

Case Studies 2023-2024



Contents

Coed-Y-Dderwen becomes first English Medium Primary School in Merthyr Tydfil to achieve Siarter Iaith Silver Award.....	3
Merthyr Primary School Rugby World Cup 2023.....	4
Another Busy Recruitment Fair	5
Merthyr Pride 2023.....	6
Ensuring Value for Money for Residents and Visitors	7
Fly-Tipping Cases lead to Culprits in Court.....	8
Business and Education Together Partnership	9
Developing our Understanding of Performance.....	10
Scrutiny Changing to improve Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Core Governance	11
Decarbonisation Plan Given the Go-Ahead.....	12
Developing a Digital Strategy	13
New Improved Hub opened in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	14
Apprenticeship Development Day	15
Making Merthyr Tydfil CBC a Healthy Organisation	16
Vapes – Protecting children and preventing illegal sales	17
Playground Plans Begin to Become Reality	18
Foster Care Merthyr Tydfil	19
Team Around the Family	20














Coed-Y-Dderwen becomes first English Medium Primary School in Merthyr Tydfil to achieve Siarter Iaith Silver Award

Merthyr Tydfil Council is committed to supporting Welsh Government’s aspiration to have one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. Siarter Iaith is a Welsh Government initiative that encourages schools to promote the use of Welsh language, improving skills and inspiring children to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives. The Charter provides a framework for schools to follow in order to achieve the award at three possible levels; Bronze, Silver or Gold.

Everyone at Coed-y-Dderwen Primary School worked together as a team; teachers, support staff, governors, and pupils, to smash the targets set for the Silver Award. The Central South Consortium conducted an assessment and presented the school with Silver, making history by becoming the first English Medium Primary School in Merthyr Tydfil to achieve this prestigious award.

Mrs Sarah Townsin, Headteacher, said: “I am extremely proud of our whole school community in achieving the Siarter Iaith Silver Award. Our well established Criw Cymraeg led the assessment day and were quoted as being ‘inspirational’ and a key driver in raising standards of Welsh in Coed-Y-Dderwen. Work has already started on our Gold Award journey! We aim to inspire the children of Coed-Y-Dderwen to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives with confidence, enjoyment and in the wider community. Welsh is high on our school improvement priorities and this award celebrates the progress we have made so far. As a school community, we are delighted.”

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

						
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Merthyr Primary School Rugby World Cup 2023

The Council continues to support people in our community to be active and maintain their physical and mental health and well-being. As part of our work with the new curriculum, Mr Craig Lynch (the Deputy Head Teacher at Pantyscallog Primary School) identified the Rugby World Cup in France as being a great way to engage pupils; and proposed the Council run its own Schools Rugby World Cup. This would offer an opportunity for Class 10 – children aged 8 and 9 (Years 4&5) - to plan, organise and run their own event.













Mr Lynch explained “From a health and well-being perspective; the main benefit would be increased physical activity, with the tournament having a positive impact upon the wellbeing of everyone involved”. All players would be developing their rugby skills in a competitive and structured environment; with all players and schools expected to follow rules and guidelines to encourage fair play and sportsmanship”.

All schools have an equal chance to be crowned ‘World Cup Champions of Merthyr 2023’ (– what a great achievement!) Pupils prepares for the tournament by communicating with schools/organisations, gaining sponsorship, ordering equipment and managing a budget. They have developed these real-life skills during the planning stage of the project, and it has been wonderful to see them thrive and shine in a different context.

20 primary schools took part. Each school was allocated a country to represent from the World Cup 2023 in France. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 represented their schools, with one of the rules being there must be at least one girl on the pitch at all times. The Schools World Cup Event took place in October 2023 at the Wern rugby ground thanks to the support of Merthyr RFC. New Directions Recruitment sponsored a t-shirt for all competing schools in the colours of the country. Also, Valleys Education generously sponsored t-shirts for all Class 10 event organisers; with Active Merthyr sponsoring trophies for the winners, and medals for all participants.

Ex Wales Rugby Captain, Paul Thorburn attended and presented the winning trophies to the champions. Spectators were welcomed to attend the event; and families were encouraged to come and support their school/countries.

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

						
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Another Busy Recruitment Fair











When reviewing the findings of our Residents Survey; we noted a high number of residents responding indicated that thought it was important the Council offered support to local people to find work. Feedback had also been received from some local employers who told us they sometimes faced challenges when looking to hire people with the skills they needed.

