

## Pwyllgor Craffu Dysgu a Sgiliau

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Man Cyfarfod  
**By Zoom**

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Dyddiad y Cyfarfod  
**Dydd Gwener, 9 Chwefror 2024**

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Amser y Cyfarfod  
**2.00 pm**

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I gael rhagor o wybodaeth cysylltwch â  
**Katharine Flanagan-Jones,**  
**Democratic and Scrutiny Support**  
**Officer**

katharine-maria.flanagan-  
jones@powys.gov.uk



Neuadd Y Sir  
Llandrindod  
Powys  
LD1 5LG

Dyddiad Cyhoeddi

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Mae croeso i'r rhai sy'n cymryd rhan ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg. Os hoffech chi siarad Cymraeg yn y cyfarfod, gofynnwn i chi roi gwybod i ni erbyn hanner dydd ddau ddiwrnod cyn y cyfarfod

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### AGENDA

<b>1.</b>	<b>YMDDIHEURIADAU</b>
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Derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb.

<b>2.</b>	<b>DATGANIADAU O DDIDDORDEB</b>
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Derbyn unrhyw ddatganiadau o ddiddordeb gan Aelodau yn ymwneud ag eitemau i'w hystyried yn y cyfarfod.

<b>3.</b>	<b>DATGANIADAU CHWIP Y PLEIDIAU</b>
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Derbyn datganiadau ynglyn â gwaharddiad chwip plaid a gyflwynwyd i Aelod mewn perthynas â'r cyfarfod yn unol ag Adran 78 (3) Mesur Llywodraeth Leol 2001.

(D.S: atgoffir yr Aelodau, dan Adran 78, na all Aelodau sydd wedi derbyn gwaharddiad chwip plaid bleidleisio ar fater gerbron y Pwyllgor.

<b>4.</b>	<b>COFNODION</b>
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Awdurdodi'r Cadeirydd i lofnodi cofnodion y cyfarfodydd blaenorol a gynhaliwyd fel a ganlyn fel cofnodion cywir: 17.11.2023 a 13.12.2023.

(Tudalennau 1 - 20)

<b>5.</b>	<b>CYD-ARCHWILIAD TREFNIADAU AMDDIFFYN PLANT (JICPA)</b>
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Derbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiad ac unrhyw argymhellion gan yr Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru (CIW) yn dilyn Cyd-Archwiliad o'r Trefniadau Amddiffyn Plant a gynhaliwyd yn ystod Hydref 2023.

(Tudalennau 21 - 46)

<b>6.</b>	<b>RHAGLEN WAITH</b>
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Nodi y bydd cyfarfodydd y Pwyllgor ar gyfer y dyfodol wedi'u trefnu fel a ganlyn:

(Tudalennau 47 - 48)

**Myfyrdod y Pwyllgor**

Ar ôl cau'r cyfarfod gofynnir i'r Pwyllgor dreulio 5 i 10 munud yn myfyrio ar y cyfarfod heddiw.

# Public Document Pack

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee Friday, 17 November 2023

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON FRIDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2023

### Present:

**County Councillors:** Lucy Roberts nominated as Chair for this meeting.  
D Bebb, AW Davies, B Davies, D Meredith, G Preston. G D Jones (Vice Chair) arrived late.

**Co-opted Member:** K Chedgzoy, S Davies,

### Cabinet portfolio Holders in Attendance:

County Councillors:

P Roberts, Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys

D Thomas, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation

### Finance Panel Members in attendance for Joint Scrutiny on agenda items 7-9:

County Councillors: P Lewington, E Vaughan, C Walsh, A Jones, J Pugh

**Officers:** Lynette Lovell, Dir of Education and Children's Services. Georgie Bevan, Head of Schools Service, Chris Davies, Interim Service Manager for the Curriculum for Wales and Professional Learning, Jane Thomas Section 151 Officer and Head of Finance, Sarah Quibell, Service Manager for Education Support Services, Mari Thomas, Deputy Head of Finance and Nancy Owen, Finance Manager

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

**County Councillors:** G Thomas (Chair) unable to access the meeting and S McNicholas.

**Co-opted Member:** M Evitts.

**Cabinet Member:** Jackie Charlton.

## 2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

## 4. CURRICULUM FOR WALES

### Background

The 4 purposes of Curriculum for Wales for a shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person which align with Powys' Corporate and Strategic Equity Plan Stronger fairer Greener are:

1. Ambitious, capable learners.
2. Enterprising creative contributors.
3. Healthy confident individuals.
4. Ethical informed citizens.

The Curriculum for Wales framework assist practitioners to develop a more integrated approach to learning. The 6 areas of learning and experience are:

1. Expressive Arts.
2. Health and Well-being.
3. Humanities.
4. Languages, Literacy and Communication.
5. Mathematics and Numeracy.
6. Science and Technology.

The Curriculum for Wales Guidance promotes collaboration and cross disciplinary planning, learning, and teaching both within and across the 6 areas noted above. Within the 6 areas there are 27 mandatory statements of What Matters. These statements ensure a level of consistency in Curriculum design across schools and settings and learners must develop an understanding of all 27 statements.

Most schools in Powys are engaging positively with Curriculum for Wales. Feedback from schools has informed that the professional learning on offer in Powys was of a high quality and easily accessible. Schools are provided with a Blended Professional Learning offer which has included universal bespoke support online and face-to-face training.

