

Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team Newsletter



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Welcome to the Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team newsletter December 2025.

A very warm welcome to this month's festive edition of the Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team newsletter - another chance for us to showcase our work, our partners' contributions, and the impact they've had across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Working in partnership has never been more important, and this newsletter reflects our shared commitment to improving health, reducing inequalities, and supporting the wellbeing of the communities we serve.

Across Wales, we continue to face complex and inter-connected challenges, from persistent health inequalities and the impacts of climate change to workforce pressures and rising demand on services. Yet, every day, I see inspiring examples of collaboration, innovation and dedication that make a real difference. Whether through prevention-focused initiatives, community-based programmes, or system-wide planning, your work is helping to create healthier, fairer futures.

This newsletter provides an opportunity to share updates, celebrate achievements, and highlight learning from across the system. It is also a space to strengthen connections between organisations, recognising that public health is everyone's business and that

This month:

- Winter viruses are circulating - protect yourself against them
- Chief Medical Officer visits the Public Health Team
- Public Health Team wins UK-wide award
- Guide to help you reduce your risk of dementia
- Public Health Team member profile: Helen Griffith
- Key health awareness days

lasting change depends on collective action.

I would like to thank you for your continued commitment, professionalism and resilience. I hope you find this edition informative and motivating, and that it supports your ongoing work to protect and improve health across Wales.

If you missed our November edition of the newsletter, you could catch up [here](#). I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Claire Beynon
Executive Director of Public Health

Winter viruses are circulating – protect yourself against them

Flu and other winter viruses are circulating in our communities across Cardiff and Vale as we head towards Christmas. They can make people seriously unwell, particularly those in more vulnerable groups such as older people and those with weakened immune systems.

Higher rates of infection often result in more patients needing hospital treatment, putting added pressure on our already stretched health and care services. However, there are several simple, effective ways we can protect ourselves and those around us this winter.

Firstly - **get your flu vaccine.** Vaccination the single best defence we have. The vaccine also changes every year to match the strain we expect to circulate, so even if you've had it before, you'll need this year's dose to stay protected.

It's especially important if you're older, pregnant, have a long-term health condition, or if you work in health or social care. But even if you're generally healthy, the flu vaccine helps stop flu spreading and protects people who are more vulnerable. You can find out more about all winter vaccinations in Cardiff and Vale [here](#).

Next - **stay home if you're unwell.** This is easier said than done, but flu spreads very easily through droplets in the air and on surfaces. If you develop symptoms like fever, aches, or a sudden cough, giving yourself time to rest at home helps you recover and helps protect others.

Another simple step - **keep up hand good hygiene.** Wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water, especially after coughing, sneezing, or being out in public places. And if soap and water aren't available, use hand sanitiser. If you do need to cough or sneeze, catch it in a tissue or your elbow, then bin the tissue and wash your hands.

Also, **keep the air fresh indoors.** Flu spreads more easily in poorly ventilated rooms, so opening windows for even a few minutes can make a real difference.

Finally - **look after each other.** If you know someone who's vulnerable, check in on them. Encourage them to get their flu vaccine or help them make an appointment if that's useful.

By taking these small steps, you're not just protecting yourself, you're helping to protect your family, your community, and our NHS during its busiest time of year.



Chief Medical Officer visits the Public Health Team

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Professor Isabel Oliver, paid a visit to Woodland House to learn more about the work of the Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team.

Prof Oliver, who succeeded Sir Frank Atherton in January 2025, heard about the team's mission to reduce health inequalities and to protect and improve the health of our communities.

To provide context, Cardiff and Vale UHB Executive Director of Public Health, Dr Claire Beynon, first outlined the health profile of the Cardiff and Vale population and her vision for the team, including its main priorities.

She then handed over to three of the team's Principal Public Health Practitioners - Catherine Perry, Rebecca Stewart and Emma Davies-McIntosh - who in turn gave presentations on the 'big three' areas of focus: tobacco smoking, healthy weight and vaccinations.

The event was a chance for Prof Oliver to hear about some of the successful local initiatives taking place across Cardiff and Vale which have resulted in positive outcomes.

Some recent successes include:

- A reduction in levels of smoking in Cardiff and Vale - down from 13% to 9.1% in the past year.
- A reduction in the rates of children in Cardiff and Vale classed as overweight or obese (as outlined in the most recent [Child Measurement Programme](#)).
- An improvement in vaccination rates in Cardiff and Vale, particularly among those choosing the gelatine-free version of the flu vaccine in schools.

