Cardiff's
Story of Change

2023–2026

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Foreword

Achieving Child Friendly City status in 2023 was a landmark moment for Cardiff and remains one of the achievements we are most proud of. It recognised several years of sustained work to embed children's rights across the city and reflected the commitment, dedication and collaboration of staff, partners, schools, and the many children and young people who contributed to shaping this agenda.

Since receiving accreditation, we have continued to strengthen and deepen this work. Children's rights are becoming increasingly embedded in everyday practice, and the principles that guided our journey to accreditation are now more firmly reflected in how services are designed and delivered. This Story of Change provides a welcome assessment of the progress made over the past three years and highlights the breadth and depth of activity taking place across the city.

There has been strong and sustained progress. More than 80% of maintained schools are now accredited through the Rights Respecting Schools Award, with engagement continuing to grow. Workforce development has expanded significantly, with most of Council staff having now completed children's rights training. We are also seeing children and young people contribute more routinely to shaping policies and services, with participation becoming more consistent and better integrated into decision-making. These developments reflect a culture in which rights-based approaches are increasingly understood, prioritised and acted upon.

The report also acknowledges the challenges that continue to shape this work. Inequality, rising need and pressure on public services remain. Demand is growing and becoming increasingly complex. These pressures underline the importance of sustaining a rights-based approach and maintaining investment in the skills, relationships and participation structures that support it.

All of this progress forms part of our ongoing commitment to being a Child Friendly City. As we look ahead, our intention is to build on the strong foundations already in place and to continue strengthening the systems, culture and practice that enable children's rights to be embedded across the city. Seeking reaccreditation is an important step in renewing that commitment and ensuring that every child and young person in Cardiff has access to the opportunities, support and experiences they deserve.

We are proud of what has been achieved so far and remain focused on continuing this journey. Working alongside children and young people, schools, partners and communities, we will continue to ensure that children's rights are understood, embedded and reflected in the experiences of all children and young people across the city.

Cllr Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education)
Emily Gao (Chair of Cardiff Youth Council)

Summary of Journey

Since beginning the Child Friendly City journey, Cardiff has made sustained progress in embedding children's rights into the way the city plans, decides, and delivers. Between 2023 and 2026, the city has shifted from early participation and pilot activity toward a clearer, more intentional focus on strengthening its four core priorities:

- Childrens Rights Education
  Workforce Development
  Rights Respecting Schools Award
- Place: Urban Planning & Design
- Participation
- Equal and Included

Across this period, Cardiff has invested in developing staff skills, knowledge, and confidence to apply children's rights in practice, while also building a culture rooted in dignity and respect for babies, children, and young people. Significant progress has been made in embedding children's rights education across the workforce and maintained schools; advancing children's rights approaches to planning and the built environment; strengthening meaningful participation structures for children; and tackling inequality through a sustained focus on inclusion and equity.

At the same time, the city has remained honest about the challenges that persist, including rising need and widening inequality. This Story of Change reflects a maturing whole system approach—one that recognises children as rightsholders and partners in shaping Cardiff's future. Together, these four priorities provide a strong foundation for the next phase of the Sustainability Plan and for continuing to embed children's rights across all aspects of city governance.

Further detail on progress, learning and impact across this period is set out in the Child Friendly Cardiff Annual Reports for 2023–24 and 2024–25, which provide additional evidence and context to this Story of Change.

Annual Report 23 24 - CFC Annual Report 23-24

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1.1 Children's Rights Education - Workforce Development

Across the city, children, young people and adults have good knowledge of children's right and children are actively supported to claim their rights.

Overview and Intent

This priority is about embedding Children's Rights into the Council's culture so that every decision and service reflects a commitment to the rights and wellbeing of babies, children, and young people. Our aim is to create a workforce that understands these principles and can confidently apply them in daily practice. Through a comprehensive and accessible training framework, we seek to build knowledge, shift attitudes, and influence behaviours across the organisation.

It also supports Cardiff Council's Corporate Plan by strengthening our commitment to fairness, inclusion, and safeguarding, ensuring children's voices are embedded in service delivery. In addition, it fulfils statutory duties under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, which requires local authorities to enable children to participate in decisions that affect them. By equipping staff with the skills to apply Children's Rights in practice, we meet both strategic objectives and legal obligations to place children at the heart of local governance.

Story of Change (2023-26)

1. Roll-out of Children's Rights e-learning to 85% of Council Staff, Extend applied children's rights training to other departments and external partners, and develop bespoke resources and modules.

From 2023 to 2026, Cardiff Council embedded Children's Rights into core training by making the e-learning module one of eight mandatory courses for all staff. This 30-minute module provides a foundation for understanding Children's Rights, supported by extended in-person and virtual sessions for practical application. A key challenge was reaching staff without regular PC access or those preferring alternative formats. To address this, we engaged directly with teams with high non-compliance rates, asking how training could be made more accessible. As a result, the resources outlined above were developed, alongside tailored support. This approach proved highly effective. For example, a team within the Council's Education and Lifelong Learning directorate, made of largely of non-PC users, improved compliance by over 60% in 2025.

We also delivered bespoke training to groups requiring deeper engagement, including early years professionals, foster carers, school governors, and elected members. For early years professionals, sessions focused on strategies for upholding Article 12, the right to be heard, particularly for very young or non-verbal children. Each programme was adapted in content and delivery to meet the unique needs of these groups, reinforcing our commitment to embedding Children's Rights across all levels of governance and service provision.

2. Identify and up-skill network of managers

At the start of this journey, we aimed to create a dedicated Children's Rights module for managers and establish a network of champions across the Council. However, this proved challenging due to conflicting agendas, concerns surrounding overburdening officers with training, and the difficulty of sustaining engagement and enthusiasm over time.

In response, we developed a practical alternative: the Children's Rights for Managers Guidance, which outlines five simple ways managers can champion and embed Children's Rights within their teams. This approach provides flexibility while still promoting leadership responsibility for rights-informed practice. Looking ahead, we plan to explore how this guidance has been implemented in practice and identify opportunities to strengthen managerial engagement further.

3. Deliver Elected Members training programme

Delivering Children's Rights training to Elected Members has been an ongoing challenge due to low attendance and remains a key focus for the coming years. We plan to work closely with colleagues in Democratic Services and IT to design a training framework tailored to the unique capacity and demands of Elected Members. With Council elections in Wales scheduled for May 2027, our priority is to embed Children's Rights into the induction process so that new Elected Members are introduced to the principles and their relevance to decision-making from the outset of their term of office. This approach will ensure that Children's Rights are understood and championed at the highest level of local governance.

