



Child Friendly Cardiff

Annual Report

2023/24



Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3
WHAT ARE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?	4
ABOUT CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES	4
A CHILD'S RIGHTS APPROACH	5
1. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION	
Workforce Development	6
Rights Respecting Schools Award	8
2. PLACE - URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN	10
3. PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK LOOP	12
4. EQUAL AND INCLUDED	
Tackling Issues Around Gender Equity	14
Tackling Disproportionality in the Youth Justice System	16
Tackling Discrimination: School Exclusions and Behaviour	17
Developing a Public Transport Policy that is Fair and Equitable for Children	19
KEY INSPECTION OUTCOMES	20
NEW CONNECTIONS	21
SUMMARY	22
NEXT STEPS	22
GLOSSARY	23

Cardiff is already a fantastic place for many babies, children, and young people to grow up, with some of the best education results in Wales and a wealth of opportunities offered by the new Curriculum for Wales. However, we recognise that not everyone has the same experience. Inequality still affects too many children, young people, and their families, challenges that have been exacerbated by the lasting impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

The Council is dedicated to closing these gaps in outcomes for our children and young people. We are working closely with schools, families, and partners to address issues related to school attendance and pupil wellbeing, ensuring that every child has the support they need to thrive.

For our city's most vulnerable children, young people, and their families, we will continue to offer the highest quality of care and support. This means providing the right assistance at the earliest stage possible, enabling families to stay together wherever it is safe to do so. Our approach includes community support and a range of care options, all underpinned by a commitment to best practice and a stable, skilled workforce.

Our vision is to embed children's rights into the fabric of Cardiff, so that everyone understands, respects, and champions these rights in their daily lives. We are committed to ensuring that every child and young person has a voice in shaping the future of our city and is actively engaged in the decisions that impact them. We want Cardiff to be a place where every child, regardless of their background or circumstances, feels valued, included, and empowered to reach their full potential.

As our city grows, we are committed to designing every space and development with children in mind. Our goal is to create safe, welcoming environments that offer abundant opportunities for play, learning, and growth. Together, we can make Cardiff an even better place for every child and young person to flourish.

Signed by: Cllr Merry and Chair of Cardiff Youth Council

INTRODUCTION

Cardiff Council and our local partners joined the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) Child Friendly Cities & Communities programme in 2017. After six years of hard work to make sure children's rights are part of the way the council makes decisions, creates policies and delivers services, Cardiff was officially named the [UK's first UNICEF Child Friendly City](#) in November 2023. At the end of 2023, we published a 3-year Child Friendly [Cardiff \(CF Cardiff\) sustainability plan](#) to continue the work to make Cardiff an even better place for children (0-18).

This plan helps babies, children, and young people understand and use their rights. It makes sure they can be part of important decisions, access the services they need, and that adults do a better job of respecting and protecting their rights.

This work focused on four key areas:

Children's Rights Education

We are teaching everyone in Cardiff about children's rights so that they understand and respect them.

Participation

We make sure children and young people have a say in how Cardiff is run and how the city develops.

Place

We are designing Cardiff's buildings and spaces with children in mind, so they're safe, fun and fair.

Equal & Included

We want every child, no matter who they are, to feel valued and included in Cardiff.

Glossary explanation

In this report, we have underlined some of the difficult words and explained them at the end on [page 23](#)

Common Acronyms

Sometimes we shorten common phrases to just the initials (acronyms). Here are some common acronyms we use in this document:

CF Cardiff – Child Friendly Cardiff
CYC – Cardiff Youth Council

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Governance

The CF Cardiff programme is overseen by the Child Friendly Cardiff Strategic Leadership Group. There are also Operational Groups for both Place and Equal & Included priorities. These provide coordination and support for the activities in our plan.

The programme provides regular reports to the Public services Board (PSB) which includes all the head people for public services such as Police, Health, Fire Service and the Council's Cabinet, who are the senior politicians, and Cardiff Council's Senior Management Team (SMT).

Children's Rights Champions

Key leaders who support the programme include Deputy Leader Cllr Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member Cllr Jennifer Burke, Chief Executive Paul Orders, Director of Education Mel Godfrey and Director of Highways, Planning and Transport Andrew Gregory.

Accountability

Elected members and council officers regularly support children and young people to monitor the CF Cardiff programme by giving updates to the children's Scrutiny Committee and Cardiff Youth Council.

Reporting

We want to make sure that the right people understand what work has been carried out and how well we have done. We do this by:

- Quarterly performance updates to the Corporate Policy Team and Cabinet.
- Annual CF Cardiff Report submission to UNICEF UK.



WHAT ARE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?

We want Cardiff to be 'a great place to grow up'. We want to live in a city with children and young people at its heart, where the voices, needs and rights of every child and young person is respected.

Children have the same general human rights as adults and also specific rights that recognise their special needs. Children are neither the property of their parents nor are they helpless objects of charity. They are human beings and are the subject of their own rights.

Children have 42 rights under the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC). These 42 rights give children and young people what they need to grow up happily, healthily and safely.

