

COUNCIL: 30 NOVEMBER 2023

TACKLING POVERTY, EQUALITY & PUBLIC HEALTH STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH & EQUALITY

HIV Testing Week

I am pleased to say that Cardiff Council will be supporting Fast Track Cardiff & Vale during Wales HIV Testing Week between 20 & 26 November by promoting the benefits of regular HIV testing. The Fast Track Cities Initiative is a global partnership which works towards zero new infections, eliminating HIV-related stigma, and improving the quality of life of people living with HIV. Cardiff became a Fast Track City in 2020.

The aim of the week is to break down the stigma which prevents people from testing, showing how easy it is to get tested and linking people to the national free postal testing portal (www.shwales.online). Increasing awareness and accessibility of testing is crucial in order to diagnose HIV at an early stage, providing people with treatment and support quickly as well as preventing ongoing transmission.

The Council is fully supporting the campaign with promotion on the StreetHub units across the city centre, as well as via Hub digital screens. Officers have also been liaising with health colleagues to promote the message across GP surgery screens. Staff are also supporting Fast Track colleagues by joining them at an information stall in the University Hospital of Wales concourse during the week, where they will be on hand to talk to visitors about HIV and testing. Officers and Fast Track colleagues have also collaborated with in the development of a 'HIV 101' booklet, which includes key messages about HIV, including prevention and how to access testing. The booklet is available in all Community Hubs during HIV Testing Week.

Bowel Cancer Roadshows

Bowel Cancer UK delivered roadshows in Cardiff between 21 and 23 November to raise awareness of bowel cancer. Visitors were able to experience their giant inflatable bowel – measuring 19 feet by 6 feet – in an interactive way to demonstrate the various stages of bowel cancer and other diseases of the large intestine, and to raise awareness of bowel cancer symptoms and screening. Around half of all bowel cancers could be prevented by leading a healthier lifestyle, so it is important that people recognise the risk factors.

Council teams are sharing these key messages widely via posters and social media to support Bowel Cancer UK and are encouraging customers to take part in this vitally important screening programme.

I would urge anyone who is invited to screening (people aged between 51 and 74 years old registered with a doctor in Wales) to make sure that they take up the invitation. If you have any bowel symptoms or are worried about your family history of bowel cancer, do not wait for your bowel screening test kit. It is important that you speak to your doctor.

Arts and Culture for Community Cohesion

My Cabinet colleague, Cllr Bradbury, and I are both delighted to support a powerful new film demonstrating how the people of Cardiff are using arts, education and culture to improve diversity and encourage inclusivity in the city. 'Stories for Cohesion' is a short film produced by the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN), a group of UK local authorities committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community. Filmed in June during Refugee Week, the film was launched at the CCIN'S AGM in Sunderland earlier this month. As well as Cllr Bradbury and myself, the film features leading figures from Cardiff's arts, theatre and music scenes, along with teachers and community cohesion workers, explaining how their work helps to generate harmony in the city's multi-ethnic communities. The film is available to watch at: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/863120356>

Sustainable Food Challenge

Following completion of a feasibility study, Fareshare Cymru has been successful in being selected to participate in the Round 1 demonstrator phase of the Cardiff Capital Region Sustainable Food Challenge. The Redistribution Wales Kitchen will turn surplus food, which would otherwise be wasted, into nutritious, healthy meals. Recipes aim to contain two of the 'five a day' fruit and vegetables, will be fully vegetarian, and will trial reuseable packaging. The meals will meet a gap in provision of food to community organisations and charities who are supporting some of the most vulnerable in society. The project will supply 10 community food members initially, with the aim to build up to 30 as the trial progresses over the six-month period. Projects for the Round 2 demonstrator phase are currently being evaluated following a recent round of bids.