Voice of the Child

"Rights aren't a project. They're a promise."

This emphasises that children's rights are not optional but fundamental guarantees. Training is essential to ensure professionals understand their role as a duty bearer and embed them into their everyday practice.

"It feels different when councillors and senior staff actually listen."

"We want to be listened to properly, not just asked." "We want to be part of decisions, not just give opinions."

These quotes show why training is essential for professionals and decision-makers: it gives them the skills to listen to young people and involve them meaningfully in consultation and decision-making. This ensures policies and services reflect the needs of the communities that they serve, which includes babies, children, and young people.

Partner and System Perspectives

The development of a robust Children's Rights training framework has relied on strong partnerships across the Council and with external organisations. At the outset, guidance from Children in Wales shaped both content and delivery, ensuring alignment with best practice and legislative requirements.

Internally, collaboration with the Council's training team was vital in enabling the EDI Training Officer to use internal systems effectively, strengthening the technical foundation and integration of the programme. The EDI Training Officer also built relationships across departments to deliver bespoke training. For example, working with the School Catering Service led to a tailored solution, a short video uploaded to Google Classroom, allowing flexible access and boosting participation. Similarly, partnerships with the Youth Service and Fostering Team resulted in dedicated sessions focused on applying Children's Rights in roles that directly impact babies, children, and young people.

These collaborations have been critical in creating a flexible, inclusive training framework that meets diverse needs.

Reflection and Learning

Over the past three years, Cardiff Council has made strong progress in embedding Children's Rights, but the journey has highlighted important lessons.

One of the most important lessons from this journey has been the value of flexibility in training design and delivery. When digital access posed a barrier, we adapted by creating alternative resources such as printable workbooks, PowerPoint presentations, and training videos. Similarly, bespoke sessions were tailored to the unique needs of different groups, early years professionals explored practical ways to uphold Article 12 for non-verbal children, while school governors and Elected Members received content focused on governance and decision-making. These adaptations ensured that Children's Rights training remained accessible, relevant, and impactful across a diverse workforce.

We will continue to use this flexible approach in the future, adapting content and delivery methods to meet the evolving needs of the Council and its workforce

1.2 Children's Rights Education - Rights Respecting Schools Award

Across the city, children, young people and adults have good knowledge of children's right and children are actively supported to claim their rights.

Overview and Intent

Cardiff's approach to achieving its ambition that babies, children, and young people learn about their rights and are supported to claim them is grounded in a sustained commitment to embedding children's rights across the education system. This work sits within a wider programme of children's rights education under Priority 1 and focuses specifically on change within maintained education settings.

The UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) provides a structured and quality-assured framework that supports schools to embed children's rights into everyday practice, including teaching and learning, relationships, decision-making and school culture. Through this workstream, children are supported to understand their rights, to be heard, and to influence decisions that affect their school lives, while adults are supported to act more consistently and accountably as duty bearers.

The intent of this work is to ensure that children's rights are not experienced as abstract principles, but as something real, consistent and meaningful in daily school life. This means children knowing that they have rights, experiencing dignity and fairness in their relationships, and being supported to participate and have their views taken seriously. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that this experience is equitable and responsive to differing needs, rather than dependent on individual schools or staff.

Story of Change (2023-26)

Between 2023 and 2026, Cardiff shifted its focus from increasing participation in the RRSA to strengthening depth, consistency and sustainability of practice across schools.

Engagement with the award increased from 65 percent of maintained schools in 2023 to 82 percent by early 2026, with 105 of 127 schools engaged at Bronze, Silver or Gold level. Progression also strengthened, with no evidence of system-wide stagnation.

Depth of embedding improved alongside this growth. Among primary and special schools, the proportion achieving Silver or Gold increased from 40 percent in 2023 to 56.9 percent by 2026, demonstrating continued progression beyond initial engagement.

Delivery of the award became more sustainable. Central funding ensured equitable access for all maintained schools, while the UNICEF training of local authority officers as accredited silver assessors enabled assessments and support to be delivered locally and consistently.

Schools were further supported through annual Right to Respect in Schools events, which brought together children, school coordinators and professionals to share learning, build capacity and reinforce a city-wide approach.

System oversight also strengthened through the development of a live RRSA database, supporting ongoing monitoring, early identification of barriers to progression, and more targeted support.

Together, these changes reflect a move from building participation to sustaining a coherent, city-wide approach to children's rights education, with increasing emphasis on secure and consistent practice.

Impact Summary

Overall, Cardiff has made clear, sustained and system-wide progress in embedding children's rights education within schools through the RRSA. This judgement is supported by qualitative evidence from Silver and Gold assessment reports, including direct testimony from children and school staff, presented in the accompanying Evidence submission.

The evidence indicates that children's rights are increasingly understood, experienced and acted upon within school life. Growing engagement, accelerated progression through Silver and Gold, and the absence of widespread stagnation suggest that rights-based approaches are being embedded more securely over time rather than treated as short-term initiatives.

At a system level, this progress reflects increased consistency and resilience. Central funding, local assessment capacity, shared learning opportunities and evidence-informed oversight have reduced reliance on individual champions and strengthened accountability, improving the system's ability to sustain momentum and respond to challenge.

Voice of the Child

Importantly, the impact of this work is visible in children's lived experience. Evidence from assessment reports shows that children can describe their rights, explain how they are respected in school, and give concrete examples of how their views influence decisions that affect them.

"In my home country, we weren't taught about rights. I didn't feel safe and we didn't have a voice in school. I only learned about rights when I arrived at Cantonian. It improved my confidence and I feel empowered now." - Pupil, Cantonian High School, Silver Report

The evidence also indicates a shift in adult practice and school culture. Staff and school leaders describe improved relationships, more inclusive approaches to behaviour and wellbeing, and greater emphasis on dignity, participation and mutual respect.

"If someone has behaved in a way that impacts rights, we use a restorative approach that encourages pupils to take ownership of their actions and ensures issues are discussed in a dignified way." - Staff member, Danescourt Primary School, Gold Report

Taken together, this evidence supports the judgement that Cardiff's approach has moved beyond activity and compliance towards sustained change in ways of working, with children's rights increasingly embedded as a shared framework for relationships, decision-making and school improvement.