To respond to this feedback, the Council organised its fifteenth Recruitment Fair, in partnership with Merthyr Tydfil Job Centre Plus and hosted at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre. The event took place in October 2023, and was opened by Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil, Councillor Malcolm Colbran. With the support of Communities for Work Plus and Job Centre Plus staff, many local people were able to make applications for employment directly at the event. It was also a great opportunity for local Wilko staff, who were recently made redundant, to attend the event and speak to employers who were looking to fill retail roles.

The event was really positive with almost 500 local people going along to speak with the 25 employers who were there to discuss their current vacancies, take CVs and have a general chat about their employment opportunities.

[Councillor Michelle Symonds, Cabinet Member for Regeneration](#), said: “It’s great to see another successful Recruitment Fair this year! We want to support as many people as possible to enter or get back in to work, so our experts were on hand throughout the day to offer their support and advice on everything from how to apply for jobs, to writing to CVs, to interview techniques. We hope that many successful job applications came as a result of it.”

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

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 ✓	 ✓	 ✓	 ✓	 ✓		 ✓



Merthyr Pride 2023









Merthyr Tydfil Council has been a key member of the Proud Councils partnership formed in 2015 with the aim to improve support offered to LGBTQIA+ staff within local authorities in Wales. Their aims include ensuring that local government across Wales is a visible leader in the field of LGBTQIA+ rights and actively championing LGBTQIA+ inclusion in our communities.

In 2023, in addition to attending Cardiff Pride; partners came together across Merthyr Tydfil to organise the first Merthyr Pride event on Saturday 19th August. The event began with a lively parade through the town centre; and finished at The College, Merthyr Tydfil, which hosted the event.

[Elin M attended the event and told us](#) “This is a really big step forward for Merthyr and honestly, I’m so proud of people in Merthyr for the way they have embraced this first Pride March. The vibe has been really positive - there were way more people than I expected. The free entertainment provided at the College site was fantastic; and LGBTQIA+ or not, everyone joined together in celebrating – people got involved with no judgement and it’s made me really happy. Merthyr people really are the best!”.

Work has already begun on the organisation of Merthyr Pride 2024.

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

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Ensuring Value for Money for Residents and Visitors








The Council regularly reflects on the feedback received from our residents to ensure that the advice and support we offer continues to meet the needs they identify. Over the past 12 months; this feedback has included how people living in Merthyr need continued support to manage the impact on the sustained cost of living crisis.

Officers in our Trading Standards team noted that it can cost around £70 to fill the tank of a mid-sized family car, so it's important for residents to be reassured that they're getting the right amount of fuel that they're paying for.

Using specialist measuring equipment, the Trading Standards team checked a total of 105 pumps for accuracy across the 5 fuel stations in Merthyr Tydfil. All the fuel pumps that were tested were found to be accurate and within the tolerances permitted by law.

Councillor Michelle Symonds, Cabinet Member for Public Protections, said: "The Trading Standards Service sometimes operate as an invisible service, working behind the scenes to ensure that consumers are protected from unfair trading practices. Every day, consumers rely on the accuracy of descriptions and measurement of goods; and our Trading Standards Team are at the forefront of ensuring they are protected and receive what they are paying for."

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

						
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✓	✓	✓	✗	✓		✓



Fly-Tipping Cases lead to Culprits in Court














Having a clean and green environment provides local people with opportunities to stay healthy and fit at low/no cost. When developing the Corporate Well-being Plan, feedback received from residents across all wards in the County Borough showed that they wanted to Council to focus on maintaining our green and open spaces to keep them clean and free from litter and fly-tipping.

In the past 12 months, 25 criminal investigations into fly-tipping have led to 19 cases referred for prosecution, with six Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of £400 paid and fines of almost £1,500 ordered. A further seven cases await a date to be heard.

Councillor Michelle Symonds, Cabinet Member for Public Protection said: “It’s great to see that people are being brought to justice for this blatant disrespect for our beautiful countryside. The Council’s Public Protection team is doing a great job in responding to public concerns, and cracking down on fly-tipping. These successful prosecutions are testament to their hard work and determination. The team will now be doing targeted enforcement operations, using covert cameras in known fly-tipping hot spots.