Primary and Secondary practitioners in Powys are co-designing a curriculum that would progress with the learner.

In September 2021 Powys launched the Pedagogy Leads Programme from WG funding, who:

1. Share knowledge and experience with Practitioners
2. Plan and facilitate termly networks across the MWEF.
3. Conduct Professional enquiry projects.
4. Facilitating and attending WG National Networks

<b>Points raised by the Panel:</b>	<b>Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.</b>
It was stated that most school are engaging positively with Curriculum for Wales, what would happen to those schools that were not and where would they stand on inspection.	The Schools Service continues to support all schools with the Curriculum for Wales roll-out, through the SIA's ensuring that expectations and requirements on the mandatory elements are met.
What rights do children in Wales have under the Curriculum for Wales to receive lessons through the medium of	Welsh is a mandatory element for the Curriculum for Wales. All schools with be teaching either first or second

Welsh.	language medium of Welsh. Welsh language schools are support through Cwricwlwm yng Nghymru.
What expectations were there for a child to receive all lessons through the medium of Welsh under this new Curriculum	There has been a focus on the literacy element within the Curriculum for Wales, called trans-linguaging. It is an expectation within the Welsh Curriculum that pupils have a right to access that provision which the school are to provide. The Welsh Medium Model of delivery varies between LA's, with bi-lingual schools, Welsh medium, and English medium, however there is that expectation within the skills and cross responsibility skills with Y Gymraeg.
Could translanguaging be explained. Do Welsh Language pupils have to participate in the translanguaging but not for the non-Welsh speakers.	An element within the Curriculum for Wales is cross curricular skills, an element for Welsh and English dependent on the delivery of language of particular settings. The aim of translanguaging element within the new literacy framework is to support learners to become not just bilingual but trilingual and build on the learning across the languages for learners to understand the connections between different languages as they progress through their education.

**5. SECONDARY SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY - CONTINUATION**

<b>Points raised by the Panel:</b>	<b>Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.</b>
Concern raised of pressure on Head Teachers and staff of the Improvement Strategy and the Curriculum for Wales, what support had been input to ensure school staff were not overwhelmed.	The Schools Service are acutely aware of all challenges and pressures faced by Head Teachers and staff. There was continued close collaboration to build our model for school improvement and support throughout the school calendar. The Service has purposefully planned professional learning or meetings with Head teachers to assist with managing pressures and dealing with issues that have affected their work, holding face to face meetings to allow for effective networking.
Chair made comment made that improving standards for literacy and numeracy appeared to come after self-	The priorities are not in any particular order; however, it would prove difficult to make improvements without precise

<p>evaluation was this correct.</p>	<p>evaluation for areas on which to focus. Following COVID it was noted that there has been a regression in skills. Self-evaluation evidence would be used throughout this year to drive improvement in teaching and learning.</p>
<p>Committee member was very supportive of the ongoing progression Bro Caereinion to provide bi-lingual education for all.</p> <p>There is precedent in Flintshire and Wrexham of one school moving to Welsh Medium and others school in those counties becoming more anglicised.</p> <p>In regard to north Powys, it could take an 1-2 hours on school transport to travel to Bro Caereinion to access a Welsh medium education provision, which is not feasible. This provision does not solve the issue for the rest of the County.</p> <p>Llanfyllin is part of the WESP for Powys, how would the immersion be developed and what support would be available from and around the County.</p>	<p>We have spoken about Trochi and those elements regarding immersion previously and during the discussions in relation to the Bro Caereinion proposal. As a County that provision is provided as and when approached and this will be continued. In the interest of transparency, a WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan) presentation will be provided to Scrutiny prior to Christmas, to update on the various strands.</p>
<p>Would there be plans to create an immersion stream within Llanfyllin and / or Llanidloes to increase the number of bi-lingual children by Yr. 9 through offering an all-inclusive curriculum.</p> <p>Chair confirmed this discussion would be picked up within later scheduled meetings on the WESP.</p>	<p>It is important that discussions are held in relation to the progression of TROCHI, 3 years ago Powys had nothing in place. Parents from the first TROCHI cohort would be willing to attend Scrutiny in the future to inform of their families experience.</p> <p>In term of the TROCHI provision at present and the capacity within the Service TROCHI is successful and has enhanced numbers in Welsh medium. There is a need for further discussion on development and capacity using the evidence and data collected.</p>

<b>6.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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Schools transformation updates have been noted within the Work Programme through discussions with Service and Chair.