Partner and System Perspectives

"Cardiff City Council's ongoing commitment to RRSA goes from strength to strength. Partnership working and collaboration is building local capacity to support and advise schools and to carry out RRSA accreditations, at Silver level, across the city. This approach is unique in Wales and reflects best practice elsewhere in the UK.

Schools value the Council's interest in and commitment to their child rights work and appreciated to opportunities provided for them to come together and showcase the impact of becoming Rights Respecting.

All the above is contributing to a sustainable model with school leaders trusting and valuing the Council led support for their child rights work."

Martin Russel - RRSA Program Director

The progress described in this Story of Change was driven by a combination of strategic commitment, practical infrastructure and sustained attention to how children's rights are realised in everyday school practice.

Training local authority officers as accredited silver assessors has played a fundamental role in our commitment to *develop and deliver a sustainable approach to RRSA in Cardiff*. Enhanced local capacity and knowledge has put us in a unique position to support schools in a timely and context-aware way. Face-to-face assessments and bespoke support strengthened relationships with schools and helped translate rights principles into practical action, particularly for settings facing additional pressures or complexity.

A key factor in *supporting schools to engage with and progress through the UNICEF RRSA* was the continuation of central funding for the initiative. By removing financial barriers for maintained schools, Cardiff ensured that engagement with children's rights education was not dependent on individual school budgets or competing priorities. This equitable approach created a stable foundation for participation and signalled that children's rights are a shared responsibility across the education system.

Progress was further supported by creating opportunities for connection and shared learning across schools. Annual RRSA events brought together children, school coordinators and professionals, reinforcing a sense of collective endeavour and shared direction. These spaces supported participation, peer learning and capacity-building, helping schools to learn from one another and maintain momentum.

Finally, the use of evidence to inform action strengthened consistency and accountability. The development and ongoing use of a live RRSA database enabled the council to track engagement and progression, identify disparities and pressure points, and target support where it was most needed. This helped ensure accountability that progress was monitored systematically and that emerging challenges, such as staffing changes or stalled progression, could be addressed early.

Together, these factors created conditions in which children's rights education could move from reliance on individual commitment to a more embedded, resilient and equitable system. Change was supported not by a single intervention, but by aligned funding, capacity, participation and evidence-informed oversight working in combination.

Reflection and learning

Over this period, sustained progress has been made alongside important learning that continues to shape the delivery and long-term sustainability of children's rights education in schools. A key challenge has been achieving consistent depth of rights-respecting practice across different school phases. Evidence shows that embedding is generally more established in primary and special schools, with more variable progress in secondary settings. This aligns with the greater structural complexity of secondary environments and wider national pressures, including curriculum demands, staffing capacity and large-scale pupil engagement.

This challenge is not unique to Cardiff and has been recognised across other local authorities. It has highlighted the importance of better understanding the specific contexts and pressures faced by secondary schools, rather than assuming uniform barriers. This learning points to the need for more tailored and responsive approaches to support, informed by ongoing dialogue with schools and closer collaboration with UNICEF UK to explore more bespoke guidance where needed.

Workforce change has also remained a significant pressure point. Shifts in school leadership or RRSA coordination roles can interrupt momentum, especially where expertise is held by only a few staff. This has reinforced the need for system level mechanism, such as live data tracking, relationship-based support and regular reengagement, to reduce vulnerability to staff turnover and protect continuity.

Another area of learning relates to maintaining strong local assessment capacity. While training local authority officers as silver assessors has enhanced sustainability and responsiveness, it has also highlighted the need to keep building capacity, including Welsh language provision, and to plan for future succession. National limitations, such as ongoing development of Gold assessor training, shape what is achievable locally and require ongoing dialogue with UNICEF UK.

These reflections sit within a wider operational landscape where schools face increasing workload pressures, attendance challenges and competing priorities. Despite this, schools consistently report that a children's rights approach acts as a unifying framework that strengthens existing practice rather than adding burden. Ensuring this continues requires ongoing clarity, support and reinforcement so that rights approaches remain embedded over time.

Together, these challenges and insights have informed our shift toward greater emphasis on sustainability, targeted support and system resilience. This is also reflected in Cardiff's forward looking approach. Children's rights education is no longer dependent on time limited initiatives or individual champions; instead, it is becoming embedded within structures, expectations and systemwide ways of working. Key elements supporting this include continued central funding for the RRSA, locally held assessment and support capacity, and live, evidence driven oversight through corporate performance processes. These ensure that children's rights education remains visible, resourced and accountable well beyond the current recognition period.

Looking ahead, the next phase of work focuses on consolidating and deepening progress rather than expanding activity. Priorities include strengthening tailored support for secondary schools, continuing to develop and sustain local assessor capacity, and ensuring that Welsh language provision and inclusion remain integral. Ongoing use of data will help to target support, identify emerging risks and address disparities in engagement or progression. The accompanying Sustainability Plan outlines the detailed priorities, governance and measures for the next three-year phase, demonstrating Cardiff's commitment to maintaining and strengthening a systemic, equitable and participatory approach to children's rights education over time.

2. Place: Urban Planning & Design

Urban planning and design in Cardiff consistently uses children's lived experience and rights-based methods to create safe, inclusive, and playful neighbourhoods, so children can move, meet, and play across our city.

Overview and Intent

Cardiff's story of Place is, at its heart, a story about reshaping the built environment so that children are not an afterthought in urban design, but a central consideration in how the city is planned, developed, and experienced. From the outset, the ambition was clear: to create a city where children's rights to play, safety, movement, participation, health, and belonging were systematically embedded into the places they use every day.

Over the 2023–2026 period, this priority moved from early experimentation and pilot engagement into a period of policy consolidation, deeper partnership working, and the beginnings of visible community-level change. What has emerged is a more coherent, rights-based approach to planning - one that increasingly joins up policy, evidence, design, and children's lived experiences into a consistent model for creating a child-friendly city.

Story of Change (2023-26)

We began to realise…

When Cardiff undertook its early community mapping and engagement work in 2022–2023, involving more than 700 children and young people, it surfaced something important: children consistently described experiences of place that adults had not fully appreciated.

"Sometimes it feels like places are designed for adults, and we're just told where we can't go."