Cllr Symonds continued, “I’d like to take this opportunity to remind members of the public of the importance of checking for waste carrier licenses when using third parties to dispose of excess waste. You should always ask to see their license and make a record of the company name, vehicle registration and the name of the person taking your waste. Unfortunately, we see time and time again waste collected by third parties being fly tipped, resulting in the waste owner being investigated and prosecuted. Don’t fall victim to bogus waste removal businesses – always check they are licensed, or you could end up with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £300, or even face criminal prosecution.”

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

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Business and Education Together Partnership














Our engagement work with residents continues to confirm the need for the Council to focus on providing high quality education opportunities for local children and young people (dig out data from Residents Survey and insert here). As part of this work, the Council is focusing on providing the right support and opportunities to better connect young people with the world of work.

The Business Education Together Partnership (BETP) in Merthyr Tydfil aims to raise the aspirations of our children and young people. We recognise as a Council that it is only through collaboration and partnership working, with targeted resources and support, that we can raise our outcomes and enable people to grow and reach their potential. The partnership came together to formally launch its approach at The College, Merthyr Tydfil in January 2024. The launch offered an opportunity for over 80 businesses (local, national, and international) to join BETP members to help inspire our learners to ‘be the best that they can be’.

The BETP Partnership had already engaged in a range of events and supported schools in their curriculum approaches. During the launch, schools presented their journey, and our partners talked about the mutual benefits of engaging in this increasingly important agenda.

Schools, businesses and employers had the opportunity to shape our next steps through some focused discussions and engagement opportunities. The BETP’s work is targeted at all young people, from the age of three years and over. Our pathways into work colleagues, as well as Careers Wales and The College, Merthyr Tydfil are key partners in supporting young people into higher and further education as well as the workplace. Further events are planned in the New Year, including Welsh skills and employment, International Women’s Week, as well as the start of mentoring programmes.

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

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Developing our Understanding of Performance












At Merthyr Tydfil CBC, we aim to work together to achieve the best outcomes for people in Merthyr Tydfil by offering services that meet identified need. This means we must be clear about what we are trying to achieve and can measure the impact our services have. Feedback from an audit undertaken in 2023 identified opportunities to develop its performance management and quality assurance arrangements so we can better understand how the Council is performing.

An [Audit Wales report](#) found “that performance information provided to senior leaders does not generally enable them to understand the perspective of service users and the outcomes of the Council’s activities; and that this could restrict their ability to understand the impact of the Council’s services and policies”. This report was received and initially reviewed by the Council’s Corporate Management Team before it was reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee who reviewed its findings and questioned both Audit Wales representatives and officers regarding the recommendations made and the plans to address these; including querying timescales for activities and queries around data quality, as well as seeking to identify areas where best practice had been noted so this could be reviewed as part of the development process.

The Council has now committed to:

- improve the way in which information on the perspective of the service user is presented to senior leaders so they can better understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users;
- review and update information on progress towards outcomes to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and its intended outcomes; and
- check the quality and accuracy of the data it provides to senior leaders to ensure arrangements are robust.

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

						
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Scrutiny Changing to improve Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Core Governance













Overview and Scrutiny (more commonly known as 'scrutiny') is an important tool and a key component of the Council's governance framework. A lot of focus has been placed on improving the council's scrutiny function over the last 12 months to improve the quality and impact of scrutiny following a number of recommendations made by our key regulators, including Audit Wales and Estyn. A project plan outlining improvement activities was collaboratively devised; a key focus of this being a review of the ways in which scrutiny members could explore topics (e.g.) more focus has been placed on holding wider scrutiny activities such as task and finish groupwork, workshops and site visits.

Some of the workshops undertaken in 2023/24 have included other public bodies - South Wales Police, the Health Board, the Central South Consortium (CSC), schools etc. Holding partners to account was a previous weakness of scrutiny; however, the changes introduced to scrutiny have helped broaden the scope to help provide constructive and critical-friend challenge and enhance the level of accountability by working more collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders.

Additionally, quarterly technical meetings involving key participants have been introduced to ensure that scrutiny members are given the opportunity to have pre-decision items included in their work programmes **before** they are presented to Cabinet. This provides scrutiny an opportunity to challenge any information or decision(s), enabling them to address any concerns on behalf of their constituents before key decisions are made.