**7. PROGRESS ON SCHOOL BALANCES AUTUMN 2023**

<b>Points raised by the Panel:</b>	<b>Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.</b>
<p>The position of Secondary schools following intervention of the Finance Team has worsened, were the budgets overly optimistic, were there also concerns for the non-monitored schools. Figures within the report stated for end of 2023/24 almost £500k, £3.346m compared to £3.65m, with the Primary School sector having improved their position by £130k.</p>	<p>Tables 1 and 2 within the report shows schools there were requested to submit recovery plans or were unlicensed at the start of the year following their submittals. In terms of Secondary provision there was reported an improved position from May 2023. By end 2026/27 would be looking at a £7.4m cumulative deficit. In Table 2 that position has improved to £6.5m cumulative deficit.</p> <p>The Finance Team continue to work with schools on budgets.</p>
<p>Chair noted the concern was that figures for 2023/24 had deteriorated between May and September where Finance had been assisting and Committee would have expected to have seen an improvement.</p>	<p>The Finance Service received submittals in May, after which further work was undertaken on budget individual school positions, providing challenge and review to achieve a balanced position at the very least.</p>
<p>There are no in-year balances reported within the tables, the situations has progressively worsened and projected to continue for the next 4 years. The liability on the Council increases year on year, would this indicate there were insufficient budgets delivered to schools.</p>	<p>Not reported within the reports, there were secondary schools indicating surplus in year (2023/24) positions projected. The finance teams are focussing on future years to ensure those balanced positions are achieved.</p> <p>The information within the reports showed a collective position, in the confidential session there will be discussion on specific schools. The Service has worked with 4 schools on deep dives to identify actual and potential savings, with work progressing with another 2 this week. Where themes have been identified the Finance team have taken to the Service and Area Heads meetings to discuss different elements of spend and appropriate spend.</p> <p>There was also the challenge of recruiting Business Managers across Powys which would be a crucial position in supporting Head Teachers to manage budgets and finances. The Service has reviewed the Secondary Funding Formula, with proposals made to mirror other LA's</p>

	<p>i.e. giving more of the ALN funding directly to schools rather than hold in a central budget as well as ALN and deprivation.</p>
<p>With the proposed changes would there be significant in year surpluses impacting on the projected £5m deficit.</p>	<p>In depth reviews have led to extensions in respect of recovery plans, with another school requested to review budget as not in a balanced in year position and commence addressing the deficit. Further meetings with schools have been pencilled in for the coming weeks. The Service has also requested School look passed the 2024/25 financial year and submit plans for year 2025/26 in the New Year to address issues as early as possible.</p>
<p>Scrutiny warned at the last budget that underfunding of the Schools Delegated Budget, would lead to schools using reserves. Cabinet should be almost setting the schools budget for the quantum of funds into the Delegated Budget for 2024/25, what has the Schools Service requested from Cabinet to enable schools to deliver education to the children and young people of Powys, without increasing the deficit liability.</p>	<p>The Portfolio Holder stated that Cabinet would definitely be looking at passporting through all funding that comes to Education over and above already received from WG into the budget, whilst remaining aware of the teachers' pay award which was not funded in England. The draft budget from WG is not due until the week prior to Christmas, therefore unable to state categorically what funding will be covered or if schools would be in receipt of additional funding.</p> <p>The Schools Service identified that Cover Supervisor positions would benefit schools in reducing the supply teacher costs which was built into the funding formula.</p>
	<p>Finance Portfolio Holder thanked the Schools Service Officers for their work collaborating with Governing Bodies and Head Teachers in an extremely challenging financial situation. Despite the information there was some good points within the report.</p> <p>In terms of the £3.3m underspend that has purported to have occurred at budget setting last year, it was made perfectly clear that all allocated monies for Education was passported over. Any further funding would have had to be taken from other services areas or through an increase to Council Tax or Members could put forward ideas, we</p>



	cannot underestimate the impact of inflation on schools who are still working to factor this in and manage budgets accordingly. In 2019 12 warning notice had been issues, in 2023/24 this is 5, which shows significant progress has been made. Pressures within schools will remain for some time yet given the projected inflation rate pressures and an indicative settlement figure of 3.1% from WG.
How many Business Manager vacancies within Powys Schools.	There are 3 vacancies currently, there are also new appointees in place who are undertaking training, there is a significant amount of work input by officers in schools that do not have a Business Manager currently
What was the percentage of the Delegated budget allocated to staffing costs, as would leave little room for manoeuvre within the budget for school.	This has been consistently around 80% in totality and will advise of actual percentage for 2023/24.

<b>8.</b>	<b>EXEMPT ITEM</b>
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

The Monitoring Officer has determined that category 3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules applies to the following item. His view on the public interest test (having taken account of the provisions of Rule 14.8 of the Council's Access to Information Rules) was that to make this information public would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

These factors in his view outweigh the public interest in disclosing this information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

<b>9.</b>	<b>SCHOOL BUDGETS REPORTS</b>
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Committee received an update from the Portfolio Holder and Officers on the Schools Budgets

**County Councillor Lucy Roberts**  
**Interim Chair**  
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# Public Document Pack

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee Wednesday, 13 December 2023

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD BY ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2023

### Present:

County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas (Chair)

County Councillors: D Bebb, AW Davies, B Davies, D Meredith, G Morgan, S McNicholas, G Preston, L Roberts

Co-opted Member: K Chedgzoy, S Davies, M Evitts.

### Cabinet portfolio Holders in Attendance:

County Councillors:

P Roberts, Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys

D Thomas, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation

**Officers:** Georgie Bevan, Head of Schools Service, Sarah Quibell, Service Manager for Education Support Services, Eurig Towns Service Manager for Primary School Improvement, Bethan Price Cymraeg Lead, Mari Thomas Deputy Head of Finance, Chris Davies Service Manager for Curriculum for Wales and Professional Learning, Bets Ingram Strategic Equalities and Risk Officer

Lynette Lovell, Director of Education and Children Services joined late, due to other business commitments

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor G D Jones

<b>2.</b>	<b>DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST</b>
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There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP</b>
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The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
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### Documents Considered:

- Minutes 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

Minutes agreed by Committee members present as a true and accurate reflection of the meetings and ratified accordingly by the Chair.

<b>5.</b>	<b>ELECTION OF MEMBER TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
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Due to the recent by-election results, there will be a review of the allocation of seats across committees, this item was postponed until further notice.