These early insights challenged long-held assumptions about how children use public space. They highlighted gaps in play access, safe movement, social spaces, and inclusive design - especially for older children, girls, and those in higher-density neighbourhoods.

This early evidence became the catalyst for shifting from isolated engagement activity to a more strategic, system-wide approach.

At this point we wondered…

What would it look like if children's rights were not *invited in* to planning on a project-by-project basis, but were *designed in* at the policy level, shaping how Cardiff grows over the next decade?

This question drove a major turning point: the integration of a standalone Play Policy into the Cardiff Local Development Plan (LDP 2021–2036), supported by forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance.

For the first time, play - and by extension, children's rights - became a statutory planning consideration with long-term influence. This was a shift from one-off consultations toward embedding a children's rights approach into the city's development framework.

We decided to change course…

With policy foundations in place, focus shifted from "engagement as activity" to "engagement as evidence for decision-making". Cardiff moved into a more structured phase of:

- **Building system capacity** through officer and elected member training, Urban95 Leadership Academy participation, and increased child rights literacy across planning, parks, and transport services.
- **Deepening partnerships** with Cardiff University and Atkins Realis, co-creating robust tools such as place plans, mapping methodologies, HerParks research, and a child-friendly design framework.
- **Developing citywide frameworks** such as **Vision for Play**, strengthening cross-departmental alignment and providing a shared blueprint for equitable, accessible, community-informed play opportunities.

These shifts ensured that children's voices, spatial analysis, and rights-based design principles increasingly shaped planning and regeneration processes.

We knew we were on the right track when…

By 2025, rights-based planning began to translate into tangible change.

Small-scale yet meaningful neighbourhood improvements - new crossing points, park upgrades, safer routes, and locally influenced environmental enhancements - were delivered by the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team in direct response to children's feedback. These were early but powerful signs that the system was starting to respond in real time to children's lived experiences.

In parallel, over 50 young people contributed to targeted Local Development Plan workshops, strengthening the visibility of children's perspectives in the final stages of policy development.

The **neighbourhood place plans** developed in Llanishen and Grangetown became practical evidence tools, now used in local decision-making conversations, shared with elected members, and influencing regeneration priorities.

And crucially, senior leaders - including cabinet members, planning officers, and cross-service partners - increasingly referenced children's rights in professional discussions, showing that rights-based thinking was becoming routine, not exceptional.

Impact Summary

- Children's rights are now embedded in statutory planning policy through the LDP Play Policy.
- Cardiff's Vision for Play will provide a consistent citywide approach to play.
- Participation is built earlier into planning cycles, not bolted on at the end.
- Children are empowered to shape their environments. Through mapping, workshops, and place plans, children have influenced real changes-such as safer crossings, improved parks, and the design of public spaces.
- Their voices are not just heard, but acted upon, giving them agency in decisions that affect their daily lives.
- Planning, play, and transport services use shared evidence sources, including community mapping data, place plans, Play Sufficiency Assessment data, and academic research.
- Elected member and officer briefings (15+ members trained in 2025) have created political accountability for rights-based design.
- Feedback loops ensure children see how their input leads to action.
- Targeted work has strengthened inclusion for teenage girls (HerParks research), communities with less access to safe play, and young people in high-density or low-green-space areas.
- The system is increasingly attentive to disparities, ensuring that all children-regardless of background-benefit from improvements in urban planning.
- Over 700 Children engaged in mapping.
- Children contributed to place-based workshops, LDP consultations, Grangetown and Llanishen place plans, and HerParks research.
- Children shaped neighbourhood-level regeneration projects.
- Participation colleagues are embedded earlier in design processes, making engagement routine and meaningful.

Voice of the Child

Grangetown to Grow Up In

> Reflecting on the value of their environment, young people noted, "We learned that our homes, streets, schools, playgrounds, parks, and places where we meet and play are really important."
>
> Emphasising their desire for improvement, they added*, "We want to make these places the best they can be so we can enjoy them in future."*

LDP Engagement Report (April 2025)

> When asked if Cardiff is planning the right things for the future, one student responded, *"Yes, because there are lots of green spaces, less pollution and more low-emission transport."*
>
> Following the educational workshops on urban planning, another participant reflected, *"I knew nothing before but now I actually understand what it is and how it affects us."*

Llanishen to Grow Up In

On the topic of environmental safety and gender equity, one participant shared that *"Girls can feel safer when there's more lights in parks."*

Regarding the broader impact of the initiative, a young person suggested, *"If more people knew about children's rights, things would be better all round."*

LDP Grand Council Mapping

When given a hypothetical £10k to spend on improvements, children prioritized infrastructure that supports safety and nature: Zebra Crossings (19.64%), No Car Zones (18.5%), and Benches (17.58%) were the top three choices

When primary school children were asked to allocate £10k specifically to "Fun Places," their top priorities were focused on both structured and natural play: Play Areas (23.31%) and Skate Parks (20.88%) received the highest percentage of the hypothetical budget. Cycle Paths (14.68%) and Natural Play Areas (13.42%) were the next highest priorities.

These insights have directly informed:

- Street design and safer crossings.
- Conversations with the active travel team about independent mobility.
- Park design guidance focusing on social space as well as play
- Earlier stages of planning and engagement workflows.

Partner and System Perspectives

Partners consistently describe a shift in culture:

- Planners now report that play and children's use of space are *routine* considerations.
- Participation colleagues are engaged earlier in design processes.
- Cross-departmental collaboration has increased, linking Play Sufficiency, LDP policy, transport, parks, health and regeneration.
- Academic partnerships have strengthened the evidence base and ensured robust research

Challenges remain - particularly competing land-use pressures, financial constraints, and ensuring engagement reaches diverse groups - but the system increasingly shares a common language and understanding of children's rights in place-based planning.

Reflection and Learning

What Cardiff has learned through this journey is that creating a child-friendly city is not the result of one project or even one policy - it is the cumulative impact of many small shifts across culture, process, and systems.

Key learning points:

- Policy change is essential, but visible impact takes time.
- Engagement must be early, iterative, and inclusive - not one-off.
- Embedding children's rights requires sustained officer confidence and political support.
- Equity must remain central: different groups experience place very differently.
- Rights-based design frameworks help bridge the gap between children's voices and technical planning requirements.