In 2024/2025; those participating in the Council's scrutiny process will be offered an opportunity to take part in a self-evaluation exercise to review the impact of the changes made; and to identify future focus areas for further improvements

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

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Decarbonisation Plan Given the Go-Ahead

The Council's commitment to delivering on our sustainable development duty has been further reinforced in 2023 as our Decarbonisation Plan 2023 – 2030 was adopted by Full Council. This is an important step forward, and responds directly to feedback we received both when setting our corporate well-being objectives; and via our Residents Survey responses.











Councillor Michelle Symonds, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Public Protection, with a responsibility for decarbonisation, said: "As a Council, we see carbon reduction and climate change as key areas for action. We are already working towards becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, and are now in the early stages of delivering our first Decarbonisation Plan".

The Council has several projects planned or underway, including the refurbishment of Pen Y Dre High School to net zero carbon standard; an innovative project to develop a private wire network, working in collaboration with the NHS to utilise the power generated by the solar panels at Pen y Dre High School; adding more electric vehicles to our vehicle fleet and further development of electric charging infrastructure; and exploring options for low carbon heating schemes.

Cllr Symonds continued: "Working towards this plan will have huge benefits for Merthyr Tydfil, with the potential for a cleaner, greener, and more affordable energy for our communities. The reduction in carbon emissions and improved air quality will bring a knock-on benefit for health and the wider environment. There's also the potential to reduce fuel poverty, supporting our communities and developing the green economy and green jobs for the area."

To see the plan visit the dedicated Decarbonisation page on our website: merthyr.gov.uk/decarbonisation

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

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Developing a Digital Strategy

Digital technology is key to delivering a wide range of Council services in a more economic, efficient and effective way, is also an important means of councils delivering their wellbeing objectives and carrying out sustainable development. Following an audit undertaken by Audit Wales in 2023, a number of weaknesses were found in the Council's strategic approach to digital. The auditors report identified the Council had no Digital Strategy in place, and this would lead the Council unable to identify and any assess resource implications of its approach to digital over the short and longer term.

Following consideration of this report at the **Governance and Audit Committee** in January 2024, Committee Members noted a need for the Council to develop its Digital Strategy as a priority action. A number of queries were raised including what the proposed approach to addressing the report's recommendation would be and what the timeline for completion of the Strategy was. Challenge around accountability for development of the Strategy would look like were asked; and whether a Lead Officer had been identified to co-ordinate the development of the Digital Strategy. Issues including the cost and capacity implications were also explored by Committee Members.

A report was also requested by Corporate Support & Resources Scrutiny; Scrutiny Members queried the delay in developing the Digital Strategy, with a number of risks identified should development be further delayed. Scrutiny Members re-enforced the need to listen to community feedback and ensure key communications remain available both digitally and via other methods (e.g.) face-to-face to prevent exclusion. Officers attending confirmed a working group had now been set-up to drive the development process and scrutiny would maintain oversight of this to ensure the recommendation was fulfilled.

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

						
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New Improved Hub opened in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre

A new Town Centre Hub has been opened in Merthyr Tydfil's Town Centre. This facility is a collaboration of public services from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, designed to meet housing needs as early as possible to prevent people from reaching an urgent crisis point.




There are many reasons why people become homeless and often the reasons start long before being in rent arrears or being served with an eviction notice. The Hub works to support people to tackle root causes of the potential risks of homelessness before the point of crisis, working in a creative, holistic, and trauma-informed approach. This has been achieved through the partnership working of two services: Housing & Employability.

Thanks to funding from Central Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, along with additional funding secured through Welsh Government's Housing Support Grant, a new, larger Hub is now located in St Tydfil's Shopping Centre and welcomes the addition of Social Services and Benefits teams to upskill and empower the community toward independence.

Councillor Michelle Symonds, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Public Protection, said: "Thanks to the commitment and hard work of the all the staff involved, they have developed a fantastic forward-thinking service to support the community. The Hub is in the heart of the town centre so we hope this new location will allow more people to conveniently pop in to meet our knowledgeable and friendly staff".

If local people would like to find out more or feel they need support, advice, or guidance, or are simply looking for training opportunities to take up, they are encouraged to stop by – we think they'll be very glad they did!

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

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Apprenticeship Development Day














Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council held its first Apprentice Development Day for our 2023 cohort of apprentices. Events were held in the Civic Centre in December, where our new group of apprentices had the chance to meet with both His Worship the Mayor and apprentices previously recruited by the Council.