Children's Rights are so important that 15 years ago Wales put them at the [heart of their laws](#). All Welsh ministers, [public services](#) and large national organisations have to pay attention to children's rights in everything they do.



ABOUT CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES & COMMUNITIES

Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFC) is a UNICEF UK programme that works with councils to put children's rights into practice. The programme aims to create cities and communities in the UK where all children – whether they are living in care, using a children's centre, taking the bus, or simply visiting their local library – have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

Recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly City signifies that UNICEF publicly recognises that a council and its local community partners have taken significant and sustainable steps in specific areas towards advancing the human rights of children and young people growing up in their city or community. Recognition lasts for three years before they need to apply for reassessment by UNICEF UK to check what progress has been made for children and young people.

The programme is part of Child Friendly Cities – a global UNICEF initiative that supports more than 30 million children in over 40 countries.



A CHILD'S RIGHTS APPROACH

[The Right Way](#), a child's rights approach in Wales, is a way of working with and for children, grounded in the UNCRC to help public bodies build children's rights into every part of decision-making and the work they do (this mode aligns with [UNICEF's 7 principles](#) of a child rights-based approach).

The 5 Principles of The Right Way are shown below:

1

Embedding Children's Rights: Ensure that children's rights are embedded in everyday decision-making, policies, and practices.

2

Equality and Non-Discrimination: Promote equality and fight discrimination so that all children have equal access to their rights.

3

Empowering Children: Empower children to express their views and take an active role in matters affecting them.

4

Accountability: Hold institutions accountable for implementing children's rights and ensure transparency.

5

Participation: Ensure children are listened to and that their views inform decision-making.

Throughout this report, the 5 principles of the Right Way have been mentioned (or suggested) and **emboldened** to demonstrate Cardiff Council's commitment to upholding these values. By highlighting these ways of working, this report aims to show the Council's dedication to building in children's rights into its decision-making processes and how we work.

1.1 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION

Workforce Development

We want adults across the city have a good knowledge of children's rights and actively support children to them.

Approach

Over the past year, the CF Cardiff team has made great progress in creating and delivering a training programme that empowers both adults and young people on children's rights and participation. The main goal is to make sure children's voices not only get heard but also influence the policies and practices that affect them.

Increase the number of council staff who know about children's rights

Ensuring that all council workers have children's rights knowledge has been a priority and a challenge for us. This is important because when adults feel confident and knowledgeable about children's rights, they are better equipped to **embed children's rights** and **empower** children to express themselves.

We noticed that many staff without access to a computer couldn't complete the online training. To fix this, we created an in-person briefing that managers can deliver to their teams. We also offer both in-person and online sessions to fit different learning styles and schedules.

The training team also use a digital compliance dashboard to track who hasn't completed the training, helping us identify teams who need extra support. Through this special support, a team suggested that making a short video would be the best way for them to learn more about children's rights. A video has therefore been made and will be available on websites that are easy for them to access.

Develop and deliver bespoke Children's Rights and Participation trainings to various groups

Children's rights and **participation** can look different depending on the situation. We create custom training for people responsible for babies, children, and young people, like elected members, school governors, managers, and early years professionals. For example, elected members need different information than nursery staff. Each training includes special resources to help professionals learn more about children's rights:

- Early years - [Early Years - children's rights and participation \(padlet.com\)](#)
- Elected members - [Introduction to children's rights - elected members \(padlet.com\)](#)

Adults must be **accountable** to children and young people when making decisions that affect them, as outlined in Welsh law and standards¹. Our training explains the importance for duty bearers to provide feedback to children and young people and how to do it.

We also teach that babies, children, and young people should get support that meets their individual needs. It's important for adults to understand the Protected characteristics from [the 2010 Equality Act](#), ensuring that a child's identity is respected, and promoting **equality and non-discrimination**.

Develop, test and roll out of a Children's rights approach training module

When we started working to make Cardiff a child friendly city, we planned to create a training session called 'The Right Way', based on a guide that helps adults embed children's rights in Wales by adopting a 'children's rights approach'. While we didn't make a specific module for it, we've included its five key ideas in different training sessions. These sessions help professionals in Cardiff use a children's rights approach in their everyday work.

The creation of a 'Children's Rights Champion model'

At first, we thought about creating a children's rights champion model, where selected adults in each council department would promote and advocate for children's rights. But after talking to experts, we realised this might not fully work. Instead, we developed a training module for managers, teaching them to advocate for children's rights in their teams and make sure these principles guide their leadership and decisions.

In conclusion, the impact of our children's rights training has been overwhelmingly positive, and we look forward to continuing to adapt our delivery to suit the needs of our city.

¹ The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, National Participation Standards for Wales, Children and Families Wales Measure (2010), Children and Young Persons Wales Measure (2011), Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)

Impact

70% of council staff

have completed online introductory children's rights training, which is over our predicted impact of 60% in year one.

