

COUNCIL: 26 OCTOBER 2023

SOCIAL SERVICES STATEMENT

ADULT SERVICES

International Day of Older Persons

The United Nations International Day of Older Persons takes place annually on 1 October to raise awareness of opportunities and challenges faced by ageing populations, and to mobilise the wider community to address difficulties faced by older people. This year, the occasion was marked by a fantastic two-day event based at Central Library Hub on 29 & 30 September 2023.

The event on 29 September focused on raising awareness of local services and support available for older people, with stallholders from many different organisations located throughout three floors of the Central Library Hub building. These included the Digital Support Team, Independent Living Services, FAN Groups, Into Work Services, Amgueddfa Cymru, Sight Life, and Public Health Wales. The third floor was dedicated to falls prevention awareness, with a living room 'crime scene' set up by Public Health Wales to draw attention to potential hazards which often increase the risk of falls, such as rugs, loose wires and extension leads. Independent Living Services gave a talk on the positive impacts that their walking groups have on the building of core strength, which reduces the risk of falls. Elderfit provided a taster session, and a chair and laughter yoga taster sessions also took place, proving a great success.

The event on 30 September involved a variety of wellbeing taster sessions including watercolour painting, and knit & natter. Information stalls were also available, and stallholders reported that it was a fantastic chance to network with each other and meet other older people from the community.

I'd like to remind everyone of our new Age Friendly Cardiff website which was launched at the event. The new website will be a vital resource for older people living in and visiting Cardiff and can be found at: www.agefriendlycardiff.gov.uk

Focus Groups Care'Diff – Learning and Development

I was so pleased to continue the quest to listen to more carers in Cardiff, who do such an amazing job of looking after others and helping them stay independent within the community. In September, Carers Wales helped to facilitate focus groups with unpaid carers who were then able to feed into the building of a learning and development offer. An in-person session was held at Central Library Hub, followed by an online session on Microsoft Teams. Carers were invited to share their views on what is already available, suggest further improvements, and identify any support they would require to access learning opportunities. I would like to thank all of the unpaid carers who took time out from their caring role to give us the benefit of their insight and experience. Carers Wales is currently consolidating the feedback received and will be

making some recommendations which will hopefully enhance the learning support that is currently available to unpaid carers.

Hubs for All

The Hubs for All project was launched at the end of August and is already proving to be a valuable service to both older people and their carers. The project provides a care and wellbeing service for potentially vulnerable adults including:

- older adults living alone;
- those with age-related illness;
- early onset of dementia, and;
- low-level support needs.

Hubs for All now operates in Powerhouse Hub, Rhiwbina Hub, St Mellons Hub, Grangetown Hub and Llandaff North Hub. The project provides care and wellbeing support from dedicated and experienced staff, light refreshments, person-centred activities, social activity and, of course, unpaid carer respite. Hubs for all have been welcoming referrals from Adult Services, the Day Opportunities Team, the First Point of Contact Team, Carers Team, Community Teams and Independent Living & Community Social Care with 21 people attending the August sessions and 47 people attending during September.

I have been incredibly pleased to see some of the positive comments we have received from those who have used the service and I'd like to share some of them. A service user's husband commented "She was so happy and smiley after our first session and was singing" – he hadn't heard his wife sing in over two years because of a fall and losing confidence in her speech. From a service user's son, "Mum sounded like a different person today after her day with the team. It is definitely a service that I know will benefit her care and social needs".

I'm sure you'll agree that the Hubs for All project is so important and is really having a positive impact on the lives of older people in Cardiff.

Supporting Hospital Discharge

I am pleased to announce that the continued development of the Integrated Discharge Hub, which facilitates safe and timely discharge from hospital via a number of support pathways, is having a significant impact on the speed at which we are able to support people into the next stage of care following a period in hospital. The number of delayed hospital discharges in Cardiff (i.e. when someone is ready to move on from hospital but is prevented from doing so) has reduced from 185 in April 2023 to 124 in September 2023, a reduction of 32%. On average, 43 people each week are being discharged from hospital with care in place thanks to the support of our hospital team.