The groups of 2023 apprentices had the chance to listen to presentations by existing Council apprentices about how their journey through the Apprenticeship Programme has been; and what they're up to now. It was fantastic to listen to our apprentices both new and existing about how excited they are to learn new skills, gain a qualification and how beneficial the Apprenticeship Programme has been in providing career opportunities for them.

Luned Francis joined the Council as a Data and Business Analytics apprentice in 2021, Luned told us “I would recommend anyone who is looking for a career change or has just left school to take up an apprenticeship. It’s an amazing opportunity to develop your skills and knowledge and a great introduction to your new career.” Luned has now completed her initial apprenticeship and has progressed on to start an MSc in Data Science.

Brandon Burnell works as a Parks apprentice and is studying to achieve a Level 2 in Horticulture. Brandon told us “I used to do volunteering before I saw the apprenticeship advertised so I knew the area very well and felt completely at ease. I really enjoy the practical side and have been able to plant trees, double dig flower beds and use heavy duty machinery. I’m learning so much!”

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

						
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 **Apprenticeships**
at








Making Merthyr Tydfil CBC a Healthy Organisation

To drive the Council forward, it's vital to have a Human Resource strategy which details the organisations overall plan for managing its workforce to align with its organisational goals. The [Healthy Organisation Strategy](#) has been designed to set the direction for key areas of Human Resources (HR). The Council recognises and values that our people are our most important asset in achieving our organisational goals. The Strategy has been broken down into 6 key themes:

- **Skills and Development:** committing to ensuring our workforce is highly skilled and can develop to their full potential;
- **Culture:** committing to ensuring our culture is one of positivity and continuous improvement;
- **Attraction and Retention:** committing to ensuring the Council is an employer of choice, attracting and retaining a diverse workforce;
- **Leadership and Management:** committing to ensure our leaders model out values, and inspire and motivate others;
- **Health and Well-being:** committing to ensuring our workplace enhances the health, well-being and happiness of our staff; and
- **Performance Management:** committing to ensuring each employee's performance and potential is managed and nurtured.

Before its approval, the Strategy document was scrutinised by the Corporate Support and Resources scrutiny who explored elements such as what support was available around mental health for Council staff; including the accessibility and identifiability of the trained mental health first aiders; whilst exploring the deliverability of these commitments in the changing financial climate. The Healthy Organisations Strategy was subsequently presented to Full Council; and was approved in readiness for it to be immediately implemented.

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

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 ✓	 ✓	 ✓	 ✓	 ✓		 ✓



Vapes – Protecting children and preventing illegal sales














Vaping has become a national problem. With the attractive packaging and flavours, children are accessing vapes and there are also issues with the appearance of ‘pop up’ vape shops which have become prevalent across the UK. Although these types of shops sell legal food products and some legal vapes, it is often the case that illegal vapes are sold which are concealed somewhere on or off the premises.

The growth in the vaping products market has increased from what was originally a tool for smoking cessation into a lifestyle item. Unfortunately, the rise in children accessing the product has led to national concerns; with a National Survey for Wales identifying **6%** of students surveyed in Merthyr Tydfil smoke at least weekly; and **31%** of the surveyed students had tried e-cigarettes - both figures being higher than the national average.

Significant work has been undertaken by the Council’s Trading Standards team in combating children accessing vapes and the sale of illegal vapes. This work includes conducting test purchasing and providing advice and guidance to business premises. Between April and December 2023, over 40 information packs have been provided to businesses selling nicotine-based products with 7 test purchases taking place - with 4 cases of formal action taking place. Significant impact has been made through various operations conducted. Operation Thailand resulted in a closure of a store following an investigation by Trading Standards. In November 2023, a store on Brecon Road was issued with a three-month closure order at Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates Court following an investigation by Trading Standards. The court heard that large groups of children had been visiting the area purchasing vapes resulting in increased anti-social behaviour in the area, as well as the criminal offences of selling illegal vape products.

The investigation found illegal vapes seized from the shop on two separate occasions. The vapes were found to not be compliant with the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, resulting in the closure order being issued under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

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 ✓	 ✓	 ✓	 ✓	 ✓		 ✓

Cllr Michelle Symonds, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Public Protection stated: “Once again, the Council has concluded a successful investigation against a local business where concerns were realised. We will look to take similar action against any other business within our County Borough that trades in illegal goods and sells age-restricted products to children.”











