

Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team Newsletter



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As Executive Director of Public Health, I'm pleased to introduce the latest edition of our newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Through the articles featured in this edition, we once again highlight just how diverse our public health work is. It reflects the many factors which serve to shape our health and wellbeing, including choices - such as smoking, diet, physical activity - as well as broader influences from housing, education, employment and the environments where we live, grow, play, work, and age.

Public health is very much a shared endeavour. Though we have a clearly defined aim for the Public Health Team - to reduce health inequalities and improve and protect the health and wellbeing of our local population - we can only work in pursuit of it by working in partnership, to shared goals, across sectors and disciplines.

I would therefore like to sincerely thank all our partners who share our passion to enhance population health, including local authorities, healthcare services, education, community organisations, the third sector and many others. Your leadership, expert support, and dedication is valued. By working together, we

This month:

- New Director of Public Health report sets out how we must work together in different ways to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes
- *'Just a tickle'*: Cricket commentator's throat cancer scare highlights importance of HPV vaccine for boys and girls
- Cardiff and Vale UHB chair visits Cardiff school to see HPV vaccination programme in action
- New free Help Me Quit App launched to help people in Wales stop smoking
- Public Health Practitioner raises awareness among pupils of risks from vaping and smoking
- Schools in Cardiff and Vale come together to showcase emotional and mental wellbeing best practice
- Making Every Contact Count (MECC): including healthy lifestyle discussions in everyday conversations
- Cardiff and Vale Health Team webpages get a revamp
- Public Health Team member profile: Kim Wilyman
- Key Health Awareness Days

can continue to make a real difference and improve the health and well-being of our communities.

Warm regards,

Claire Beynon
Executive Director of Public Health

New Director of Public Health report sets out how we must work together differently to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes

Our health is shaped by the environments around us, including our neighbourhoods, high streets, parks, playgrounds, and transport routes, as well as the people, policies and cultural norms that influence how we live.

With so many factors affecting daily life, preventing conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes is complex.



The latest Director of Public Health annual report, 'What Surrounds Us, Shapes Us', calls for a shift away from approaches focused mainly on individual

behaviour, and urges action on the wider influences that shape our eating habits and physical activity.

In recent generations, lifestyles have changed significantly. The density of fast food outlets have increased, school breaktimes are shorter, fewer children walk to school, many adults spend more time sitting at work, and

roads are designed mainly for cars. These changes are contributing to rising levels of obesity and type 2 diabetes in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, with higher rates in more disadvantaged communities.

The report sets out three calls to action:

1. Prioritise prevention and invest earlier to stop problems before they start
2. Design places that support movement and access to healthy food
3. Work with communities to develop solutions that reflect local needs.

Work is already underway through the Good Food and Movement Framework (2024-2030), which brings partners together to focus on healthier environments, settings, people, and leadership for change.

For the full report and more information, visit [here](#) or contact GoodFood.Movement@wales.nhs.uk.

Key Health Awareness Days

- March 1-31: [Prostate Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- March 1-31: [Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- March 9-15: [Food Waste Action Week](#)
- March 11: [National 'No Smoking' Day](#)
- March 13: [World Sleep Day](#)
- March 17 - 23: [Nutrition and Hydration Week](#)
- March 20: [World Oral Health day](#)
- March 24: [World TB day](#)
- April 7: [World Health day](#)

'Just a tickle': Cricket commentator's throat cancer scare highlights importance of HPV vaccine for boys and girls

When cricket commentator Alan Wilkins noticed a "tickle" in his throat while covering the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, he didn't think much of it.

Weeks later he was diagnosed with HPV-related throat cancer and began urgent treatment.

Now recovering and back on air, Alan is speaking out about HPV and the importance of prevention.

The HPV vaccine is offered to boys and girls in Year 8 of secondary school and helps protect against several cancers, including cervical and some head and neck cancers. Alan said: *"For young males now to have access to a vaccination, so they don't have to go down this awful path - that's huge. It's a new dawn."*



Read his full story [here](#). For more information about the HPV vaccination programme in schools please visit [our dedicated webpages](#).

Cardiff and Vale UHB chair visits Cardiff school to see HPV vaccination programme in action

On March 10, Cardiff and Vale UHB chair, Kirsty Williams, visited Llanishen High School in Cardiff to see the HPV vaccination programme first-hand.



Around 300 children in Year 8 were given the cancer-preventing vaccine on the day thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Cardiff and Vale UHB School Nursing Immunisation Team.

The chair said she was hugely impressed by the work of the immunisation nurses, the professionalism of the teachers and the behaviour of the students.

Please visit the [Cardiff and Vale UHB Facebook](#) and TikTok accounts to watch a short video about her visit.

In addition, the Kirsty Williams also visited a Help Me Quit clinic in Llantwit Major to see how we're helping people quit smoking. We're grateful for the Chair's interest and support for our public health work.

New free Help Me Quit App launched to help people in Wales stop smoking

A new free digital app has been launched to support adults in Wales to quit smoking, offering personalised, evidence-based help in both Welsh and English.



The Help Me Quit app has been designed specifically for smokers in Wales and provides round-the-clock support for those who want to quit smoking.

The app offers practical tools, motivational support and tailored guidance to help users plan their quit journey and stay on track, at a pace that suits them.

Smoking remains the biggest cause of preventable illness and early death in Wales. While many smokers attempt to quit each year, a large number try without specialist support. The Help Me Quit app offers support by providing immediate, high-quality digital support that people can access anytime, anywhere.