Before the training, only 52% of attendees strongly agreed or agreed that they felt knowledgeable and confident about children's rights. However, after completing the training, this figure rose to **97%**

From July 2023 – July 2024, we have delivered:

Introduction to children's rights
19 sessions, 345 attendees

Children and Young People Participation

Part 1 – 8 sessions, 220 attendees,
Part 2 – 4 sessions, 160 attendees

Bespoke Children's Rights for elected members, School Governors and early year professionals



Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) training,
monthly oversight and increase in quality and number of CRIA's undertaken across the council.

Children's Rights for Managers
2 new training modules have been created and a plan to deliver them is in place

1.2 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION

Rights Respecting Schools Award

Across the city we want children to have good knowledge of children's rights and are actively supported to claim their rights.

Approach

Over the past year, Cardiff has made big strides in embedding children's rights through the [UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools Award](#) (RRSA).

Increasing our capacity and independence to support the work of the RRSA programme in Cardiff

We have worked in partnership with UNICEF UK to establish a model of localised delivery of the RRSA programme by employing three local Council Officers and a Welsh speaker as RRSA assessors. This has empowered us to embed child rights education into our local systems and structures and means that we can save some money to be spent elsewhere. Other cities in Wales and England are also trialling this approach in partnership with UNICEF UK.

Share practice and connect RRSA schools

Each year, Cardiff hosts an RRSA event at Techniquet bringing together hundreds of pupils from different schools to share and grow as part of a city-wide rights movement. These events aim to promote children's rights through presentations and activities. These pupil-led elements of the event highlight our commitment to **empowering** children and **participation**, making sure that young people play an active role in their rights education and in shaping their communities. We also offer teacher training during the event, giving them the skills to help their schools improve. For the few schools not yet involved in the RRSA, we give them first access to tickets so they can learn about the benefits of a [children's rights approach](#) and see all the excellent work going on.

Increasing secondary school engagement through community of practice

Our main objective of running community of practice pilot was to increase the number of secondary schools involved in the RRSA, as they have the most pupils but the lowest Participation. Primary school pupils and teachers have told us they would like more secondary schools to get on board.

On speaking to the community and reflecting further it was decided we should take a different approach. We supported Year 6 pupils from Rights Respecting Schools in writing letters to their future secondary headteachers, encouraging them to sign up to the RRSA to improve pupil's rights education. This project is a great example of how we're encouraging **participation** and **empowering** children to claim their rights.

In addition, we have asked UNICEF for [bespoke](#) support and training for Cardiff secondary schools to increase the number engaged and help them with their rights journey.

Lastly, we are improving our database that tracks how well schools are doing with the RRSA, which helps us better support them. We're also developing a version that everyone can see, so decision-makers can easily find out how schools are supporting children's rights. This will help us all do our best as duty-bearers to support children's rights in Cardiff.

Making sure we have a fair approach to rights education for all pupils including pupils Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS)

Building on the excellent work which has seen nearly all of Cardiff's special schools take big steps with the RRSA, we are working to make sure all pupils, including EOTAS pupils, have an opportunity to learn about their rights. The way we are working to do this includes pupils and teachers from our Pupil-Referral Unit (PRU) talking about their school's excellent work at our annual RRSA event, where staff from specialist education providers will be attending.

Impact

"We are the respectful, responsible, and hardworking pupils of Trelai Primary School, and we are extremely proud that our school has won Silver in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA)"

– excerpt from pupil letter to headteacher

88% of primary aged pupils attend a bronze, silver, gold school

"We told everyone about the ABCDE of rights in assembly so that everyone knows not just what rights are but why they're important and how they are theirs always"

– pupil in Cardiff school

Of 128 maintained schools **102 are engaged** with the RRSA

26 Gold Schools
29 Silver Schools
78 Bronze Schools
26 non-engaged schools



[Find a school on our map!](#)



2. PLACE - URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

We want Cardiff to be designed with children and shaped by their experiences, including how they move around the city and enjoy public spaces.

Approach

Ensuring that Senior Leaders know how to embed a children's rights approach to planning and design

Senior Planning Officers took part in the Urban 95 Leadership Academy, led by the London School of Economics (LSE), to learn and develop ways to make cities better for children and young people. These senior officers who play a part in the planning and design of our city, can then take this knowledge and embed children's rights into the work they do, creating environments where children's needs are prioritised.

CF Cardiff helped to fund the Community Consultation on Quality of Life (CCQoL) with Cardiff University, to make consultation feel more meaningful, engaging and accessible for people.

Developing a sustainable engagement model for children and young people in planning and design

CF Cardiff and Cardiff Youth Service (CYS) teams were trained in using the digital mapping tool 'Maptionnaire,' allowing them to capture children's views on their local area. We also worked closely with Cardiff University's School of Geography and Planning to develop a 'children's placeplan toolkit', which was delivered to school groups. We have also trained other professionals on how to use the toolkit. This approach ensures that children can participate effectively in shaping their neighbourhoods and future city.

Ensuring planning and design of public spaces is inclusive and non-discriminatory

CF Cardiff commissioned a research project led by Cardiff University to better understand what it's like to be a teenage girl in Cardiff, particularly in parks. This research helps to make sure that spaces are designed to meet the needs of all children, including those who are often marginalised.