Diwali 2023

Diwali is one of Hinduism's most important festivals and the Indian community's biggest celebration. It is a five-day festival which represents triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. I had the pleasure of attending a number of celebratory events across the city, one of which was hosted by the First Minister for Wales, Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, and the Honorary Consul for India in Wales, Mr Raj Aggarwal, at Sophia Gardens. These events brought the Indian community together to celebrate the Festival of Light and the many shared connections between Wales and India. There was an abundance of music and food as well as entertainment and cultural dance performances and the venues were beautifully decorated with Indian artefacts, textiles and Rangoli art.

Remembrance Service for Ethnic Minority and Commonwealth Servicemen and Women

It was an honour to attend the Ethnic Minority and Commonwealth Servicemen and Women Remembrance Service at Alexandra Gardens on 14 November to lay a wreath on behalf of the Leader and the Council. The annual event was organised by Race Council Cymru and pays tribute to the contribution made by Ethnic Minority and Commonwealth servicemen and women who served during the First and Second World Wars and who have served in other conflicts since. The service of remembrance provides a focal point and an opportunity to give thanks and remember some 2.5 million soldiers who came from India and fought for Britain in the Second World War, alongside servicemen and women from the Caribbean, Africa, Canada, and Australia, many from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities who lived and worked in the docks of Cardiff and South Wales. For a future of equity and anti-racism, we need to look honestly at our past and learn from it.

TACKLING POVERTY & SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Cost-of-Living Update

As we head into the winter months and the cost-of-living crisis continues, I am extremely proud of the Council's Advice Services, which continue to deliver support to residents to help mitigate the impacts of these challenges. Over 3,000 people have already been assisted with Universal Credit financial support, and the team has identified over £10 million in additional weekly benefits for customers since April and issued 855 foodbank vouchers. Our dedicated Fuel and Food Poverty champions continue to support people across Community Hubs, providing advice to people who are struggling with ongoing rising costs. I would implore anyone who is struggling currently to contact the Council's Money Advice Service to find out more about the support available by phoning 029 2087 1071 or by emailing: advicehub@cardiff.gov.uk

Remembrance Service

The Council's Veterans Advice team, which offers help and support to the Armed Forces community in Cardiff, held an event to commemorate Remembrance Day at Central Library Hub on 10 November. A bugler played the Last Post at 11am, which was followed by a two-minute silence and the laying of a wreath in the reception area. The organisations who attended included Change Step, a peer-to-peer veterans mentoring service, and an NHS Wales dedicated mental health service for the Armed Forces.

School Snack Scheme

The School Snack Scheme has been relaunched ahead of the forthcoming winter period after the success of last year's initiative, which supported over 1,500 families. The scheme enables schools to ensure that every pupil has access to healthy snacks during the school day, as well as providing food parcels for families who are experiencing food poverty.

Each school in the city can request a voucher from the Money Advice Service, highlighting the number of families they have identified who require support. Schools will also actively promote and refer families to the Money Advice Service, so they can receive a full money and benefit health check, including income maximisation as part of the help available. To refer a family into the scheme, please contact your local school or the Council's Money Advice Service by phoning 029 2087 1071 or by emailing: advicehub@cardiff.gov.uk

Into Work Advice Service Jobs Fair

As part of the Council's initiative to get people into work, the Into Work Advice Service delivered its fourth Cardiff Jobs Fair at the Capitol Centre in partnership with Scope last month. Disability-friendly employers promoted live vacancies at the event with 60 employers and support organisations in attendance. The event was very well attended, with over 1,000 jobseekers visiting the event, engaging with employers and receiving support from organisations.

Young Person Homelessness Support

It is extremely important that young people living in supported accommodation are equipped with the tools to live independently. This month saw the start of 'Cook & Create' workshops. These workshops, delivered by the Multiply team within the Into Work Advice Service, aim to help young people develop cooking skills, learn about budgeting, problem solving and following instructions. Upon completing the workshops, the young people are gifted an air fryer and an item of furniture that they have made. Over 40% of residents at Ty Bronna young person's hostel have now completed the workshops, and the team will continue to offer the opportunity to young people living in supported accommodation, with the next sessions planned for Ty Seren and Northlands.