<b>6.</b>	<b>WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP) FIRST YEAR EVALUATION REPORT AND FEEDBACK REPORT FROM WELSH GOVERNMENT.</b>
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**Background: -**

- First annual report of 10, addressing Powys' priorities within the WESP.
- Feedback received from WG received in November, meeting scheduled next week for discussion on next steps.

<b>Points raised by the Panel:</b>	<b>Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.</b>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	
In relation to Outcome 1 has there been improvement on previous year, are the trends moving in the right direction as difficult to understand without full context. Could the class sizes be shared, to provide Committee with the links across the various outcomes of the WESP.	In the WESP document there is all the pre-data which has led to information produced and held by WG and PCC to inform the next stages. Data has remained stable at 36.4% for Welsh medium nursery provision. The transfer to school was 80% of those in Cylch Meithrin 2021/22 to 87.5% in 2022/23 therefore an improvement in the percentage of numbers retained.
The LA has funded Mudiad Meithrin / language Support Officer to support the Welsh Language skills of practitioners in 3+ settings, what is the costs and for how long is that post costed for given that Mudiad Meithrin are a voluntary organisation, what outcomes are hoped to be achieved.	This does not form part of the current TROCHI, this post was of a temporary contract for specific support for specific settings and was not currently funded. Will forward further details to committee on the outcomes of that particular work.
Within the WESP there was an intention to develop Cylch Meithrin in the Carreghoffa Arddleen, Four Crosses and Llandysilio area, however no reference in the annual report, what was the current status	This was not one of the designated areas to be prioritised at this time. The WESP covers a 10-year programme, in this year the focus was on Hay-on - Wye area as currently there was no Welsh medium provision at all. There was Welsh medium provision within the Llanfyllin catchment area, with the aim of ensuring these were at capacity. The Arddleen, Carreghoffa area has been identified an area for development over the 10-year period of the WESP, with development

	<p>commencing from July 2027. There are 5 areas in the WESP in need of improving provision, Hay-on - Wye, Crickhowell, Presteigne, Llanidloes then Arddleen area, work will be undertaken for one of those areas per annum over the first five years.</p>
<p>The equality of provision was varied across the county, not just the 5 areas mentioned. Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi provision was very much dependent on volunteers, and the bureaucracy involved in setting up a new provision made it more difficult, could this be addressed in any way.</p>	<p>There are issues with per pupil funding for very small settings which would determine whether they could be financially viable.</p>
<p>Were WG informed of issues in rural areas, the need for accessible and equitable provision, which was currently non-existent, to be addressed.</p>	<p>There were regular meeting with WG in relation to Welsh medium education and early years education. Officers hold monthly meetings with Mudiad Meithrin, who are keen to ensure WG are aligning funds towards Welsh medium education provision.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b></p>	
<p>Not all pupils from entering Welsh medium reception have come via Cylch Meithrin.</p>	<p>Not all settings need to be registered with Cylch Meithrin to provide a Welsh medium education. WG provide PCC with data and information from Mudiad Meithrin which allows tracking of pupils and was where the 87% noted under Outcome 1 came from.</p>
<p>Was there a clear education pathway for children or were children leaving Cylch in an area where the local or nearest school did not provide Welsh medium education.</p>	<p>Work on the Hay-on-Wye area with Mudiad Meithrin has enabled Powys to understand that there was no point in having a Ti a Fi, Cylch Meithrin and then no further provision for Welsh medium education. Discussions are being progressed with the Gwernyfed catchment of schools to ensure there was transition into early primary school phases.</p>
<p>Was the 87.5% all pupils transferring into Welsh medium education or just those from Cylch Meithrin.</p>	<p>The 87.5% was pupils just from Cylch Meithrin, there would be others transferring in from other settings, or parents have chosen Welsh medium education and have not been through an early years setting.</p>
<p>The document stated that a website had been developed alongside social media channels, was there an indication of usage data by parents of these resources.</p>	<p>The website was formed in 2021. In terms of the social media presence, through discussion with Communications Dept. it is quite difficult to build the followership, work</p>

	<p>is being progressed with schools to share messages as they have a well-developed audience.</p>
<p>It was documented that TROCHI immersion centres had been established as support for latecomers to the Welsh language, this has happened on three occasions, Dafydd Llwyd twice and Llanfyllin. Request made for new phraseology to distinguish between late comers model and the TROCHI model for Yrs. 6 &amp; 7, in addition there should be reference to a Bi-bilingual education and English education, it was the outcomes that count.</p>	<p>There is also confusion with the TROCHI early education and the TROCHI methodology was a different model again, this would be something that the National network of TROCHI practitioners need to review to ensure a consistent national approach as well as the phraseology used. Will share this with WG when meet next to get as for a consistency across the national picture. With TROCHI it was felt that a more centralised provision could be more accessible and available throughout the year or 2 terms of the academic year, although the geography of Powys would still present challenge.</p>
<p>There were a number of initiatives mentioned within the document however unsure of progression or outcomes, there was not much analysis included, how many hours was spent on projects that did not progress and could have been used more constructively on viable and deliverable projects.</p>	<p>Actual hours was not known but through Consultations on schools closure all options had to be evaluated. There was a lot of activity in the first year of the WESP. Work has to be prioritised otherwise risk of becoming disparate in the approach.</p>
<p>If Powys were determined to have more Welsh medium language schools, there must be progression along the linguistic spectrum, how many schools have mentioned an intention of this progression, especially those of a dual stream provision.</p>	<p>All schools are moving along the continuum, work is underway with Bro Caereinion. Discussions are ongoing with several schools to ensure they have the school development plans to follow the continuum and improve the provision of Welsh medium education.</p> <p>As the White paper goes through Government and if the Bill would be accepted, there would be an expectation that every school, whatever their circumstances, would progress along the language continuum. However, no school, with the exception of Bro Caereinion, which was still under a consultation process, had mentioned any intention of moving along the continuum to be fully Welsh medium. Every school, has been made aware of their linguistic category within the new category system, from which to progress.</p>