Over the past year, we've worked closely with different groups to ensure that opportunities for children to play are included in two important planning documents for Cardiff. The first is the Local Development Plan, which will shape the city's growth over the next 15 years, and the second is a new set of guidelines specifically focused on play. We completed work with experts to explore how the city's plans could support both play and health.

Following this, we are working hard to **embed** play into the local development plan to make sure it highlights its importance in the future design of Cardiff. For the first time, there will be specific guidance to help adults who design the city to be more **accountable** by creating more opportunities to play for all. This guidance will be completed in 2025 and will help **embed** children's rights into the future of Cardiff's urban planning.

Impact

Senior planning officers

in Cardiff Council are now more aware of how to embed a children's rights approach in their work and are taking active steps to achieve this.

Children's Play will now have its own policy

in the Local Development Plan 2021-2036, ensuring that children can continue to claim their right to play (Article 31, UNCRC)

Since working with Cardiff University and community partners

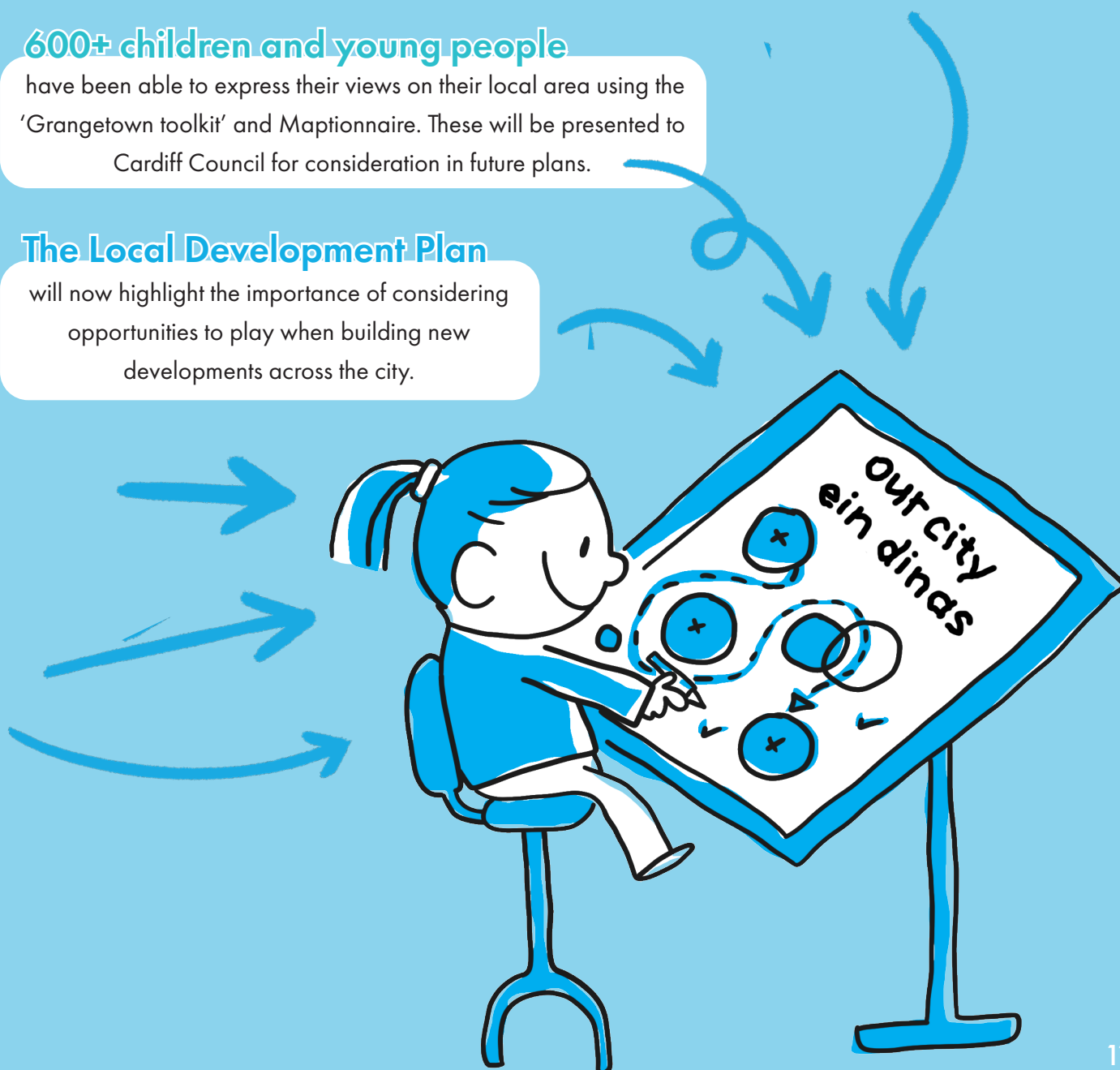
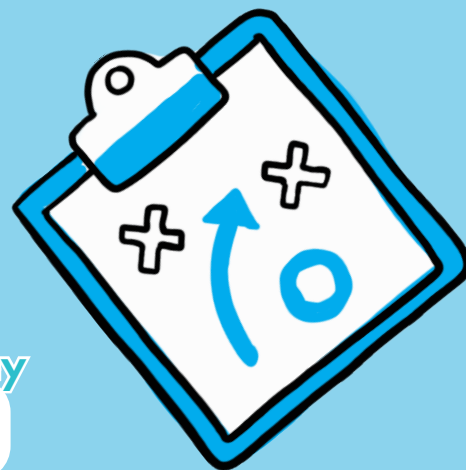
we have created more engagement opportunities for children and young people, to tell us how the local community meets their needs now and in future (Llanishen Community Mapping; Grangetown Placeplan; Youth Service Community Profiles; Research with girls in parks).