Ready for Sustainability (2026–29)

We are now aligned with the Sustainability Plan's next steps, including:

- Systematic consultation embedded in localities
- Child-friendly Local Development Plan implementation
- Adoption and rollout of Play Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Continued use of design frameworks and community mapping
- Stronger feedback loops showing children how their views influenced decisions

Cardiff now enters the next phase with strong policy foundations, early wins on the ground, and a maturing system that increasingly recognises children as legitimate stakeholders in the design and governance of their city.

3. Participation

Children's views and supporting qualitative data about their experiences are consistently used to inform the design, development and evaluation of policies, services and programmes

Overview and Intent

This priority is about ensuring that children and young people (C&YP) in Cardiff are active participants in shaping the city's policies, services and decisions. It seeks to make participation a routine part of how decisions are made, not a one-off exercise. The aim is to ensure that qualitative data and lived experiences of C&YP consistently inform the design, development and evaluation of council and partner activity.

Participation directly supports Cardiff Council's Well-being Objective to make Cardiff "a great place to grow up" and aligns with the Council's commitments under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. It also underpins the wider ambition of the "Stronger Fairer Greener" strategic framework and Child Friendly City programme, embedding a child rights approach (CRA).

Since accreditation in 2023, the city has strengthened its participation structures and expanded opportunities to include younger children through the Under 11s Social Action Toolkit. Work has focused on quality assurance, developing feedback loops, and using data to identify inequalities in participation through a participation review.

During Year 2, the city focused on strengthening its approach to meaningful engagement by developing a participation framework that sets out a clear demonstration of how the city engages with children and young people. Alongside this, the city designed and delivered a participation review, gathering insights from stakeholders to understand what was working well and where gaps or inconsistencies existed across services. The findings from this review will directly inform the creation of a focused participation review action plan, ensuring that future engagement is more coordinated, inclusive, and impactful.

Children and young people were involved from the outset in shaping the purpose and priorities of participation work across the city. Their feedback through the Grand Council, school workshops, and youth forums informed how this priority links to the wider Child Friendly Cardiff goals. They've helped define what "meaningful participation" looks like, ensuring it is not just consultation, but shared decision-making.

Story of Change (2023-26)

Cardiff has made strong progress in embedding consistent, high-quality participation opportunities for children and young people aged 11–25, with developing work to reach and include under-11s. Participation is now a recognised and valued part of council culture, supported by leadership from both elected members and senior officers.

Young people have been central to driving change, co-developing priorities, sitting on scrutiny and recruitment panels, and shaping policies like the Education Inclusion Strategy, CS Participation Strategy and Local Development Plan. Their involvement has increased both the quality and accountability of decision-making. Youth-led initiatives show a growing culture of shared leadership between young people and professionals.

1. Strengthening Youth Voice and Leadership

Over the first two years of the sustainability plan, the city supported young people to lead and shape Cardiff Youth Council, a city-wide youth forum. This structure provides a platform for young people to raise issues that matter to them, co-design campaigns, and influence citywide priorities. The emphasis has been on youth-led governance, supporting young people to plan and facilitate their own meetings, set agendas, and engage with numerous people, experts and external agencies in a variety of fields.

Young people have demonstrated growing confidence and ownership of these spaces, taking on roles and working collaboratively with these partners to influence change.

2. Representation in Decision-Making

Children have been supported to sit on a range of strategic boards and working groups, ensuring that their voices are represented where key decisions are made. These include committees focused on children and young people, the environment, community and housing, economy and culture and Cardiff's commitment to help leavers of mainstream education to have a place to go, whether that be further education, a job or work experience.

Through structured mentoring and accessible briefing materials, young participants are equipped to contribute meaningfully and report back to their peers. This approach has increased both visibility and influence of children in strategic decision-making.

3. Creating High-Quality Opportunities for Influence

Cardiff has invested in expanding the number and range of opportunities for children to share their views on local and national issues. Between 2023 and 2025, young people contributed to consultations on the Local Development Plan, active travel priorities, city events, and education inclusion. Engagement activities have increasingly used creative and digital approaches, from surveys and online discussions to facilitated workshops, making participation more accessible and appealing.

4. Reviewing and Strengthening System-wide Participation

A major milestone in Year 2 was the development of the Participation Review, which examined participation practice across the council, schools, and partner agencies, including specialist provisions. The review identified good practice, areas for development, and gaps in reach and

consistency. A Participation Review Action Plan will be developed, and delivered collaboratively across departments and partners

The review included six key recommendations to strengthen how children and young people are involved in shaping their city. These focus on increasing awareness and implementation of the Wales National Participation Standards through accessible training and guidance and supporting all organisations to develop clear participation policies and strategies that embed a consistent, rights-based approach. The review also highlights the need to strengthen feedback mechanisms so that young people can clearly see how their input leads to action, supported by creative methods and a central participation log. Greater inclusivity is encouraged through widening engagement with underrepresented groups and ensuring that participation opportunities are accessible to all. Collaboration and shared learning should be enhanced through a citywide network and online hub, enabling organisations to exchange knowledge and good practice. Finally, the review calls for the celebration and recognition of participation success through annual events and communications that highlight the achievements of children, young people, and practitioners, helping to sustain momentum and pride in Cardiff's child rights journey.

The participation review now needs to engage with C&YP as well as look at local systems of participation opportunities. Members of Cardiff Youth Council helped co-design the C&YP participation review survey and along with this the next step is to work at a local level, possibly with school clusters to see what participatory methods, systems or opportunities there are for C&YP to help shape local services.

5. Embedding Evidence and Data through the SHRN Survey

Cardiff continues to promote participation in the School Health Research Network (SHRN) survey, supporting schools to interpret and use the findings. Nearly 130,000 pupils across Wales, and 11, 514 pupils in Cardiff took part in 2024, providing rich data on well-being, belonging, and voice in education settings. Cardiff specific data has been shared with council officers and used to inform targeted actions around inclusion, mental health, and school engagement. The collaboration with SHRN has enhanced the evidence base for participation, ensuring that young people's lived experiences inform local policy and service improvement.

6. Engaging Children and Young People in Policy Development

Participation has been central to the development of the Education Inclusion Strategy, ensuring that young people's perspectives shape both its priorities and delivery plan.

Children and young people were engaged through focus groups, workshops and on-line to explore barriers to inclusion, experiences of support, and ideas for creating more inclusive school environments. Their insights directly informed draft priorities and are now reflected in the strategy's language and tone. Examples include Education Inclusion Strategy, CS Participation Strategy and the Local Development Plan.