<p>There has always been discussion about moving along the continuum, with the aim to do better, however the crux of the matter was if want to produce Welsh speakers, there has to be bi-lingual education for all. It was disappointing that no other school other than Bro Caereinion had mentioned their intention to do this, was this entirely decisions made by Head Teachers and Governors or could the LA influence them.</p>	<p>Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon and Ysgol Cribarth have moved along the continuum. The decision must come from the school, the LA can advise and support which is a better method than dictating the position.</p> <p>Some schools have mentioned the intention to increase the amount of Welsh medium teaching used, but it was important to note that the categories in the WESP are far broader with multiple elements which would require completion prior to progressing to the next category. Cabinet Member added that Ysgol Cribarth was being actively monitored as it formally moves along the continuum to a dual stream setting. Admissions would be monitored over the next few years in the hope of an organic change toward a fully Welsh medium provision.</p> <p>We remain aware that Powys has a teaching related issue, if not sufficient nor the ability within the current staff to offer a full Welsh medium experience, additional staff would be required which creates further challenge.</p>
<p>Acknowledgement of the poorer experience pupils have had and that there was a reluctance to move along the continuum amongst some groups, dual stream schools are effectively dual standard schools. Further promotion was needed with videos shared with all schools with an offer, to distribute to parents and pupils.</p>	
<p><b>Outcomes 3 &amp;4</b></p>	
<p>There must be emphasis on the importance of the numbers of pupils moving from one medium to another. Were schools providing data and how was this collected.</p>	<p>Yes, where pupils are not receiving bi-lingual but Welsh medium lessons. The Arweinydd Cymraeg (Welsh Lead Officer) was responsible for collecting this data from schools. A sample of a survey from parents and pupils would be sufficient to test the accuracy of the data provided.</p> <p>The 14+Lead Officer was currently carrying out a mapping exercise at Key Stage 4 to look at the offer both vocationally, academically and language delivery to address the point that have been made by Committee</p>

	Members on provision and language delivery across the spectrum to ensure equity. There was also a clear picture on Post 16 provision following improvements in the data capture processes, course delivery, learner numbers and language delivery.
<b>Outcome 5</b> – No questions forthcoming from the Committee.	
<b>Outcome 6</b> – No questions forthcoming from the Committee.	
<b>Outcome 7</b> – No questions forthcoming from the Committee.	
<b>Welsh Government Feedback document</b>	
Request for Committee to have sight of the LA's response to the WG feedback to follow the progression.	Accepted that for future updates the documentation and data would be provided and presented in a more suitable format for the Scrutiny Committee.

## Actions

### Observations:

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee requested that:
  - Assurance be given on pace of the development of WESP timeline in particular the development in the North of the County in relation to the Llanfyllin Catchment Schools Transformation programme.

## 7. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

**Background:** - The Corporate Risk Register was circulated with agenda papers prior to the meeting.

Risk PPPP0031 - If the school building stock deteriorates due to the insufficient level of revenue and major improvement capital funding required to maintain them, then they could become un-safe and not fit for purpose.

<b>Points raised by the Panel:</b>	<b>Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.</b>
Comments were invited on the building deterioration risk as closely linked to the Sustainable Communities for Learning Transformation Programme, with the schools Transformation capital maintenance programmes significantly pushed back i.e., a £400k maintenance	The position on schools within the Llanfyllin Catchment review has been determined by the WG under Band C, and additionally affected by the collapse of Dawnus which limited the ability to bring forward new projects. Officers were now preparing



<p>backlog at a potential receiving in school in the north of the County</p>	<p>submissions to WG. In respect of the wider schools estate there is an oversight, fire inspections have largely been completed, work has been prioritised for the safeguarding measures e.g., fencing highlighted in Estyn reports, with funding from the schools major improvements budget, and there has been significant financial investment in Welshpool High School.</p>
<p>There was a £20m saving from unspent Capital monies in this financial year, resulting in an additional revenue saving was none of this earmarked for schools. What is the cost in terms of service delivery of not utilising these capital funds.</p>	<p>During a briefing on the current Welsh Fiscal analysis, it was abundantly clear that there would be a squeeze on Capital with regards WG for the foreseeable future. Cabinet have made clear that to maintain a viable capital programme would be through short-term borrowing and capital receipts. High inflation rates continue to impact on progress that could be made. The £20m has contributed saving towards the revenue budget. If were to spend the £20m, it would add approx. £1.2m to the pressures on the revenue budget in this financial year going into the next. Cabinet were concerned with protecting services moving forward, if act irresponsibly with savings now, there would be difficulties in delivering services of any value in the future.</p>
<p>Chair asked if the risk was acknowledged by the Scrutiny Committee in the correct manner, should this risk be escalated, as clearly a significant risk with no immediate resolution put forward. Were the ratings of risks which relate to Education matters totally explored.</p>	<p>The risks cannot be escalated further then at present, it is within the gift of the Scrutiny Committee to request further information from the Services Area that the risk is being managed accordingly.</p>
<p>Request made that risks to individual schools were being adequately addressed, i.e., boiler and heating issues leading to school closures, impacting on the service delivery for our children's education further documentation may assist to that reassurance.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member gave limited assurance in terms of RAAC that almost all Powys schools surveys were completed with the exception of a couple of small roof spaces, and no RAAC had been found. In respect of confidence in the structural integrity of the estate, officers had been tasked with completed full condition surveys of the entire estate, linked in with WG works on energy efficiencies, which would provide a detailed assessment</p>