600+ children and young people

have been able to express their views on their local area using the 'Grangetown toolkit' and Maptionnaire. These will be presented to Cardiff Council for consideration in future plans.

The Local Development Plan

will now highlight the importance of considering opportunities to play when building new developments across the city.



3. PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK LOOP

We want to make sure Children's opinions and experiences are regularly used to help shape, improve, and review policies, services, and programmes.

Approach

To improve children's Participation, particularly under 11s, ensuring all children and young people can help shape services and make a difference.

The CF Cardiff team have developed a [social action](#) toolkit specifically designed to engage children under 11 years old. The toolkit was developed as a supporting document to [UNICEF's RRSA Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#), providing more information on how social action can be applied in Wales.

Through our [Cardiff Young Citizens' Panel](#), children are invited to give their views on changes being suggested by the [local authority](#) and claim their **right to be heard** on matters that may affect them.

To continue to help **empower children**, we have supported them on numerous projects where they have been able to help shape services. These include working with:

Bristol University, Cardiff University, Flying Start, Plan UK, Welsh Women's Aid, Gwynedd Youth Forum, BBC Wales, Cardiff [Public services Board \(PSB\)](#), UK Youth Parliament, DebateMate, Accord in Nantes, Legislative Theatre and numerous departments across the council.

To identify [discrimination](#) or inequality in children being able to claim their rights.

It's important for us to look at the bigger picture when understanding [discrimination](#) and **inequality** across Cardiff. This is why we analyse lots of [data](#) from partners, to gain a better understanding of children's experiences in the city. For example, [School Healthy Research Network](#) (SHRN) now captures data from both Primary and Secondary school children on various topics, including their rights. We also receive Cardiff-specific data from the Children's Commissioner's Office for Wales from their '[Monthly Matters](#)' survey. This asks children their views on current issues such as online safety.

Child Friendly Cardiff have also begun putting together an [online library](#) where organisations can access and share data on children. This will help Cardiff Council and partners make better decisions for children and only engage when there's a lack of data.



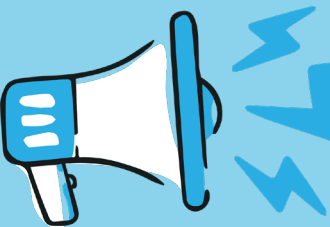
Provide children with more accessible feedback on decision making processes

Information on decisions and changes from Cardiff Council often come from sources that are not very child friendly. One way to improve this was the creation of Cardiff Youth Council's (CYC) 'Media Reel Group', turning information from the Council into child friendly online content such as video reels. To ensure further [accountability](#) and transparency, we added a [suggestion](#) and [feedback](#) page on CYC's website, making it easier for young people to provide their views on improvements to CYC.

Inform children how their views have influenced decision making & highlight when a children's right's approach has been followed when making decisions

When young people collaborate with or are asked for their views by organisations, we ensure that they are provided with feedback about what happens because of their contribution. This is a key strand of the [Children and Young People's National Participation Standards for Wales](#). This feedback can be found on the [CYC website](#) & the [CF Cardiff Website](#).

Impact



"Joining CYC was one of the best decisions I've made. I find it is a good place to meet people and discuss the problems facing young people and to have our visions seen. All young people deserve to have a platform that amplifies their voices, like CYC does."

- Young Person, age 14

Children have given

3000+ hours

and attended 150 sessions

including overnight visits to the House of Commons and Cardiff's Twin City of Nantes. You can see more of what they have been doing here [children's news blog](#).

Young people now sit on 4 [scrutiny](#) panels and 5 strategic boards within Cardiff Council.

A social action toolkit has been created and shared with primary schools across Cardiff after talking to 400+ pupils from 7 schools

Over 300 pupils took part in a community mapping project in Llanishen to have their say on the local area.

Feedback loop

- Children are involved in creating accessible and engaging feedback which highlights what is happening in the city feedback reels.
- Children's views are being fed back to them regularly and consistently through the Children's Commissioners Monthly Matters survey – See example results [May-MM-English-Primary.pptx](#)
- Children are being given feedback via the [CYC website](#) & the [CF Cardiff website](#) when a child right's approach has been followed during big decisions.

4.1 EQUAL AND INCLUDED

Tackling Issues Around Gender Equity

In Cardiff, we want all children to be treated with dignity and respect and free from discrimination.