The app includes personalised quit plans, behaviour-change tools, progress tracking and encouragement

to help people overcome cravings and challenges. For those who want additional help, the app also acts as a clear bridge into local Help Me Quit services, making it easier to access structured support when needed.

The Help Me Quit App is now live on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store at the following links:

[Apple link](#)

[Google Play link](#)

Public Health Practitioner raises awareness among pupils of risks from vaping and smoking

A Public Health Practitioner from the Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team has been working with pupils at Whitchurch High School to raise awareness of the risks linked to smoking and vaping.

Lauren Thomas recently delivered sessions to Year 10 and Year 11 pupils as part of their Health and Social Care GCSE, supporting the unit on promoting and maintaining health and wellbeing. The sessions were arranged through Careers Wales and focused on substance misuse, smoking and vaping among young people.

During the sessions, pupils learned about the differences between smoking and vaping, how to identify illegal or non-compliant vape products, and the



legal limits on nicotine strength and tank sizes. Lauren also highlighted the Welsh Government's ambition to achieve a smoke-free Wales by 2030.

Students shared their own views on why vaping is so common among young people. Many said that flavours, bright colours and the small size of devices make them appealing and easy to conceal.

Lauren also explained how nicotine reaches the brain within around 10 seconds, triggering dopamine release and increasing the risk of addiction.

The Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team hopes to deliver more prevention sessions in schools, helping young people make informed choices and supporting Wales' journey towards a smoke-free future.

Team member profile

Kim Wilyman

Kim Wilyman is a Senior Health Promotion Specialist who joined the Cardiff and Vale Public Health in December 2022.

Kim has been with the Health Board for 16 years, first as a nurse within adult services, then as a health visitor. Following these, she pivoted into a career in public health and joined the team as a Public Health Practitioner before moving into her current role as the lead for the Vale Health and Well-being Promoting Schools team and the Vale Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (HaSPSS).

Outside of work, she enjoys being outdoors, trail running and signing up to her next challenge.



Schools in Cardiff and Vale come together to showcase emotional and mental wellbeing best practice

Secondary schools across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have come together to share best practice in supporting the emotional and mental wellbeing of learners and staff.



The Cardiff and Vale Secondary Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing (WSAEMW) Celebration and Sharing Event took place at the Cardiff City Stadium on Tuesday, March 3.

Following an introduction from Dr Michael Allum, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, those in attendance were treated to presentations from five different secondary schools, each demonstrating how they are embedding the whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing into their learning environments.

Learners and staff from Whitmore High School, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, Llantwit Major School, Fitzalan High School and Pencoedre High School gave valuable insight into how much progress is being made in supporting emotional and mental wellbeing.

Those in attendance were also able to visit a 'marketplace' of stalls run by dozens of local and national organisations.

Representatives from the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Welsh Network of Health and Wellbeing Promoting Schools teams and supporting partners said: *“We’re incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed to the event - from our speakers and exhibitors to those who came along to take part. The day highlighted the inspiring work taking place in secondary schools throughout Cardiff and the Vale”.*

“Hosting the conference was an opportunity to connect, exchange experiences and deepen our understanding of the issues affecting both learners and staff. It’s evident that supporting wellbeing remains central to school life and learning.”

In March 2021, the Welsh Government issued its statutory framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing (WSAEMW). Schools are required to have regard to this framework when developing action plans, strategies, and policies that impact on the wellbeing of learners and staff.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC): including healthy lifestyle discussions in everyday conversations

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is an approach to behaviour change to empower and help people to make positive changes to their lifestyle. This includes supporting people to quit smoking, keep up to date with immunisations, eat more healthily, and take up health screening offers.

This year our Public Health Team provided MECC training to Health Board and wider partners including around 16 Health Practitioners and Practice Nurses, and from other organisations around 150 Wellbeing Support Service staff, Pharmacy students and

Health and Social Care Workers. The training enhances skills so that staff can include healthy lifestyle discussions into their everyday conversations, and signpost to behaviour change support resources. It enables colleagues to engage in ‘healthy chats’ with the people they interact with daily, promoting consistency in approach and confidence in raising lifestyle issues in a supportive and non-judgmental way.

This year also saw the launch of two new e-learning modules from Public Health Wales on Alcohol Brief Interventions and a Level 2 Generic MECC to allow more people to access the free training across Wales. The uptake of these online courses can now also be monitored through a data dashboard, which will support us with future planning and promotion of MECC.

We’re currently busy planning next year’s work including working with colleagues in Vale of Glamorgan Council, Primary Care Clusters and Velindre University NHS Trust to provide training, support and resources to embed MECC into areas of their work and updating our resources for those who’ve undertaken the training.

Cardiff Third Sector Council (C3SC) are also planning to deliver courses to voluntary organisations within their network to improve the reach of MECC. Over time we hope to improve the sustainability of our in-person training offer by exploring a train the trainer approach to colleagues. For more information or to access MECC online training, go [here](#).

Cardiff and Vale Health Team webpages get a revamp

Members of the Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team have been busy updating their content as part of efforts to revamp our section of the Health Board website.

For professionals, the pages contain a wealth of information on our team members and

their roles, our key areas of focus and links to publications.

A new section, '[Ways to Improve Our Health](#)', signposts the public to information and support on stopping smoking, getting active, healthy eating, vaccinations, alcohol, sexual health, mental health and falls prevention.

If you would like to get in touch with the team to share any compliments, complaints or general feedback please visit [this section of the site](#).