

COUNCIL: 28 MARCH 2024

TACKLING POVERTY, EQUALITY & PUBLIC HEALTH STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH & EQUALITY

Childhood Immunisation Information

I am pleased to announce that, whenever a birth is registered in Cardiff, parents will now receive information leaflets on childhood immunisations within the birth pack provided by the Council's Registration Service. This is a result of collaboration between the Council and the Cardiff & Vale Local Public Health Team. The original Welsh and English documents have also been translated into Bengali, Polish and Arabic to ensure that these leaflets will be read and understood by as many families in the city as possible.

This is a great example of our multi-agency 'Amplifying Prevention' work to improve health outcomes in an identified priority area for the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan region. It is important that all children and babies are fully immunised to protect them from potentially serious diseases. Once common illnesses, such as diphtheria and tetanus, are now rare in the UK because of immunisation. However, whilst polio has been eliminated in Europe, the threat of other diseases, such as measles and meningitis, has not gone away in the UK today. I would urge parents with any worries or queries about any aspect of their child's immunisations to discuss them with their doctor, health visitor, practice nurse or school nurse.

National No Smoking Day

National No Smoking Day took place on 13 March 2024. The day provides an opportunity to reach out to friends or family members who suffer from nicotine addiction. No Smoking Day encourages smokers to stop smoking, raises awareness of the health risks associated with smoking, and inspires a movement towards a smoke-free world. Smoking does a lot of harm to the circulation of blood around the body, particularly the blood vessels in the brain, as well as the heart and lungs, and increases the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease and other diseases such as dementia. It's never too late to quit smoking. Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do for your health, and the health benefits start straight away. People are also four times more likely to stop smoking by using an NHS Stop Smoking Service than if they try to quit alone. Further information is available from Help Me Quit (<https://www.helpmequit.wales/>); NHS Live Well (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/>) or by visiting a local pharmacy and asking for more information about quitting smoking.

Lunar New Year Market Event

It was an honour to attend and celebrate the spirit of the first Lunar New Year celebration in Cardiff, which was held at Grange Pavilion in Grangetown on 27 January 2024. This marked the third year of the Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) welcome programme and it's great to see more Hongkongers choosing Wales as their new home. The event was organised by the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership and Hongkongers in Britain (Cymru) and supported by the Council's Community Cohesion Team. Grange Pavilion was colourfully decorated, with display boards around the market featuring information about Hong Kong's history and culture stalls from a variety of Hong Kong vendors and organisations, as well as from groups and organisations representing the diverse demographic of Cardiff.

Indian Society of South Wales Republic Day Celebrations

The Indian Society of South West Wales invited me as their chief guest speaker in celebrating India's 75th Republic Day event in Swansea on 3 February 2024. Republic Day commemorates the adoption of the Constitution of India, and the country's transition to a new democratic and sovereign Republic on 26 January 1950, after having gained independence from Britain in 1947. It is one of the most important days of the year for 1.4 billion people in India, as well as the millions of people of Indian heritage living around the world, including here in Wales. This was a great event and opportunity for the local Indian community to come together to show how proud they are of their heritage and culture. The event also helped to build new friendships and strengthen existing relationships in celebration of everything about that is good about both India and Wales.

Somali Community Socio Economic and Well-being Conference

I joined the Leader of the Council in attending the Somali Community Socio Economic and Well-being conference held at Channel View Leisure Centre on 5 February 2024. Keynote speakers included the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and Welsh Government Minister for Social Justice. The conference brought together senior leaders from across the public and third sectors and round table discussion provided an opportunity to hear first-hand on the need for focused actions on how we need to work together to close the inequalities within the Somali community.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

I was also pleased to attend and speak at an event held on 5 February 2024 at the University of South Wales in support of International Day of Women and Girls in Science, which takes place annually on 11 February. Championing diversity and encouraging young females from under-represented backgrounds to pursue careers in science is not just about addressing a disparity; it's about unlocking untapped potential and fostering innovation. By actively engaging with women and girls from under-represented groups, providing mentorship, access to resources, and exposure to diverse role models, we can break down barriers to education and employment and instil them with confidence and belief that they belong in the world of science.

International Women's Day 2024

I was pleased to attend the International Women's Day event on 8 March 2024 that was organised by the Council's Women's Employee Network. International Women's Day serves as a powerful reminder to celebrate the achievements of women and raise awareness about the ongoing challenges they face. The Women's Employee Network plays a pivotal role in shaping the workplace into an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

Iftar Dinner

I attended an Iftar Dinner on 17 March 2024 following an invitation by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association in Cardiff. Iftar, which is observed during the holy month of Ramadan, is a significant moment for Muslims worldwide. As the sun sets, fasting individuals break their day-long fast with this special meal. It symbolises both physical nourishment after hours of abstinence and spiritual reflection. Families and communities come together to share food, express gratitude and strengthen bonds. Beyond sustenance, Iftar embodies compassion, generosity and the joy of communal worship.