Approach

We wanted to learn about what life is like for girls in Cardiff, so we tried out different ways to make sure all girls could share their stories and ideas.

We did this through using various methods:

- [Legislative theatre](#) – where young people acted out real-life scenarios and worked with adults to come up with solutions to the problems
- [Plan UK 'Young Changemakers' programme](#) – Girls were able to lead on their own projects focusing on making Cardiff a fairer place for everyone.
- [DebateMate](#) – Young people developed debating skills which they used to discuss important gender issues.
- Gender [Equity](#) Day with leading academic Prof. EJ Reynolds – A day dedicated to empowering and educating girls and young women.
- The 'Period Standard' pilot project – An award to help schools champion period dignity and make it easier for pupils to access period products.
- ['Take Your Place' leadership academy led by Commonwealth Theatre](#) - working with young working-class people to build agency, take action & know their rights.

All these activities were about making sure girls in Cardiff can **participate** and use their voice to help shape the city to be a better place for everyone.

If you would like to hear about the views and ideas of girls in Cardiff, you can [read our report here](#).

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

In March 2023 the Council passed a motion to declare Cardiff a 'City for CEDAW'. CEDAW is the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of [Discrimination](#) Against Women.

In response the Council has taken forward a programme of work to progress the Council's commitment to acting in accordance with the CEDAW principles. This has included a number of strands of activity:

- Promoting and celebrating CEDAW
 - The Council's website has been updated to add a dedicated page providing information about CEDAW and the commitments made in the motion Eliminating discrimination against women (cardiff.gov.uk)
 - Cardiff Early Help have designed a birth certificate folder that celebrates Cardiff as both a City for CEDAW and as the UK's first UNICEF Child Friendly City.
- Embedding CEDAW into the Policy Framework
 - The commitments made in the CEDAW motion have been incorporated into the Council's new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-28. Progress against this Strategy will be documented through an

annual report which will include a narrative update against each of the commitments.

- Commitments from the motion which specifically relate to girls and young women have also been included in the Child Friendly City Sustainability Plan which this report provides updates on.
- CEDAW has been embedded into the Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy 2023-28 with several commitments incorporated into the strategy.
- Reviewing training to include CEDAW
 - Following a review of the suite of equalities training offered within the Council, a new eLearning module on 'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging' has been rolled out across the Council. This training module is mandatory for all staff. The training includes a section on eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation – one of the three elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty – which specifically highlights CEDAW.

Impact

A group of stakeholders from across the council and wider partners, led by Cabinet Cllr Jennifer Burke, has been set up to focus on making the changes suggested in the [gender report](#). They'll also keep talking to girls and young women to make sure their voices are heard.

We've teamed up with Cardiff University to do a study on what it's like for girls in Cardiff's parks. This will help us understand how to make parks safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

1 school has achieved distinction, and 3 other schools have achieved Merit in the 'Period Standard'

"Our Period Ambassador is friendly and easy to talk to and we can get period products in the toilets and from our teachers" - primary school pupil

Through the 'Young Changemakers' scheme, we funded 8 projects led by young people. Find out more about the incredible work that took place [here](#).

'This project has shown us that anything is possible and that hopefully society is going to become a place where neurodivergent people like us are accepted and supported.' - a quote from a young person involved in the project

Resources on how to safeguard young people from exploitation have been put into [a central location](#) and regularly updated by the SAFE team.

Advice and information was given through community Hubs and Libraries across Cardiff to help women and girls to access all benefits to which they are entitled, including a booklet of rights.

Council teams and external partners are working collaboratively to develop resources for young people on important topics such as VAWDASV, misogyny, public sexual harassment etc.

Work has taken place to ensure more Safe Spaces throughout Cardiff, involving women and girls in their creation.



4.2 EQUAL AND INCLUDED

Tackling Disproportionality in the Youth Justice System

Approach

We are committed to understanding and tackling any disproportionality within Cardiff's Youth Justice System. Using the Youth Justice Board's Ethnic Disparity Toolkit, we've analysed the makeup of young people in our service. The data shows that while white Welsh boys are the largest group entering the system, this reflects the wider demographics of Cardiff's youth population. However, there has been a slight increase in boys of mixed heritage entering the system. To better understand their experiences, we are conducting an audit focusing on these young people.

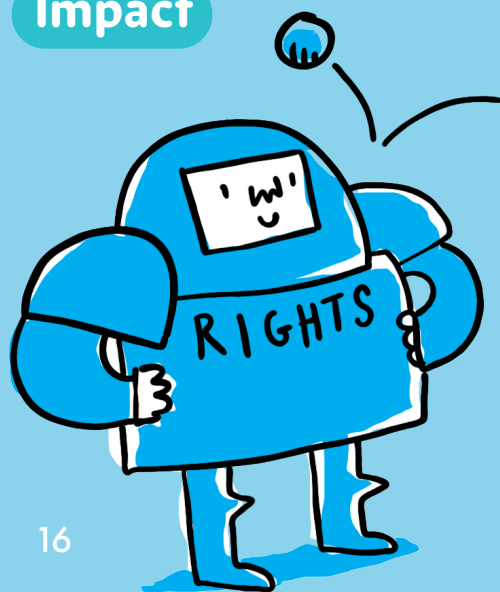
We continuously monitor the ethnicity and outcomes of the young people we work with through quarterly reports. This helps us track any changes and ensure that our services are fair and equitable. We also gather feedback directly from young people involved in our programmes, their insights help shape future projects and are shared with our management board and other stakeholders to inform decision-making.