The move out of hospital is not always straightforward, in some cases life-changing decisions need to be made particularly when a permanent move into a care home is needed. The individual and their family need time to come to terms with this change and to find the right home. Our Discharge to Assess pathway provides a temporary care home placement for more complex cases, while our Discharge to Recover and Assess pathway provides rapid response domiciliary care for those able to return home.

We are providing tailored support that meets the needs of the individual, supporting independent living wherever possible, whilst reducing the risk of re-admission. I am pleased with the progress made and we are in a good place as we move into the colder months, however we are continuing to work with health colleagues to further develop the service and to increase resilience to meet winter pressures.

Independent Living Service – Successful Apprenticeship

As part of Cardiff Council's drive to provide career and development opportunities for the city's young people, and in line with the Independent Living Service's "grow your own" ethos, the Joint Equipment Service employed a warehouse apprentice in February 2022. The apprenticeship involved learning and gaining experience in a number of skills essential in delivering the regional Joint Equipment Store, which provides specialist medical equipment to support independence, care at home and to enable speedy discharge from hospital.

The apprenticeship also involved achieving a Level 2 qualification in warehousing, storage, and logistics, and obtaining a forklift truck license. I am pleased to announce that due to his hard work, the young person has secured a permanent role as a Storekeeper with the service and is thoroughly enjoying his role.

Carer Continuity

Over the last year a significant amount of work has been completed to improve the quality of home care delivered by our Community Resource Team (CRT). One area for improvement which was identified through our customer surveys is that our citizens would love to have better continuity of care whilst with our service. Due to the disparity of working hours across various shifts, the service was unable to provide consistent continuity of care across the city. Service users would often receive care from a wide variety of carers from day to day and week to week.

Since the roll out of new Electronic Call Monitoring technology across the service and in full consultation with our 95 carers, a new rota structure has been agreed. This has supported the service to be able to provide more care hours with the same number of care workers and also enables citizens to receive care from the same carers, providing greater consistency and allowing better relationships to be built between carer and service user.

Celebrating World Mental Health Day with Ty Canna

To mark World Mental Health Day, which took place on 10 October 2023, I would like to shine a spotlight on the work of two services currently partnering with Ty Canna, the Council's Mental Health Outreach Services in Canton. The projects, Growing Green Cardiff and Brawd, more than live up to this year's theme that 'Mental health is a universal human right'.

Growing Green Cardiff cultivates wellness and community through allotment gardening. The project creates a safe space for individuals with initiatives such as gardening, art and craftwork. Managed by volunteers with first-hand experience of the challenges posed by long-term illness, the project is a shining example of how gardening and sustainable living can positively impact wellbeing. The group meets at Leckwith-Droves Allotments. If anyone would like more information on this project, they can contact Ty Canna on (029) 2064 1530.

The second project is Brawd, a men's mental health support group that offers help for men aged 18 and over. Brawd understands the barriers which men can contend with when it comes to accessing support and strives to foster an environment in which men can openly talk without judgement. The group holds two meet-up sessions per week, including at Ty Canna on Thursdays between 6pm – 7.30pm, where men can come together in a safe, warm, and welcoming environment for a cuppa and a chat. More information can be found at the website: www.Brawd.org.uk

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Practice Matters Week

The first week in October was designated as "Practice Matters Week" for Children's Services with a focus on "all about the child" (i.e., the child's lived experience). Now into its second year, a week of workshops was arranged covering topics such as Motivational Interviewing, Cultural Identity and Diversity, Neurodiversity, and Safety Planning. The week was a great success with sessions providing the opportunity for lots of reflection, ideas, and positivity to inspire our practice with children and families. 19 sessions were held with close to 1,400 attendees and feedback from staff was very positive. In response to the session giving messages from care-experienced young people – one attendee commented "Thank you for a lovely presentation ... it was so powerful and inspiring to hear you speak. I hear the importance of a personalised approach to each child and the importance of using language that you understand. I will be taking this forward in my role and encouraging others to also do the same." It was a pleasure to join staff during some of the sessions, giving me the opportunity to thank them for all they do and to get a better understanding of the work they carry out on a daily basis.

