducing them by 10 since March 2023. All our locality team managers are now permanent and work to develop our operating model in support of prudent social work continues.

Early Years Pathfinder & Neurodiversity Workstream

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board (RPB) to discuss the work being done by Cardiff & Vale University Health Board to improve services for neurodiverse children and young people, as well as during their transition to adulthood. I also visited the Neurodevelopment Assessment Unit at Cardiff University with the Deputy Leader, where staff shared some of their research

with us and talked about the focus on support and alternative ways to help children and young people without focusing on diagnoses.

The RPB is supporting the regional delivery of the Early Years Innovation and Transformation programme. This regional programme provides additional financial support, alongside the Neurodiversity programme, to deliver improvements for children aged 0-7 years who have been referred into the Neurodiversity Team for assessment. Currently, there are long waiting lists for assessment across the age range, with limited access to support while waiting. For children aged 0-7 years, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has begun piloting a range of activities which provide access to support without the need for a diagnosis, ensuring that the right support is given at the time needed.

Three Community Connectors have been recruited into the Neurodiversity Team who have supported over 100 families since April to access information workshops and connect to a wider range of services which can support their child and family while they wait for diagnostic assessment.

An “Early Positive Approaches to Support” programme has been delivered across Cardiff to support parents who have infants with additional learning needs to develop strategies and support in the early years. This includes parents who have children under five waiting for assessment and those already with a Neurodiversity diagnosis. Since April 2023, 53 families have been supported and additional courses are planned for later in the year. Alongside this, Action for Children are delivering a small pilot of support for families that includes stay and play workshops, running through the holiday periods when many other services pause.

Cardiff Early Help is increasing capacity in the Cardiff Family Advice and Support Service to reduce waiting times for support. Whilst there is still some way to go in reducing the length of time for those waiting for assessment, this partnership approach to supporting children with support when needed as opposed to when diagnosed is a positive outcome in the right direction.

In terms of our statutory services, Children’s Services work with a large number of children and young people who are neurodiverse, many of whom experience barriers to accessing the right services at the right time. Children’s Services have identified that delays in accessing specific and timely support for children often leads to an escalation and the need to offer increasingly large specialist support packages to the child and their family. Children’s Services are working with partners from the University Health Board to consider how we can better use limited resources for children who are neurodiverse that moves away from the medical model of diagnosis and seeking to work alongside families to understand what interventions will help them improve outcomes for the individual child.

Cardiff Parenting Waiting Times

Waiting times for psychology-led one-to-one parenting support has been reduced to 10-12 weeks; this is a significant decrease from the waiting times of up to 30 weeks the team saw at the end of last year. Cardiff Parenting continues to work hard to further reduce waiting times as far as possible in order to support families at the point that they are asking for help. For families, this has meant the team has helped with:

- their ability to support their child's learning and developmental needs;
- improved family resilience;
- helping change in family lifestyle and behaviours; and
- improvements in family relationships.

So far, the team has recorded an avoidance of onward remedial costs for other public services of £1.7m.

Councillors Norma Mackie & Ash Lister
Cabinet Members for Social Services (Job Share)
21 September 2023