With our new Youth Justice Plan receiving positive feedback, we've set clear priorities for the coming year. Our action plan includes a strong focus on improving quality assurance and promoting diversity. This involves regular audits and reviews of cases to identify any issues related to ethnicity, gender, or offence type.

Our staff are trained in diversity and cultural competence, and we ensure that our workforce reflect the communities we serve. We also actively recruit volunteers across Cardiff to support young people in the justice system, including appropriate adults and mentors from diverse backgrounds.

We believe that by regularly reviewing our strategies, involving young people in decision-making, and continuously improving our practices, we can ensure that our youth justice system is **fair** and supportive **for all** young people in Cardiff.

Impact



Regular monitoring of ethnicity and outcomes has become routine, and direct engagement with young people, such as through the 'Girls Group,' has provided valuable feedback that has informed both local and national discussions.

The development of a new Youth Justice Plan and Service Action plan, alongside consistent quality assurance practices, ensures that diversity and disproportionality are regularly addressed.

4.3 EQUAL AND INCLUDED

Tackling Discrimination: School Exclusions and Behaviour

Approach

Throughout the year, we carefully monitored exclusion [data](#) and identified patterns, such as a slight reduction in secondary school exclusions but a small rise in primary schools. Despite fewer fixed-term exclusions overall, the number of learning days lost remains a concern, particularly for Key Stage 3 students.

To tackle these challenges, we set up a group of managers from across education service to look at new guidance on exclusions and Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs). This framework is now being piloted in five secondary schools to ensure a more consistent and effective approach to managing exclusions.

Incorporating the voices of young people has been essential to our strategy. We used feedback from the School Health Research Network and stakeholder surveys to ensure that children's experiences inform our [action plans](#). This has enabled schools to target support where it is needed most.

We also prioritised training for headteachers and governors, helping them understand how to manage exclusions fairly and prevent discriminatory practices. This training has fostered a culture of shared best practices and increased [accountability](#) across schools.

Our comprehensive support extends beyond the classroom. The 'Team around the School' approach, along with training programmes like Talkabout, has been implemented to help staff adopt the Whole School Approach, enhancing their ability to support students effectively.



Impact

These efforts have led to meaningful changes in how schools manage exclusions and support student behaviour. The new guidance on exclusions and PSPs has provided a stronger framework, giving schools clearer guidelines to support vulnerable pupils.

By prioritising the voices of young people, schools are now better equipped to offer targeted interventions that meet the specific needs of their students. This has resulted in a more inclusive and responsive school environment.

Training for school leaders has improved their capacity to handle exclusions fairly, reducing disparities and ensuring more consistent practices across the city. As a result, we have seen fewer exclusions, better engagement in learning, and improved outcomes for vulnerable students.

The comprehensive support provided through initiatives like the 'Team around the School' has led to a stronger capacity to support students, contributing to a positive impact on overall attainment. Improvement Partners have played a key role in helping schools integrate well-being into their processes, leading to more effective support and intervention where high exclusions were identified.

Overall, our approach has fostered a fairer, more supportive school environment, where every child has the opportunity to succeed.



4.4 EQUAL AND INCLUDED

Developing a Public Transport Policy that is Fair and Equitable for Children

Approach

In 2025, there will be a big discussion about how to make Cardiff's roads and transport system work better together. This will include ideas like a Road User Payment scheme, which is a way to help manage traffic and improve transport.

We know it's important for children to have a say in how the city is run. So, we've started talking about how to make sure they can share their ideas when the time comes.

We asked members of the Cardiff Youth Council to join a workshop where we talked about the best ways to get children involved in this important discussion. Their ideas will help us plan how to include young people when the big public [consultation](#) happens in 2025.



Impact

Planning for the [consultation](#) with children next year is being informed by work done with members of Cardiff Youth Council to develop a set of ideas and rules to work to when running consultation.

KEY INSPECTION OUTCOMES

Education

- The last Estyn [Inspection report for Cardiff Council](#) was done in 2022 and the date for the next inspection has not been set.
- All school inspections can be seen here [latest inspection reports - Estyn \(gov.wales\)](#), then filter by local authority.

Youth Justice

- The latest youth justice report can be seen here [An inspection of youth offending services in Cardiff \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#)

Child Protection

- Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA): Cardiff 2024 [240507-Cardiff-JICPA-Report-en.pdf \(careinspectorate.wales\)](#) This report sets out areas of strength and areas for improvement.



NEW CONNECTIONS

Participation is recognised as strength in Cardiff, supported by highly trained staff and a culture of respecting children's rights. Numerous partners across the UK, including Harborough, Gwynedd, Taunton, and internationally Sarawak, Malaysia have requested support and advice on setting up a young people's Participation structure.