This process modelled good practice in engagement, early involvement, accessible materials, and clear feedback on how contributions shaped the outcome. It also helped strengthen relationships between policy officers, schools, and young participants.

Cardiff Parenting Service - Use of VIG with parents and Parents Plus and Parents First Psychology-led teams

Approach

Video Interaction Guidance is a strength-based approach where we use video to help families to focus on times that interactions are going well, so that they can build on and learn from these moments of positive interaction. VIG is recommended as an evidence-based intervention in the NICE guidelines (for children adopted from care or at risk of going into care). It involves taking video recordings of the parent and child interacting, then the practitioner shares back short clips of the best moments of the interaction with the family, in what is known as a shared review.

In these “shared reviews”, we use the short clips to support the family to reflect on what is going well and support them to mentalise themselves and their children. This process empowers parents to identify their own strengths and working points.

Within Cardiff Parenting Service, including the Parents Plus and Parents First psychology-led teams, Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) is used with parents and babies as a strengths-based approach that focuses on attuned, responsive interactions. By reflecting together on short video clips of positive moments, parents are supported to understand their baby’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, strengthening secure attachment relationships that help children learn about safety and trust. While particularly valuable in the first 1,000 days of life, when early relationships are most influential, VIG recognises that learning happens across all relationships and can benefit families at any stage.

Parents Plus found the parents average Warmth score increased by 4 points, and the average Invasiveness score reduced by 5 points, after use of VIG.

Parents feedback - “My anxiety around my baby has decreased, I am feeling so much more confident as a parent. Because of this, I am enjoying being a mum, something I never thought would happen. The videos have been amazing. Through video you have helped me see how important I am to her and what a good bond we have with one another. You have let me see through the videos how I contribute to my baby feeling happy and contented. And that I am a big part of why she is such a happy baby."

Voice of the infant “I love it when my mum plays with me. She is fun and she loves being with me. She understands me more than anyone else in the world, and that helps me feel safe and loved.”

Impact Summary

- Children supported to lead and run city wide youth forum
- Representation established on multiple strategic decision-making bodies
- 286 High-quality participation opportunities delivered across diverse themes and age groups

- Over 2000 C&YP engaged in participation opportunities
- 6197 Volunteer hours completed through participatory mechanisms
- Comprehensive Participation Review completed and Action Plan in development
- SHRN data used for policy and service design
- Children directly influenced the development of the Education Inclusion Strategy.
- Feedback tracked and mechanisms introduced to increase transparency
- Stronger, more secure parent–child relationships
- Increased parental confidence and reduced anxiety
- Improved emotional availability
- Positive, measurable changes in attachment-related perceptions
- Protective impact for children experiencing adversity

Voice of the Child

Quotes, meeting notes, and survey responses illustrate how children and young people describe feeling heard, respected, and empowered. Their words directly informed new commitments — such as clearer feedback loops, expanded in-person participation, and recognition through volunteering certificates and vouchers. Each example shows how their feedback is translated into action. A few are shown below:

“We know the Council listens, but sometimes we don’t hear back about what happens next.”

Response: Introduced Monthly Matters updates and improved communication on decision timelines.

“It’s good to talk about the city, not just school things. We got to share ideas about buses and green spaces.”

Response: Expanded engagement beyond education to include transport, planning and environment policies.

“We wanted younger children to have a say too, so we helped test the Under 11s Toolkit.”

Response: Co-created the toolkit with youth forum and schools and piloted it in primary schools.

“It feels like adults take us seriously when we share ideas.”

Response: Continued to provide opportunities for children to participate in decision-making and influence service design.

Partner and System Perspectives

Young people have engaged directly with key partners including Citizen Cymru, Children in Wales, and the National Youth Agency among others. Their collaboration has influenced practice across services, promoting joined-up participation across education, health, and social care. They've also strengthened cross-city and international partnerships, for example with Stuttgart and St Helens Youth Councils.

Key partners, including Cardiff Youth Service, Education, Planning, Public Health, and C3SC, have been instrumental in progressing work. Partners describe the approach as "a joined-up model that empowers young people to shape services rather than just consult on them."

Schools have embraced participation through RRSA networks and local democracy days. The Planning and Transport teams have cited CFC participation methods as influencing the Local Development Plan and Active Travel consultations.

Partnership with Cardiff University and Urban95 Academy has strengthened participatory research, while collaboration with the Equalities Team has supported intersectional analysis within the new data dashboard.

Barriers have included a Lack of time, funding, and staff resources, tokenistic or superficial involvement and limited organisational commitment or leadership buy-in.

Reflection and Learning

Children and young people have consistently reflected on what works and what could be improved, asking for more in-person gatherings, better communication, and stronger links to the Welsh Youth Parliament and Senedd Members. Their feedback shapes the design of future participation frameworks and monitoring approaches, ensuring sustainability and continuous improvement.

What worked well:

- Embedding participation within policy and governance structures ensured political visibility and accountability. E.g. development of the Participation Strategy for Cardiff Council and the Children's Services specific participation strategy.
- The Participation Review provided a robust baseline for improvement and helped shape practical action.
- Introducing the Feedback Loop has started to address the UNICEF conditional requirement and increase transparency.

Challenges:

- Reaching under-11s and priority groups that require bespoke and additional support to be heard remains a developing area.
- Feedback processes are still uneven across departments and rely on central coordination.

- Limited resourcing constrains the scale of participation activity.

Learning for the next Sustainability Plan (2026–2029):

- Strengthen participation pathways for primary-aged children and under-represented groups.
- Further improve feedback mechanisms across all directorates with clear accountability.
- Continue developing data dashboards/Padlet for participation monitoring.
- Deliver recommendations from the participation review
- Extend the participation review to look at local school cluster model of voices/forum and systems.

4. Equal & Included

All children are treated with dignity and respect and are free from discrimination

Overview and Intent

All children and young people in Cardiff are treated with dignity and respect and are free from discrimination.

Since the launch of the Child Friendly Cardiff Sustainability Plan, the Equal and Included theme has become the anchor of our city's rights-based work that seeks to address issues of inequality within the city.

Story of Change (2023-26)

Our work across 2023–26 has focused on reducing barriers, challenging discrimination, and creating environments where all children feel they belong.