Codi Cymru / Black Lives Matter Wales Exhibition and Conference

I joined my Cabinet colleague, Councillor Mackie, and council officers in attending a Codi Cymru / Black Lives Matter Wales exhibition and conference that was held at St Fagan's National Museum of History on 21 March 2024. The conference also marked the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Race Discrimination and helped to raise awareness about racial injustice, promote dialogue and encourage positive change. It featured thought-provoking exhibits, inspiring speakers and engaging workshops and provided an important opportunity for individuals and communities to come together, share experiences, and explore ways to combat systemic racism in Wales.

Food Strategy

Grant funding secured from the Cardiff Capital Region's Sustainable Food Challenge aims to identify and support projects that can harness the potential of land, technology and people to increase the sustainable production and supply of locally grown food in the Cardiff Capital Region.

Fareshare Cymru, the biggest redistributor of surplus food from the food industry in Wales, secured funding to trial the production of healthy, sustainable ready meals made from surplus food after successfully moving to the next phase of the Sustainable Food Challenge. Currently, the charity cannot utilise all the food they have access to.

Production in the 'Redistribution Wales Kitchen' started one day per week in the kitchens and additional facilities at Cardiff and Vale College, with the aim of scaling up at a later stage. The meals produced all contain two of the '5 A Day' fruit and vegetables for a healthy, balanced diet and will be entirely vegetarian.

In the first two months of this year, they provided over 1,900 meals using surplus food, which has gained positive feedback from community food programme participants. To help produce these meals, they have worked with 11 charities and community groups, resulting in 91 volunteer hours being contributed. In addition, seven partner organisations have provided critical support in various aspects of meal production, including supplying additional ingredients, meal preparation, nutritional analysis, and training. Phase 2 of the project is currently underway and will be focusing on piloting the meals using metal containers.

TACKLING POVERTY & SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Advice Service

The Advice Service continues to see a significant increase in people accessing services since the New Year, with the number of people seeking help from the Advice Line exceeding 2,900.

With the commencement of the Universal Credit Migration in Cardiff, the Advice Service has launched a publicity campaign to raise awareness of the changes and highlight support available to those affected. Social media and press releases in local media is being used promote the help on offer. Since the launch of the campaign in January 2024, over 900 customers have been supported with Universal Credit queries. I would like to thank the teams for their continued hard work and support that they provide during these difficult economic times.

The Money Advice Team has also surpassed their 2023/24 KPI target for total benefits identified of £17million, with almost £1 million identified last month, taking the total to almost £19million.

Into Work Advice Service Youth Provision

Last month, the Bright Futures Team worked with the Personal Advisor Service (Post 16 Leaving Care Team) to facilitate an NHS careers information workshop. This provided an opportunity for care-experienced young people to have a discussion with representatives from the NHS to discuss any barriers into employment they have experienced. It was also a chance for the young people to learn about the wide variety of possible careers in the NHS and discuss their own aspirations. Following this session, the NHS is now the latest business to partner with the Council's Bright Start Traineeship Scheme to offer care-experienced young people supported work placements. The group of nine young people who attended the workshop have all been offered the opportunity to complete a six-month Bright Start placement in the NHS, starting with a site tour next month. The Bright Futures Team has also been in discussions with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) about the difficulties that care-experienced young people face when trying to secure careers in sectors such as the Civil Service. The team will be facilitating a consultation workshop for DWP officials to speak directly with young people about their experiences and think about possible solutions.

Cardiff Refugee Jobs Fair

The Into Work Advice Service held its first Cardiff Refugee Jobs Fair in partnership with Cardiff University on 28 February 2024. The event provided over 500 refugees in Cardiff with an opportunity to meet with employers and support providers to find employment and explore pathways into work. Support organisations were also in attendance to offer advice and guidance on barriers to employment. A total of 18 refugee-friendly employers were in attendance, including McDonalds, Cardiff Bus and Holiday Inn amongst others, and offered live vacancies on the day. Seventeen support providers were on hand at the event, including various council services, the national Refugee Employment Network charity and targeted third sector organisations. The event was widely praised by exhibitors and attendees alike.