	<p>of the backlogged maintenance and the state of the estate as a whole. An update was given in respect of Welshpool High School boiler work and removal of asbestos by specialist contractors whilst no pupils or staff were on site.</p> <p>Assurance given by the Head of Service that regular meetings are held between the Schools &amp; Property Services and Head Teachers to ensure where there was urgent need of repair, that support was prioritised.</p>
<p>£2.2m was committed to capital works along with an additional £500k concession within the budget for 2023/24 which has been well underspent to date, given the awareness of the state of repairs required why have there not been more projects committed to.</p>	<p>In terms of the £2.2m there is a full programme of works, although the actual spend that has been processed through the system. The completion of works showed as an underspend currently the funds had been allocated across 33 schools which have or are benefitting from a variety of projects under the programme of works.</p> <p>Low carbon technology capital projects further supported by additional grants from WG.</p>
<p>Request for the programme of works to be shared with Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Will check with colleagues in Property Services and advise.</p>
<p>The risk denotes school closures where necessary for works to be completed, could a list of schools with the most significant issues to be shared with the Committee. The residual risk however remains scored at 16 and in pink, any changes made to the risk score, Committee were to be informed.</p>	<p>In terms of schools likely to close for maintenance / works to be undertaken the service works hard to ensure the situation does not arise wherever possible, with schools being safe and warm for our learners.</p> <p>The score was in respect of the total value in backlog maintenance. The residual risk remains high until the condition works have been completed.</p>
<p>Clarification requested that the surveys undertaken, which led to the delay of the distribution of the £500k budget concession monies, was for full condition surveys of Powys' school estate. Further clarification required from the Service Area concerned.</p>	<p>The delays in the distribution of the £500k were complicated by the announcement of the additional work being undertaken by WG and the need for alignment to ensure duplication of expenditure of public money was not occurring.</p>
<p>The development of the Well-Being Hub in Newtown adds to the risk as forms an important part of the Newtown Schools Transformation programme, the Committee are unaware of any further progress or outcomes from WG on this project.</p>	<p>The Scrutiny template on the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) is due to be returned to WG in the coming weeks, to be approved and progressed, aligned with the capital spend challenges to give a degree of clarity early in the New Year. In respect of the</p>

	<p>new build at Ysgol Calon Y Dderwen, if the SOC does not progress, it would not impact the funding envelope for the school build site.</p>
<p>Concern was highlighted in relation to Corporate Risk PPPP0031 and the potential partial or full school closures. Committee remained unconvinced that this risk had been fully addressed. On one side capital was squeezed with little spend and on the other, assurance given that everything was undertaken to moderate that risk. Committee needs to have a true understanding of the level risk contained within the condition surveys for individual schools.</p>	

### Actions

1. Request for the programme of works to be shared with Scrutiny Committee – **Email sent to Property Services.**
2. Clarification requested that the surveys undertaken, which led to the delay of the distribution of the £500k budget concession monies, was for full condition surveys of Powys' school estate. **Further clarification required from the Service Area concerned**
3. Any changes made to the risk score; Scrutiny Committee were to be informed.

### Observations:

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee requested that:
  - The programme of works be shared with Scrutiny Committee
  - The any changes made to the residual risk Committee were to be informed.
  - Clarification that the surveys undertaken, which led to the delay of the distribution of the £500k budget concession monies, were for full condition surveys of Powys' school estate. Further clarification required from the Service Area concerned.
- The Committee expressed concern
  - In relation to Corporate Risk PPPP0031 and the potential for partial or full school closures. Committee remained unconvinced that this risk had been fully addressed. On one side capital was squeezed with little spend and on the other, assurance given that everything was undertaken to moderate that risk. Committee needs to have a true understanding of the level risk contained within the condition surveys for individual schools.

<b>8.</b>	<b>ESTYN REPORTS UPDATE</b>
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**Background: -**

**Primary Sector**

A verbal update was provided on work undertaken in the last 2 years following previous Estyn inspections. During the pandemic inspections were suspended and re-commenced last year.

➤ **Academic Year 2020-21.**

- 9 Primary Schools inspected, of which 3 were requested to provide case studies of exceptional practice.
- Ysgol Llandinam was placed in Estyn Review, this was not a statutory follow up category, and were removed from this category in July 2023 after having made strong progress against all recommendations.

➤ **Academic Year 2022-23**

- 8 Primary schools inspected, of which 2 were requested to provide case studies of exceptional practice.
- 2 schools were placed in Estyn Review, Forden and Radnor Valley. A meeting is scheduled for later this week, with Estyn, in respect of progress Forden School have made addressing recommendations.
- Leighton Primary school was placed in need of significant improvement in June 2023, a formal category of follow-up. Schools Service are working closely with the school to ensure that their post inspection action plan is in place and acted upon.