In education, the development of the Cardiff Education and Inclusion Strategy (2025) represents a major step forward. Co-produced with schools, children, and families, the strategy defines inclusion through belonging, that every learner should feel accepted, respected, and supported to thrive. The strategy is grounded in evidence: attendance and exclusion data, youth justice links, and feedback from pupils and parents who spoke honestly about the challenges they face. It sets out practical actions to strengthen inclusive practice, improve engagement, and ensure the right provision and workforce to meet diverse needs.

Alongside education, the Neurodivergent Friendly City Strategy has expanded inclusion beyond the classroom, helping to build awareness, language, and accountability across services. The work has been informed by young people's lived experiences, reinforcing that accessibility is as much about relationships and attitudes as it is about adjustments.

Cardiff has also continued to lead on gender equity and safety, strengthening links to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Partnership with the council's Women's Network and the period dignity programme has promoted access to products, education, and confidence for girls across all schools. Equality has also been advanced through the leadership programme for underrepresented young people, building pathways into civic and active citizenship roles that reflect the diversity of the city's younger population.

Our ongoing partnership with Our Voice Our Journey has strengthened Cardiff's commitment to gender equity by engaging boys and practitioners in conversations about respect, relationships, and responsibility in schools and communities following a direct request by girls in our earlier work.

The city's equality agenda has broadened further through partnerships with DARPL, Show Racism the Red Card, and Schools of Sanctuary, ensuring that diversity and anti-racism are not peripheral topics but central to how schools, youth services, and communities understand inclusion.

Our partnership with Omidaze Productions has helped pupils learn how Cardiff operates and who makes the decisions that shape their lives by considering a curriculum-based approach. Through creative workshops and performances, children have been able to share their views directly on council priorities, building their confidence as informed and active citizens.

Implementing a national pilot in Cardiff which sees children 5–21 years old being able to access discounted bus travel seeks to address barriers identified in our earlier work and is an important step to improving accessing to leisure, education, training and employment opportunities.

Cardiff Youth Justice Service is taking a reflective and evidence-led approach to addressing disproportionality, using ongoing case-load profiling and deep dives to monitor ethnicity and outcomes. Children and young people's experiences inform this work, alongside a clear action plan to embed a consistent focus on disproportionality across quality assurance, supervision, and workforce development. This work is underpinned by a strong commitment to a Child First approach, rooted in the UNCRC, ensuring fair, inclusive, and rights-respecting practice.

Reasoning

Through this reflection, the focus of Equal and Included has evolved from tackling isolated inequalities to creating equitable systems. Cardiff now approaches inclusion as relational — about how we behave, listen, and make decisions — as much as about policy. The language of rights has been a unifying tool, helping professionals across services see equality not as an optional add-on, but as integral to children's wellbeing and safety.

The Education and Inclusion Strategy symbolises this evolution. It is not simply an education plan; it captures the collective learning of the city on what it means to build belonging. It draws directly from children's voices: their sense that being noticed, respected, and represented matters as much as academic success. That insight has informed practice across other sectors — from transport planning to play and health — embedding a shared understanding that inclusion is everyone's business.

Voice of the Child

"Sometimes rules aren't fair for everyone."

Feedback, gathered through education inclusion engagement

"We want to see people like us leading."

Young people's calls for diverse representation and leadership opportunities

"Being included means someone noticing when you're struggling."

Feedback from pupil on the focus of early identification of need, trauma-informed practice, and wellbeing support across schools and services.

"If the city is for everyone, everyone should feel safe being themselves."

Insight from child relating to work on neurodiversity.

"It made me think about how much respect matters."

Partnerships and Systems perspective

Progress under the Equal and Included priority has been supported by strong partnership working across council services and with external organisations, reflecting a shared commitment to children's rights. Education, Equalities, Youth Services, Planning, Transport, Public Health, and Children's Services have worked alongside partners such as DARPL, Schools of Sanctuary, Show Racism the Red Card, Our Voice Our Journey, Omidaze Productions, and the Council's Women's Network to embed inclusion across policy and practice. These partnerships have helped move equality work from isolated initiatives to more coordinated approaches, with Child Friendly Cardiff playing a key convening role despite ongoing capacity pressures.

Reflections and Learning

This phase of work has reinforced that meaningful progress on equality and inclusion depends on sustained system-wide learning, shared accountability, and the ongoing involvement of children and young people. We have learned the importance of embedding inclusion not only through strategies, but through how impact is reviewed, monitored, and refreshed over time.

Governance through the Cardiff Inclusion Board provides an opportunity to ensure that children and young people are involved at key points in reviewing and strengthening the Education and Inclusion Strategy, alongside wider strategic work such as the Education 2035 strategy refresh. Engaging children and young people in reviewing initiatives that affect their daily lives, including the national discounted bus travel scheme, the impact of the Take Your Place leadership programme for young people from ethnic and working-class backgrounds will be important in understanding lived experience and equity of access.

We know we didn't get everything right for example schools told us that the work to engage pupils in work to set Council priorities is important but needed longer lead in time and more support for teachers which will be considered for the next steps of this work.

Our learning also highlights the need to strengthen intersectional use of data, embed inclusion measures consistently across service plans and dashboards, and review the impact of targeted work, including with boys, to inform future approaches. Moving forward, we will focus on building sustainable partnerships and curriculum-based approaches that empower children, address outcome gaps, and support long-term cultural change across the city.

Conclusion

This Story of Change shows that Cardiff is making real progress in becoming a city where children's rights shape how decisions are made, services are designed, and places are created. Across education, participation, planning and inclusion, children and young people are increasingly recognised not just as service users, but as rights-holders whose voices and experiences matter.

Over this period, children's rights have moved from aspiration to action. They are being embedded in policy, reflected in professional practice, and increasingly visible in the systems that shape daily life across the city. This progress has been driven by partnership working, political leadership, and a shared commitment to listening to children and responding to what they tell us.

The report is also clear that challenges remain. Inequality, rising need, and pressure on public services mean that a child rights approach is more important than ever. Embedding rights requires sustained leadership, accountability, and continued investment in skills, relationships, and participation.

As Cardiff enters the next phase, this Story of Change provides a strong foundation for the future. By continuing to place children's rights at the heart of decision-making, Cardiff reaffirms its commitment to being a city where all babies, children and young people are treated with dignity, respected, and supported to thrive.