Virtual Headteacher/Bright Futures

LACE (Looked after Children in Education) is a multi-disciplinary team based within the Council's Education Service which works to support Looked After Children with all aspects of their education, monitor their achievements and assist them in overcoming any barriers to their success, ensuring they achieve their full potential. The Into Work Youth Employment Team met with the LACE Virtual School Headteacher last month to discuss collaborative working to support care-experienced young people's transition from statutory schooling into employment, training, volunteering, or higher education. The meeting was very successful with further plans being made, including visits by the Into Work Youth Team to parents' evenings to talk to parents and young people about the help that is available from the service. This early intervention will allow the team to tailor support to each care-experienced young person. It is great to see collaborative and partnership working across council services to help these young people get the best opportunities to fulfil their potential.

Cardiff Playday

The autumn half-term school holiday ended on a high for hundreds of Cardiff school children and their parents and carers thanks to the combined efforts of hard-working council teams. The rescheduled Playday on 2 November at the Central Library Hub was the result of the combined efforts of the Children's Play Services, Flying Start Parenting, the Childcare Offer and the Cardiff Family Advice and Support Service. The day was a great success and saw a range of activities to suit everyone's needs with no-one being left out. At one point during the day, there were over 400 families at the event.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the event; however, my Cabinet colleague, Councillor Lister, did attend and has reported back to me about the joy that he saw on the faces of the children, their carers and council staff on the day. One elderly gentleman who had simply come into the library to use a computer said to the organisers: *"Thank you for doing this – children need people like you."* I would like to thank all of the teams involved for their hard work and dedication to making the day such a success.

Cardiff Youth Service

Following their nominations, a number of Youth Service teams from across the city have been shortlisted for the National Youth Work Excellence Awards. I want to congratulate all those who have been shortlisted, including the Ely & Caerau team, which has been shortlisted for their work supporting the delivery of a grants programme to help young people and community groups. The Digital team has, once again, been shortlisted for an award; this time, for the Cardiff Content Creator's project. In addition, the Youth Service's Welsh provision has been shortlisted for their partnership work with Menter Iaith and Urdd Gobaith. I would also like to recognise the work of Caroline Jones who has been shortlisted for her leadership qualities at the city centre youth project, Grassroots.

A new Youth Action Group has been launched to seek the views of young people, councillors and a range of wider stakeholders to create an action plan to support the development of youth provision within Gabalfa, Whitchurch and Tongwynlais. There has been a concerted effort to address challenges within the communities through a Street Safe initiative. This has been delivered with a renewed youth service presence in the community undertaking street-based youth work on Saturdays. There will also be a schedule of pop-up provision within the communities to meet the identified needs.

The Youth Service continues to provide support for young people to access their rights and entitlements. The Active Involvement team, in partnership with young people, has developed a Young Leadership programme, which will allow young people from across the city to engage in accredited training. The programme seeks to develop their confidence and leadership abilities to enable them to actively participate within their communities.

The team at Eastmoors has worked with Sky Up to transform parts of the youth centre to create a digital space for young people. This project will deliver a range of digital provision which will seek to address the digital inclusion agenda. The facility will benefit from a wide range of improvements, as well as a gift of equipment that will allow significant improvements to the Youth Service curriculum. There will be a range of infrastructure improvements for other communities, including free fibre optic broadband and equipment for use at other Youth Service facilities, which will benefit communities throughout Cardiff.

Following the successful development of an online youth provision for 13-17-year-olds, the Digital team has developed provision for older young people, with a focus on supporting 16-25-year-olds into education, employment and training. The team will use Discord to engage young people with the help of partners, including the Council's Into Work Advice Service. The provision will provide access to trained Youth Workers and deliver a range of activities and opportunities to develop young people's capacity to engage with other services. This innovative and creative provision will be the first of its kind in Wales.

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