**Special Schools**

- In terms of Special schools there have been no core inspections since the pandemic, Ysgol Cedewain were placed in Estyn review in January 2020 and removed from that category in October 2023.

**Secondary Sector**

- 2 Estyn Core Inspections had taken place in All-age and Secondary Sector since the pandemic.
  - Ysgol Calon Cymru was inspected in November 2022 and placed in Estyn Review.
  - Newtown High School had an inspection in October 2023 and the report is due imminently.
- 2 Estyn monitoring visits have been undertaken.
  - Brecon High School were in need of significant improvement, with a monitoring visit in November 2022, which resulted in categorisation of Special Measures.
  - Gwernyfed High School received a monitoring visit in October 2022 and were also placed in categorisation of Special Measures.

<b>Points raised by the Panel:</b>	<b>Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members.</b>
From Forden schools perspective there were concerns with the	The Schools Service and SIA's have worked with the school since Sept 2022

Inspection.	and were content with progress made to date, will discuss with Estyn.
For the school placed in Special Measures what work is being undertaken to bring them out.	Both schools concerned have a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) in place. They have each received a PIAP visit from Estyn to agree the plan, they received half termly multi agency meetings including SIA, LA & Estyn working together to establish with the school what support is required to progress. The LA support is clearly identified within the PIAP.
Were there any themes highlighted from Inspections	Of the 3 Secondary Schools with recommendations, common themes were noted around teaching, improving the development of literacy and numeracy skills and improvement required in leadership and self-evaluation processes. In terms of Primary Schools last year there were 27 recommendation in Primary Schools in Powys. 13 were associated with elements of teaching, Autumn term reviews have focussed on these areas and provided challenge and support.
Assurance sought that the Schools Service are working closely with and have enough capacity to support schools in preparation of the upcoming Spring inspections.	Prioritisation has been given to support those schools facing inspections. With a strong focus on improving teaching and learning
As the 4 purposes area pushed through the Secondary schools system how much emphasis have the Inspectors placed on the understanding of them in particular as improved teaching and learning are highlighted as common themes.	Inspectors have focussed on progression of learners, encompassing all the elements in the Curriculum for Wales, all of which are taken in account to formulate judgements on whether teaching is having a strong enough impact on pupil progress and learning.
Are Estyn as concerned as WG appear to be at ensuring the 4 purposes are embedded into the Secondary Education system.	Estyn have mentioned the 4 purposes within the inspection documents. Estyn start with learners and progress then move onto how the teaching has impacted on that progress.

<b>9.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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Shared with Committee for information purposes.

<b>10. EXEMPT ITEM</b>
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

The Monitoring Officer has determined that category 3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules applies to the following item. His view on the public interest test (having taken account of the provisions of Rule 14.8 of the Council's Access to Information Rules) was that to make this information public would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

These factors in his view outweigh the public interest in disclosing this information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

<b>11. SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN</b>
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Committee received a presentation from Officer in respect of Schools causing Concern.

**County Councillor R G Thomas (Chair)**

# Powys County Council, Powys Teaching Health Board, Dyfed Powys Police

## Report of Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.



## **Introduction**

Between 16 and 20 October 2023, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Education and training inspectorate for Wales (Estyn) carried out a joint inspection of the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect of children in Powys.

This report outlines our findings about the effectiveness of partnership working and of the work of individual agencies in Powys.

### **Scope of the inspection**

The Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) reviewed:

- the response to allegations of abuse and neglect at the point of identification
- the quality and impact of assessment, planning and decision-making in response to notifications and referrals
- protecting children aged 11 and under at risk of abuse and neglect
- the leadership and management of this work
- the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding partner arrangements in relation to this work

We have endeavoured to use plain language to describe the findings from the JICPA. We refer to several terms throughout the report which are defined as follows:

## **Terms of reference**

**ACEs** - Adverse Childhood experiences

**CAMHS** - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

**CASPP** - Care and Support Protection Plan

**CLA** - Children Looked After

**CME** - Children missing in education

**CP/ CPR** - Child Protection/ Child Protection Register

**CRU** - Central referral unit (police)

**DPP** - Dyfed Powys Police

**DSL** - Designated Safeguarding Lead is the person appointed to take lead responsibility for child protection issues in schools.

**EHE** - Elective home education

**ELSA** - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant is a social and emotional intervention programme delivered by trained staff in primary and secondary schools.

**ESR** - Electronic Staff Record

**FCC** - Force Communications Centre (Police)

**FCR** - Force Control Room (Police)

**IAA** - Information, Advice and Assistance

**IRO** - Independent Reviewing Officers

**MARAC** - MARACs are Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. They are regular meetings of professionals who discuss how to help individuals who are most at risk of serious harm due to domestic violence and abuse.

**MIU** - Minor Injuries Unit

**NICHE** - The police intelligence and information system

**Operation Encompass** - Operation Encompass is a partnership between police and schools, a school can only join if the local police force has already joined Operation Encompass. One of the principles of Operation Encompass is that all incidents of domestic abuse are shared with schools, not just those where an offence can be identified.

**PCC or LA** - Powys County Council or Local Authority

**Philomena protocol** - An agreement between the local authority, the police, and providers of children's residential care about steps to be followed by care staff if they are concerned about children not being at home.