Appendix 1.1
Children's Rights in Action - Impact Studies

The 'Children's Rights in Action' narratives included in this appendix are not individual real-life case studies. They are anonymised, composite impact studies developed from observations, engagement, and evidence gathered through Child Friendly Cardiff's work with children and young people. Each narrative brings together shared experiences, themes, and outcomes to reflect the collective impact of rights-based practice across different settings and priority areas. Names and identifying details are fictional, but the experiences described are grounded in real work taking place in Cardiff and are intended to illustrate how children and young people experience the city's children's rights approach in practice.

Children's Rights in Action
Rights Respecting Schools Award

Amara

When Amara joined her new school in Cardiff, she was nervous about starting somewhere unfamiliar. In the country she lived before, she had never learned about children's rights and felt her voice didn't matter.

From her first day, things were different. A welcoming group of pupils — some speaking her first language — made her feel safe and at home. She quickly learned about her rights in lessons, assemblies, and across school life.

Encouraged to use her voice, Amara joined pupil groups, took part in staff interviews, and helped shape school policies through a rights lens. Over time, she also began to speak up for others — especially new arrivals — and shared ideas with the council on how to make the city more welcoming for young people.

Within a year, Amara's confidence had flourished. She felt a strong sense of belonging in a school community built on respect and equality, where her views were valued and she had the power to shape her school, her city, and her education.

Children's Rights in Action

Place - Urban Planning & Design

Amina

Amina often felt unsafe in her local park. The space was dominated by boys playing football, and there was little shelter or seating for others.

She joined a focus group run by Cardiff University and Child Friendly Cardiff, sharing her experiences and ideas. She helped co-design improvements like better lighting, inclusive play areas, and sheltered spaces.

Amina now feels proud seeing her ideas reflected in park plans. She feels heard, valued, and empowered—knowing she is helping make Cardiff more welcoming for girls like her.

Mia

When Mia, a 15-year-old secondary school student, first heard about the Local Development Plan, she thought it was "just for politicians." In her workshop, she realised the plan would decide how her city looked and felt by the time she was an adult. Mia spoke passionately about bus services: how expensive tickets stop her and her friends from getting to after-school activities. She also highlighted the lack of safe cycle routes in her neighbourhood.

For the first time, she felt decision-makers were really listening. After the session, Mia said: "It feels like we've actually got the power to make Cardiff better for us and for the kids who come after us."

Children's Rights in Action

Participation

El

El joined Cardiff Youth Council at 13. At first, they weren't very confident and found it hard to speak up. But through workshops, training, and encouragement from other young people, they gradually began to take part in debates and projects.

By 16, El had developed a real passion for the environment. They built confidence through subgroup work, public speaking, and projects tackling climate change and plastic pollution. They also joined scrutiny meetings, the Young Interviewers and Young Inspectors programmes, and represented Cardiff at a national environmental summit, where they co-led discussions with scientists.

Over time, El became one of CYC's most dedicated volunteers, contributing hundreds of hours and showing how participation can transform a shy teenager into a confident leader and advocate for children's rights.

Idris

Idris has a physical disability and worried he wouldn't be able to join in cycle training at school. When he explained this to the road safety team, they worked with Pedal Power to provide an adapted trike and ensured staff were trained to support his needs.

Taking part alongside his classmates was a turning point for Idris. He was no longer watching from the sidelines but learning the same skills as his friends. Cycling with them gave him independence, freedom, and a feeling of belonging. For Idris, the experience showed that when services listen and adapt to children's needs, inclusion becomes possible.

Sara

Sara has additional learning needs and sometimes felt left out when adults made decisions about the services she used. When the council advertised for a new manager in the Independent Travel Training team, Sara and a group of pupils who had completed the training were invited to help with the recruitment.

She listened to presentations, asked questions, and filled in candidate evaluation forms after each interview. For Sara, this was the first time she had taken part in such an important decision. She felt her opinion genuinely mattered. Knowing that her input helped to select the person who would support future pupils gave her pride and a new sense of confidence in her own voice.

Children's Rights in Action

Equal & Included

Sian

Sian used to find some school lessons uncomfortable. Jokes and comments from boys in her class often went unchallenged, and she felt frustrated that girls weren't always treated with respect. This year things changed. Her school introduced classroom discussions on gender equity and positive masculinity, and boys from her year group took part in a workshop led by Matt Brown, founder of *She Is Not Your Rehab*.

Sian noticed an immediate difference. Male teachers began challenging disrespectful behaviour when it happened, and boys in her class spoke with more thought and understanding. Sian feels her school is serious about equality. She now feels more confident in lessons, enjoys better relationships with her peers, and sees her male classmates as allies in making the school a more respectful place for everyone.

Aled

Aled always wanted to cycle to school with his friends, but his family couldn't afford a bike. During cycle training at school, he shared this with the instructors, who fed it back to the council team. Soon after, Aled received a bike through the ReCYCLE scheme, which provides refurbished bikes to young people who need them.

Now, Aled rides to school most days, gaining independence and confidence. He feels proud that his voice - a simple comment during training - helped spark a solution that has supported over 100 children across the city. For Aled, being listened to meant not only getting a bike, but also being part of a city where young people's ideas can lead to real change.

Sita

Sita often found public spaces overwhelming. Visiting the library with her family could be stressful - she never knew what the space would be like, and sometimes the noise and bustle made her anxious.

Things began to change when the library introduced sensory nooks and borrowed backpacks designed with neurodivergent young people. Sita used a sensory backpack on her visits, which gave her tools to stay calm and focused. Before her first trip back, she also explored the new virtual tour online, so she knew exactly what to expect when she arrived.

Now, Sita looks forward to her library visits. She enjoys choosing books in a calmer, more welcoming environment, and her family no longer worries that the experience will be overwhelming. For Sita, these small changes have made a big difference - turning the library into a place where she feels included, safe, and able to thrive.

Mohammad

Before joining the Take Your Place leadership programme, Mohammad didn't see himself as a leader. He rarely saw role models who looked like him in positions of influence and wasn't sure how he could make his voice heard.

Through the programme, run by Common Wealth Theatre, Mohammad developed new skills in communication and leadership. He built friendships, found confidence in speaking up, and met role models from his own community who inspired him to believe that leadership was possible.

Since completing the course, Mohammad has become involved in two new community projects — a youth-led campaign on climate action and a local cultural festival. These opportunities have given him a platform to contribute and to see himself as part of Cardiff's future.