

Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team Newsletter



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Welcome to the latest Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team newsletter.

It has been another busy and impactful month for our team, and I'm thrilled to share some key updates with you. With summer well and truly here, it's vital to stay safe and healthy in the warmer weather by drinking plenty of water, keeping cool in light, loose-fitting clothing, being aware of the signs of heatstroke, and protecting our skin.

I continue to be immensely proud of the dedication and hard work shown by everyone across the team, and this month we are warmly welcoming a new Programme Manager, Patrick Collins-Walsh. We're so pleased to have him join us and we look forward to the fresh perspectives and expertise he will bring.

From our vital partnerships to our strengthening community engagements, our efforts are consistently making a real difference in the lives of people across Cardiff and the Vale.

This month:

- Measles and the importance of the MMR vaccine
- How an exercise scheme cured one great-grandmother's arthritis
- Cardiff and Vale children top class in key public health measurement
- Take control of your health and wellbeing with FIT Bluebirds
- Team member profile: Sadie Alexander
- Key health awareness days

A huge 'thank you' to all our partners for your unwavering commitment to fostering a healthier future for our communities. If you missed our June edition of the newsletter, you could catch up [here](#).

Claire Beynon
Executive Director of Public Health

Measles and the importance of the MMR vaccine

As you may be aware, measles cases are currently on the rise in Merseyside - and resulted in the tragic death of a child earlier this month.

This concerning outbreak underlines the importance of children receiving the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine when it is offered.

The simple and effective vaccine is routinely given at GP practices for children at 12 months old and 3 years and 4 months - but it is never too late to receive it (even if you're an adult).



Catch-up programmes are frequently carried out by our immunisation teams in primary and secondary schools, so please watch out for them when children return in September.

While measles can be a mild illness, it has the potential to cause severe complications such as sight loss, hearing loss, pneumonia and meningitis, and measles can be fatal.

If there is a confirmed case of measles in a school or nursery, any close contact who has not been vaccinated will have to stay at home for 21 days. This could prove very disruptive to a child's education and is likely to impact on parents in terms of work and childcare arrangements too.

Finally, any child who is showing the most common symptoms - such as a rash, fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes - should be kept at home and away from any vulnerable settings such as hospitals. Call ahead to book a GP appointment or call NHS 111 immediately.

Key Health Awareness Days

- July 1-31: [Plastic Free July - Healthy Working Wales](#)
- July 1-31: [UV safety awareness month, | Cymru Care Training Limited](#)
- July 24: [Self-Care Month 2025](#)
- July 28: [World Hepatitis Day](#)
- August 1-7: [World Breastfeeding Week - Healthy Working Wales](#)
- August 7: [Cycle to Work Day - Healthy Working Wales](#)

How an exercise scheme cured one great-grandmother's arthritis

When 80-year-old Mary Howells developed arthritis in her knee, both her mental and physical health took a downward turn.

The previously fit and outdoorsy great-grandmother, from Penarth, resorted to using a walking stick to get around - and took painkillers just to pop to the shops.

But after being referred to a scheme at her local leisure centre designed to help adults with long-term conditions, she saw a remarkable improvement in her wellbeing.

The National Exercise Referral Scheme (funded by the Public Health Team), gives inactive adults over the age of 16 - and living anywhere in Wales - access to 16 weeks of tailored and supervised physical activity to help manage, or prevent, chronic conditions.

People are referred to the council-run scheme by NHS-registered health professionals such as GPs, practice nurses and physiotherapists. The aim is to provide opportunities to exercise that are fun, rewarding and that can be incorporated into everyday life.

"This scheme has completely changed things for the better," beamed Mary. "I'm happy, I no longer walk with a stick,



and I've been able to go on holidays to Australia and Japan to see my family. I'm living proof that it works."

Read her full story via the [Cardiff and Vale University Health Board website](#).

Team member profile

Sadie Alexander

Sadie Alexander is a Public Health Practitioner who has been a valued part of the Public Health Team since 2014, bringing experience from various community education and young person's project focused roles.

Her work has spanned several key public health priorities, including immunisation promotion and the Community Vaccination Champions programme, helping to build vaccine confidence and improve uptake through local engagement.

She has also contributed to Making Every Contact Count, supporting professionals to have effective conversations around health and wellbeing, and has been involved in falls prevention work, Brief Interventions and the Staying Steady Schools programme. Colleagues within the team greatly value Sadie's vast wealth of experience, and she is always willing to lend a hand to get the work done efficiently and effectively.

Sadie enjoys collaborative working and values the opportunity to work alongside community partners to make a positive impact. Outside of work, she's happiest exploring the outdoors - whether that's forest trails, waterfall walks, coastal walks, or open water swimming.

Cardiff and Vale children top class in key public health measurement

The Child Measurement Programme, published by Public Health Wales, analysed the proportion of four and five-year-olds who are a healthy weight in different parts of the country in 2023-24. You can read the full Child Measurement Programme report [here](#).

Both Cardiff and Vale compared favourably with other local authority areas. Cardiff had the lowest percentage of children aged four or five deemed either overweight or obese (20.5%) in Wales, with the Vale not far behind in third. However, Wales typically has the lowest percentage of healthy weight children of the four countries that make up the UK, and the UK has some of the lowest rates of healthy weight children in Europe.

Notably, those in the most deprived areas of both Cardiff and Vale are statistically more likely to be overweight or obese compared with the most affluent fifth – and that gap is growing.



There is much more to do to make the healthy option the easy option for children and families, and to improve the environment in which we live to support a healthy life for all. The

[Good Food and Movement Framework and Implementation Plan](#) describe the actions we will take to make a difference together.

Take control of your health and wellbeing with FIT Bluebirds

In August, Cardiff City FC Community Foundation and Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team's FIT Bluebirds programme is coming back to Cardiff City Stadium.

The free health programme (funded by the Public Health Team), is aimed at men and women aged 18 years and over who are looking to lose weight, get fitter, lead a more active life and get to know other people who are trying to do the same thing.

Last year, the Community Foundation worked with Women Connect First, empowering women from ethnic minority communities to get fitter and lose weight through female-only instructors. What was particularly heartwarming was the friendships that formed during this period. The full story can be found [here](#).

FIT Bluebirds is free for any adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 28 and over. If participants complete six weeks of the programme, they will receive a Community Foundation t-shirt, and if they stay on track for the full 12 weeks, they will be invited to a special celebratory event at Cardiff City Football Club.

Sign up for free [here](#) if you would like to be part of the EFL FIT Fans success story.

