Solving Bigger Problems

Identifying the Right People to Help

**Objective:** How to identify larger community or school issues, understand the roles of Cardiff Council cabinet members and public services, and contact the right decision-makers to help with your concerns.

**Who Are the Cabinet Members and the Leader of the Council?**

While local councillors help with problems in specific areas, cabinet members and the leader of the council have bigger jobs that affect the whole city of Cardiff. The leader of the council is like the head of a team, and they choose other councillors to be cabinet members. Each cabinet member is in charge of important areas, like schools, parks, transport, and the environment. If your problem affects lots of people across Cardiff, not just your local area, cabinet members or the leader of the council are the people who can make big decisions and changes that help everyone. They help set goals for the whole city and make sure Cardiff is a great place for all its residents, including children like you!

## Activity:

**Step 1: Identifying the Problem**

Identify a problem that you’ve experiences in Cardiff and you feel might affect children and young people. This could be through class discussion, pupil voice groups, or ideas that came up when working our “How to Change the World” guide or the” UNICEF Outright” Campaign.

**Questions to Discuss**:

* + “What issues are we seeing in our school or neighbourhood that need to change?”
  + “What is a problem that affects many people, not just one or two?”
  + “What’s something we’ve already worked on in class (e.g. littering, school safety, well-being) that still needs attention?”

**Step 2: Who Can Help?**

Once you have worked out what the problem is you want to fix identified, we have to figure out who has the power to help. Below we’ve included a list of all the things the different cabinet members look after. Can you see a cabinet member that might be able to help with your problem?

**Cabinet Members’ Roles**:

* Cabinet Member for **Childrens Services, Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People**
* Cabinet Member for **Housing & Communities**
* Cabinet Member for **Education**
* Cabinet Member for **Climate Change, Strategic Planning & Transport**
* Cabinet Member for **Culture, Sport & Parks**
* Cabinet Member for **Investment & Development**
* Cabinet Member for **Waste, Street Scene & Environmental Services**
* Cabinet Member for **Adult Services and Public Health & Equality**
* Cabinet Member for **Finance, Modernisation & Performance**
* Cabinet Member for **Investment & Development**

**What to do if you’re problem doesn’t really fit with the roles of the cabinet members?**

* **Health Services**: If the problem involves health and well-being, the NHS or local health boards might be the ones to contact.
* **Police Services**: If there are safety concerns, like road safety around the school, the police may need to get involved.
* **The Senedd**: If your problem affects children across all of Wales, like laws about schools, transport or health services, contact your local Member of the Senedd (MS). They work on big decisions that affect everyone in Wales, not just Cardiff.
* **UK Parliament**: If your problem is about war, money, taxes, immigration, contact your local Member of Parliament (MP). They work on big decisions that affect everyone in the UK, not just Wales.
* **Child Friendly Cardiff** – We can help if you don’t know who to contact, if you want advice or support.

**Step 3: Drafting a letter**

* **Activity**: Once students have identified who they need to contact, the next step is to draft a letter that outlines the problem and asks for help.

**Discussion Questions**:

* “What can we say in our letter to make sure they know why this is important?”
* “What can we suggest as a way they can help?”

**Possible Template**:

* **Greeting**: "Dear [Cabinet Member/Public Service Representative],"
* **Introduce yourselves**: "We are students from [school] and we are writing to you because we care about [issue]."
* **Explain the Problem**: "We have noticed that [problem] is affecting our school/community. We believe this is important because [reason]."
* **Action Request**: "We would like to ask what actions are being taken to address this issue and how we can help."
* **Closing**: "Thank you for your time. We look forward to hearing from you."

**Task**: In their groups, students draft a letter or action plan for their issue.

**Step 4: Following Up and Tracking Progress**

When you share your ideas with decision makers like local councillors, Members of the Senedd, or Members of Parliament, it’s important to remember that they may not always be able to help or agree with your suggestions. Sometimes, they have to make decisions based on other information or responsibilities.

But don’t be discouraged! Even if they can’t help or don’t agree, they will still listen to your voice. The most important thing is that you took the time to speak up and share your ideas. Every time you do, you’re helping to make a difference. It’s all part of how democracy works—different people have different opinions, and sometimes it takes time to find the best solutions.

* **Activity**: Once the letters are sent, it’s important to follow up and track whether any changes are happening.

**Questions**:

* “How can we follow up if we don’t get a response?”
* “What can we do if we don’t see any progress?”

**Task**: Discuss how students can stay involved if the problem isn’t solved right away. For example, they could write again, ask for a meeting, or work on a follow-up project to raise awareness.

**Reflection and Discussion**

After completing the activity, reflect as a class on the importance of social action and how working together with decision-makers can lead to positive changes in their school and community.

**Questions**:

* “What did we learn about who can help solve our community problems?”
* “How do you feel knowing that we took steps to solve an important issue?”
* “What’s the next step we can take if we don’t hear back or don’t see change?”