Playground Plans Begin to Become Reality

Local residents had raised the issue of some of the playground areas across the County Borough; raising concerns about the condition and safety of some of these. This feedback confirmed what Council data told us - that of the 51 fixed play areas throughout Merthyr Tydfil that the Council manages, a number of these were coming to the end of their useful life and were in need of refurbishment. To address this, Full Council agreed a capital spend of £518,000 per year over a five-year period, enabling the refurbishment of between five and seven playgrounds per year for five years; an investment of over £2.5m.

Councillor David Hughes, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, said: “This Council recognises the importance of play for the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and for the physical, social, mental, and emotional benefits it gives them, so this investment has been a priority for us. I’m delighted to see these plans come to fruition, with Moy Road, Prospect Place and Edwardsville playgrounds recently completed and works on Thomastown Park underway. With the rest of the playground due to be completed in, we are well on our way to giving the children of Merthyr Tydfil the improved, modern playgrounds they deserve.”

Sites are independently inspected and confirmed by qualified council officers, then prioritised based on safety and the condition of equipment. This is a rolling work programme with another five sites being renewed each year, so in addition to the work already completed at Edwardsville, Aberfan and prospect Place; and work at Thomastown Park currently underway, work will begin on a further five playground renovations will be started after April 2024.

How does this contribute to people’s well-being?

						
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Foster Care Merthyr Tydfil

There are more than 7,000 children in the care system in Wales, but only 3,800 foster families. In Merthyr Tydfil County Borough; there are currently 83 children and young people in foster care; and we need more foster carers to ensure that all our children have the care and support they deserve.

Foster Wales - the national network of 22 Welsh local authority fostering teams - set out with the bold aim of recruiting over 800 new foster families by 2026, to provide welcoming homes for local children and young people. Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil has joined the new campaign, '**bring something to the table**,' utilising their greatest asset – current foster carers – to share realistic experiences of foster care and explore the small but significant human attributes people possess that can make the world of difference to a young person in care.

Foster Wales spoke with 100+ people to develop the campaign– including foster carers, social workers, teachers, members of the public, and care leavers. The responses from these groups highlighted three key things stopping potential carers from enquiring: (1) A lack of confidence in their skills and ability to support a child in care; (2) The belief that fostering doesn't fit with certain lifestyles; and (3) Misconceptions around the criteria to become a carer.

Armed with this knowledge, Foster Wales has drawn on real stories of carers in Wales to show that local authority fostering is flexible, inclusive, and comes with extensive training and professional development opportunities. [Joanne Llewellyn](#), Head of Children's Services in Merthyr said "We have incredible foster carers here in Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil, who support our

children by offering their experience, skills, empathy and compassion. It's only with the dedication of our wonderful foster carers that we can ensure that all local children who need it, have a welcoming/safe place to call home.

Foster Wales Merthyr is a very close-knit community, and the team around our foster carers always go over and above to ensure that you have the support you may need, as well as access to local knowledge, and a brilliant learning and development package. This is all provided so you can help children stay in their own local community, close to friends, their school, and everything they hold close".

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

						
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Team Around the Family






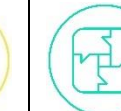

The Council and Barnardo's have extended their commitment to providing prevention support to local families via the Early Help Hub (EHH). This new agreement ensures the service will continue beyond 2026, giving much needed Team Around the Family support to families who have been affected by poverty, health, educational, relationship and parental challenges.

Since April 2022, **318** families have accessed the offer, receiving an assessment through the Early Help Hub to look at their individual needs, then being allocated a Barnardo's keyworker to ensure the right help and support is provided at the right time.

Councillor Julia Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Social Services said "The Early Help Hub ensures families have their voices heard and have more control over what support they can access to improve their circumstances. The support plan is developed with the family, ensuring they have a say every step of the way. We are proud to say that **92% of families** who have accessed the support have reported vast improvements when they leave the service. This includes **164** family members seeing an improvement in their financial situation, and **268** seeing improvements in their mental emotional wellbeing. The statistics really do speak for themselves."

Team Around the Family is just one of the packages of support on offer through our Early Help Hub, who have overall supported **2714** referrals since April 2022. **One of the families who accessed the service shared their experience with us** "I would like to say a massive thank you to the key worker for supporting me through the hardest time of my life. With the help and support from the service I was able to finally get my life back on track. I am much better now mentally from all the support I have received."

How does this contribute to people's well-being?

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