Peer Action Collection Cymru Showcase

Peer Action Collection (PAC) Cymru is a multi-award-winning, pioneering network of young people who are dedicated to creating positive change in their communities through innovative research and proactive action. Their mission is to empower local youth and under-represented groups who have experienced the criminal justice system and/or are care-experienced by giving them a voice and supporting them in developing their passions and talents. In September, I had the privilege of attending the PAC showcase event where young people presented the work they had carried out to ensure that the voices of young people were being heard, and I look forward to seeing the project go from strength to strength.

Barnardo's Conference

More recently I also attended the Cardiff Family Wellbeing Conference – arranged by Barnardo's. This was a great opportunity to learn about the shared experience of our integrated partnerships and consider with partners how we can work creatively together to support children, young people and families across Cardiff. The presentations from the guest speakers provided us with much food for thought and it was fantastic to see so many different partners coming together to share experiences and expertise, so we can support children and families as best we can.

Foster Cardiff

Work to develop the in-house fostering service is ongoing and some examples of recent progress include the development of the Teen Scheme which continues with three young people in placements and two arrangements progressing (for an additional four young people). In addition, the marketing plan is being implemented and attendance at key events in the city continues – including a fun day in Bute Park over the summer. The team are also attending team meetings right across the Council to raise awareness of Foster Cardiff, emphasising the importance of our responsibilities as a Corporate Parent and promoting the “refer a friend” policy.

Cardiff Family Advice and Support

I am very 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. Cardiff is one of only two local authorities in Wales to achieve the award, so a huge congratulations to all those involved.

Cardiff Parenting

As part of the Early Years Integration Transformation Pathfinder, Cardiff Parenting has secured additional funding to recruit a Specialist Health Visitor and Clinical Psychologist to deliver direct work with families in relation to infant mental health. The funding also supports indirect work via training and supervision for the early years' workforce. The multi-disciplinary team are piloting an offer of 'Play & Development' sessions for mothers with mild to moderate mental health needs. As part of the regional approach to standardise services, one of the educational psychologists and the clinical psychologist have started provided 'Thinking Together Conversations' for the Vale Parenting Service. The Parenting teams also continue to offer family play sessions in family centres which are temporarily housing homeless families.

Institute of Health Visiting Conference

Our Flying Start Health team for perinatal mental health presented findings of research on “Assessing the risk of postnatal depression in parents receiving a Health Visiting service” at the Institute of Health Visiting (IHV) Conference last month. The research was carried out in partnership with Cardiff University. I am pleased to say that both the IHV and delegates at the conference were very impressed by the Flying Start offer within Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, and the presentation generated many questions and discussions.

Workforce Update

Work to recruit social workers continues and we have sustained the excellent progress made over the summer with 16% vacancies in September. In addition to this, we have five social workers appointed and due to take up post in the coming weeks with an additional seven students also due to start during the year who will qualify later in the year. This is a remarkable position that has been achieved by officers in the service giving this area of work priority and focussed attention throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond.

Youth Justice

I am proud to share an example of a good news story with you about one of our young people who was referred into the Youth Justice Service Prevention Service earlier this year following concerns of exploitation and harmful behaviours. At the time, the young person was withdrawn, had limited friendship groups, presented with low confidence, low self-esteem and appeared to be experiencing some confusion around their identity. They were struggling in school and were not expected to gain the GCSEs needed for their chosen college. A referral from their social worker asked for a support worker to take them into the community whilst offering intervention to increase their self-esteem, confidence, and sense of identity. At the time they very rarely left the house and had difficulties in social settings and building positive friendships. Since working with the Prevention Service, they have made a massive turnaround and in August achieved 7 GCSEs – 2 Bs and 5 Cs. They will now be attending Sixth Form to study Criminology, Psychology, and Business. They have also secured employment and shown great engagement with work – putting their wages towards driving lessons which they are really enjoying.

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