Cardiff Play Service

Cardiff Play Service has expanded delivery into new areas across the city and has worked in partnership with colleagues from Early Help to increase available resources and the number of sessions provided. Some examples are set out below:

- New play sessions at Riverside Warehouse in response to local ward members' requests for additional play support in the Riverside area of the city, weekly play sessions are now available.
- Collaboration and delivery of a more joined-up service across temporary accommodation, which has ensured that there is now support for babies and children of all ages, from birth to 14 years.
- As part of workforce development, Play Service staff have been able to access the Early Help Workforce Development Training programme. This has been very successful, enabling Play Service staff to expand their professional knowledge and skills in best practice approaches.

In addition, the Play Service continues to provide play services across the city, including several sessions that were provided during the school half-term holiday last month, which were attended by a total of 396 children. I am pleased to see the Play Service continue to go from strength to strength and look forward to seeing future development of the service.

Cardiff Youth Service Update

Cardiff Youth Service continues to develop a new model of youth work in Cardiff and are currently consulting with staff and trade unions in re-shaping the service to meet the changing demands of young people and communities within Cardiff. During this time, work continues to support communities with open access youth work in our youth centres and through our street-based provision. In addition, the Youth Service continues to support young people through a range of targeted interventions, including one-to-one youth mentoring support and curriculum-based project work that supports the work of our schools and our wider communities. Further information about the activities being provided by the Youth Service during the Easter holiday period can be found at: <https://www.cardiffyouthservices.wales/index.php/en/events>

BBC Crimewatch Live

Earlier this month, the Council's Principal Youth Officer, James Healan, appeared on BBC Crimewatch Live to talk about the positive impact that a trail-blazing Virtual Reality (VR) initiative is having on young people across the city. Virtual Decisions is a preventative tool created by Round Midnight, which aims to reduce the risk of young people being victims of crime and violence. It provides young people with an immersive VR experience allowing them to navigate a series of challenging situations and make critical decisions in a safe and controlled virtual environment. Crimewatch Live presenters Rav Wilding and Michelle Ackerley also tried out the VR headsets and were impressed by the engaging technology.

The hands-on VR approach explores topics such as gangs, grooming, peer pressure, and substance misuse and equips participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to make the best choices for their future, in real-life scenarios. It has so far been rolled out to more than 200 young people in Cardiff and is supported by an excellent 12 session curriculum pack that lets young people learn informally at their own pace. Positive feedback from secondary schools across the city has highlighted the effectiveness of the project, which has been shaped using the views of young people. Those who have taken part have enjoyed the programmes, saying that they met their needs by giving them more awareness of the signs of grooming, exploitation and the impact their actions could have on individuals, their families and communities.

Youth Work Excellence Awards

Cardiff Youth Service, for the second year running, won the Digital Innovation Award at the Youth Work Excellence Awards 2023, which were held on 22 February 2024 in Llandudno. The team won the award for the Cardiff Content Creators programme, which saw young people from Carlsbad High School in California visit Cardiff last summer as part of a youth exchange programme. They helped to peer mentor young people in Cardiff and helped them to develop new skills in broadcasting and filming techniques, as well as life skills and confidence which they have transferred to other aspects of their education.

Cardiff Youth Service was also shortlisted as a finalist in a further three award categories at the Youth Work Excellence Awards 2023. These included the Ely & Caerau Youth Work Team in the 'Demonstrating excellence in partnership planning and delivery at a local level' category; the CFTi project in the 'Welsh language innovation' category, and Caroline Miles from Cardiff Youth Service in the 'Leadership' category. Whilst these other finalists did not win, it demonstrates the level of innovation and creativity within the Youth Service, and its efforts to strive consistently for excellence and to deliver sector-leading practice.

California Youth Exchange

Staff and young people from Cardiff Youth Service are currently visiting California as part of an international youth exchange. They have been invited to attend a broadcasting & filming conference and have subsequently won a broadcasting excellence award for their work in creating a digital content programme called the 'Butetown Buzz'. This has provided young people with an opportunity to create stories and content that celebrate their contributions to their communities.

The young people from Cardiff have also been involved in presenting on Carlsbad High School's own TV channel, undertaking interviews with students and community members, and creating content for the TV channel during their action-packed visit. This is a life-changing experience for young people from Cardiff who will continue to develop this relationship with our American partners.

Operation Sentinel

Cardiff Youth Service continues to support the Operational Sentinel programme, which is funded through the Home Office to address anti-social behaviour within identified areas throughout the city. Youth workers have delivered street-based interventions, building working relationships with young people, whilst also providing information, support and guidance to those young people presenting for support. The data provided by the Youth Service will contribute to wider data collection from South Wales Police in identifying areas within our communities that require further support. We hope to continue this work in the 2024/25 financial year and further support young people and the communities in which they live.

Councillors Julie Sangani & Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Members for Tackling Poverty, Equality & Public Health (Job Share)
22 March 2024