Claire Beynon said: "It was a real pleasure to welcome Prof Oliver and discuss the invaluable work of the Public Health Team. We are a small team, but together with our partner organisations we are making a tangible difference to the lives of those in our communities."



As Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Prof Oliver is responsible for providing independent professional advice to the Welsh Government about health and public health matters. She also works with organisations across Wales to reduce health inequalities and lead the medical profession with the aim of improving the quality of healthcare and patient outcomes.

Key Health Awareness Days

- December 1: [World AIDS Day - Healthy Working Wales](#)
- December 5: [International Volunteers Day 2025 | December 5, 2025 | Awareness Days](#)
- January 1-31: [RED \(Rise Every Day and move more\) January – Healthy Working Wales](#)
- January 1-31: [Dry \(alcohol-free\) January – Alcohol Change UK](#)
- January 1-31: [Cervical Cancer Awareness Month - Healthy Working Wales](#)

Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team wins UK-wide award

Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team is celebrating after winning a UK-wide award for establishing effective ways to improve practice.

At the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) award ceremony, held as part of their annual conference in London on Friday, November 21, the team picked up the Practice Improvement Award.

They fought off stiff competition from Hertfordshire County Council Public Health Team and East Midlands Health Protection Community of Improvement Team to come away with the accolade.

Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team was praised for its work developing a whole-system approach to healthy weight through the 'Good Food and Movement' framework.

In spring 2024, the team organised workshops involving around 160 people from 35 organisations, using causal loop mapping to understand the local system and identify shared priorities. From this, they co-created a two-year implementation plan to drive system-level change.

One major achievement involved influencing both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan councils to restrict high fat, sugar, and salt advertising on local authority assets such as highways and bus stops which will help create healthier environments for generations to come.

"I am so proud of the Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team and our partners at Cardiff Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council," said Claire Beynon, who received the award at the ceremony. "Huge congratulations to all those involved. We continue to drive forward work that makes a positive difference to the health of our local population."

Guide to help you reduce your risk of dementia

Dementia is the leading cause of death in Wales and is projected to rise by 70% by 2040.



Recent research shows that most people believe dementia to be a normal part of ageing, and the majority believe they could develop the disease during their life.

A partnership project between Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board and Cardiff and Vale UHB aims to raise awareness that, contrary to many beliefs, developing dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing.

[A booklet](#) has been produced highlighting the key modifiable risk factors identified in the Lancet report and communicating four key messages:

- Getting older does not mean that you will get dementia.
- You will not necessarily get dementia because a family member has.

- You can take action to lower your risk of developing dementia.
- It is never too early or too late to act.

To improve its accessibility across communities, the dementia prevention guide produced in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan is now available in [Arabic](#), [Bengali](#), [Urdu](#), [Somali](#) as well as an [easy read version](#).

In addition, with the support of Cardiff and Vale Public Health team, a 30-second animation has been produced with key messaging related to dementia prevention in six languages. The animations are available to view on the Cardiff and Vale UHB [website](#). Downloadable resources are also available at this [link](#).

Team member profile

Helen Griffith, Senior Public Health Practitioner

After graduating with a degree in Sports Development, Helen started working in the fitness industry and soon took an interest in nutrition and weight management.



She then worked for Newport University in a Sports Facilities role initially, before becoming a Health and Fitness Development Officer.

Helen then moved on to a community development role, as Health and Wellbeing Officer for the anti-poverty programme, Communities First, delivering education courses for weight management and diabetes prevention and management. This led to a broader interest in Public Health and in 2017, after a short secondment

to the Aneurin Bevan UHB Public Health Team, Helen joined Cardiff and Vale UHB Public Health Team as a Practitioner.

Helen is now in a Senior Practitioner role and currently on secondment to Powys Teaching Health Board as Principal Practitioner for three days a week. Throughout her time in public health, Helen's work has focused on implementing Health Eating Standards in hospital retail, promoting the uptake of schemes to support families to access healthy and affordable food, diabetes prevention and management and more recently taking a whole system approach to a healthy weight.

Helen led a project to develop a digital audit tool to support healthier hospital retail and this sparked interest in how we use technology in a healthcare setting, prompting Helen to undertake an MSc in Leading Digital Transformation.

Outside of work Helen enjoys keeping active through playing team sports, cycling and running. Helen is Mum to two teenage daughters who keep her on her toes.