Cardiff Youth Council hosted delegations from Derry and Strabane, and Gwynedd.

Child Friendly Cardiff have hosted several meetings to support and advise communities across the UK who are engaged with or considering partnering with the UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme in UK.

Cardiff Council hosted international twin cities including Stuttgart where we shared practice on the UNICEF UK child friendly cities programme.

Child Friendly Cardiff delivered a child rights approach workshop at a national conference for the Children's Commissioners Office.

Cardiff's innovative approach to the RRSA has caught the eye of other UK councils, like Manchester, Luton, and Lambeth. They've asked us for help and advice, leading to teamwork that helps everyone stay **accountable** and do their best to support children's rights.

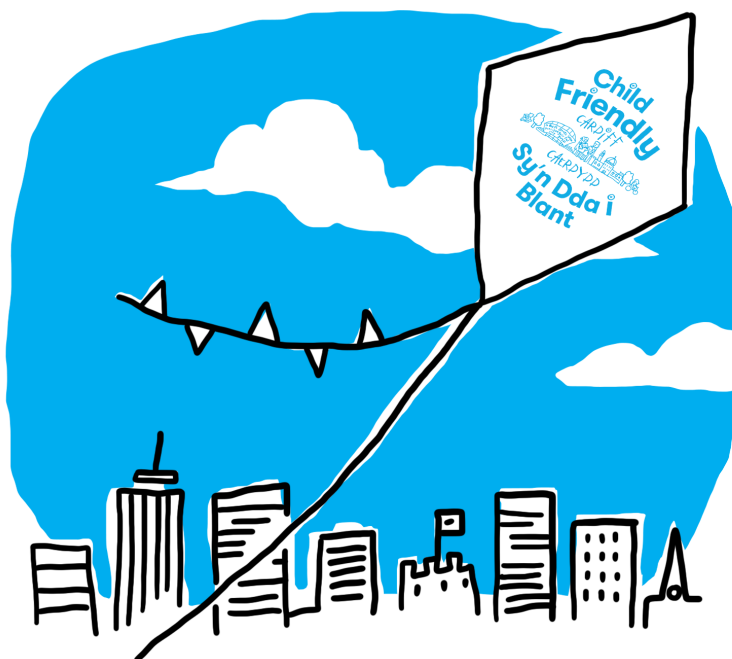


SUMMARY

As we reflect on the progress made this year, it is clear that Cardiff Council remains deeply committed to embedding children's rights into all aspects of our work. From enhancing Participation and ensuring that children's voices are at the heart of decision-making, to tackling inequalities and promoting fairness in services such as education, youth justice, and public transport, we continue to take meaningful steps toward a more child-friendly city. The challenges we have identified in this report also serve as a roadmap for future efforts, guiding our work on key priorities such as addressing disparities in school exclusions and enhancing youth Participation. With these clear goals and the support of our partners, we are determined to carry forward the work outlined in this report, ensuring that children's rights are not just an aspiration but a lived reality for every child and young person in Cardiff.

NEXT STEPS

Looking ahead, Cardiff Council is committed to building on the strong governance arrangements of the Child Friendly City programme, ensuring that the voices of children and young people remain central to all we do. By continuing to strengthen partnerships across the city, we aim to create lasting impact and drive positive change over time. As we move forward, we will also take every opportunity to celebrate the remarkable achievements of Cardiff's children and young people, recognising their contributions to shaping a city that works for everyone.



GLOSSARY

(A list of important words and their meanings)

Action plan - A suggested or previously planned course of action

Accountability - When a person or a group of people take responsibility for an action

Bespoke - Something made especially for someone

Children's rights approach - When children's rights are prioritised in the work that organisations do

CRIA - Children's Rights Impact Assessment

Compliance - means doing what you're supposed to do or following the rules

Compliance dashboard - Display of information showing you who is doing what they are supposed to be doing or who is following the rules

Consultation - When you meet with a person or group of people who are experts in a particular subject

Data - Facts and statistics which are brought together

Discrimination - Treating someone unfairly or differently just because of who they are or how they look

Disproportionality - When things are not in balance or not fair

Elected members - Members of the Council/parliament elected by residents

Equality - When everyone gets the same things

Equity - When everyone gets what they need for it to be fair – not necessarily the same things

Local authority - A body within the government which provides services in each local area

Marginalised - being pushed to the side or left out.

Participation - The action of taking part/being involved in something

Protected characteristics - things about people that make them who they are, and these things are protected by laws to make sure everyone is treated fairly. For example, your age, your gender, your race, your religion, or if you have a disability.

Public services - A service whose purpose is to help the public and is provided by the government. Some of these services are hospitals, schools, police etc.

Quality assurance - When something is checked to make sure that it is proper and of a good standard

Scrutiny - The role of scrutiny is to look at issues that matter to Cardiff residents, hold to account decisions made by the Council and push for improvements

Social action - When people come together to help make their lives better and improve issues that are important in their communities

Sustainable - When a project can continue to run because the resources will be available