**PPN** - Public Protection Notices

**PTHB** - Powys Teaching Health Board

**PRUDIC** - Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood

**Section 47 (S47)** - Under Section 47 Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to investigate if it appears to them that a child in its area is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

**SoS** - Signs of Safety approach is a relationship-grounded, safety-organised approach to child protection practice, created by researching what works for professionals and families in building meaningful safety for vulnerable and at-risk children.

**TAC** - Team around the Cluster (TAC) model aims to support schools to identify and support families earlier when the needs arise by collaboration with key partners.

**UASC** - Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

**WSP** - Wales Safeguarding Procedures detail the essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect.

## **1. Summary**

Safeguarding organisations in Powys have systems and arrangements in place for effective joint working when children are considered at risk of abuse or neglect. Senior leaders in the local authority, police and health boards demonstrate a joint approach to regional safeguarding arrangements. Leaders and managers have established a highly positive culture of joint multi-agency working.

We generally found effective information sharing between agencies resulting in appropriate referrals to children's services. However, the multiple recording systems in the health board can sometimes make the finding, and sharing, of relevant safeguarding information a challenge for staff. The Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board covers four local authorities and two health boards. Useful regional threshold guidance helps professionals analyse risk when submitting a referral, or duty to report. In general, a shared understanding about how to respond to harm is evident across partner agencies.

Opportunities for partnership working are positively taken up. There is good representation and contribution from key partners at strategy discussions, meetings, and case conferences. Actions usually happen within appropriate timescales, with support and protection in place to meet children's needs. Multi-agency contribution is evident in addressing the child's safety through care and support protection plans (CASPP).

Schools across Powys work well with a wide range of services to support children and families. There is good multi-agency attendance and participation in child protection meetings arranged under the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP). This includes the initial and review child protection case conference and core groups. Parents spoke highly about school support and pupil well-being and safety is a high priority across all schools.

In common with many areas across Wales, the ability to recruit and retain key staff is impacting on children's safeguarding arrangements. This is exacerbated by the high demand on services and the increasing complexity of children and families' needs. In social services, agency staff have bolstered workforce resilience, but there are plans in place, with some success, to safely reduce reliance on agency staff and make permanent appointments.

## **2. Key findings and evidence**

### **2.1 Well-being**

#### **Partnership Arrangements**

##### **Strengths**

Professionals accurately identify children in need of help and protection. The safeguarding organisations respond promptly and effectively to meet these needs, especially where acute risk is identified. For example, we saw practitioners arranging strategy meetings and visits to children at short notice to ensure their welfare. Healthcare professionals frequently attend initial strategy discussions. The subsequent planning was focused and based on a good exchange of information across agencies.

There is good multi-agency attendance and participation in child protection meetings arranged under the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP). Partners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children well. Strategy meetings and child protection conferences are effective forums for information-sharing, planning and decision-making. Information from these meetings is recorded on police systems so it can be used in responses to future incidents. This is essential for ongoing monitoring and reviewing safety.

##### **What needs to improve**

There is a clear process in place to support professionals making safeguarding referrals about children. However, referrers are not consistently told about the outcome or the rationale supporting subsequent decisions. Following the conclusion of a Section 47 enquiry, outcome strategy meetings are not always arranged. This can result in missed opportunities to share essential information and discuss the outcome of the enquiry. This doesn't comply with the expectations of the WSP.

Children's voices, wishes and feelings are promoted at child protection conferences by professionals, but rarely through children's direct contribution to the conference.

##### **Strengths**

#### **Powys Teaching Health Board**

The pathway for child protection medical examination is clear and has been shared with relevant professionals. All child protection medical reports are reviewed jointly by the named doctor for safeguarding and senior members of the safeguarding team. This is to ensure consistency of examination from all commissioned services. A new initiative to discuss all child protection medicals in a multi-agency forum is

planned to commence in January 2024. This is in line with the Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health Standards.

School nurses and health visitors are notified of children attending Minor Injuries Units (MIU) and where there are concerns, MIU staff can access recording systems to check if a child's name is flagged as on the child protection register (CPR).

School nurses complete a holistic health assessment when a child's name is placed on the CPR. Health representatives regularly attend and contribute to strategy meetings, conferences, and core group meetings. A child's General Practitioner (GP) is invited to attend child protection conferences and is provided with feedback in relation to registration, recommendations, and conference minutes. GP practices routinely flag the records of children whose names are on the CPR, and the safeguarding team update the out of hours GP system daily. GP's provide reports to conference, though this is often a printout of consultations or immunisations.

The safeguarding team share relevant information they receive from police with key healthcare professionals and GP practices. Overall, GPs know which children are looked after by the local authority or named on the CPR.

The child protection reports we reviewed were timely and appropriate. We found evidence of key safeguarding assessments and subsequent documentation within the clinical records, and these were updated accordingly. Healthcare staff felt well supported by the safeguarding team to challenge decisions on a child's behalf if required.

It was positive to find that when an adult is admitted to the health board's mental health services, as part of the initial assessment process, consideration is given to any children associated to the patient, and whether there is a history of domestic abuse. When the patient is discharged, a Risk Enablement Panel is convened, which includes a discussion as applicable, regarding the safety of any children who may be residing or visiting the patient's home. This demonstrates a proactive approach to risk management.

## **Education**

Parents spoke highly about the support they receive from schools. Schools prioritise pupil well-being and safety. For example, schools support with childcare, pupil's personal hygiene, and provision of free school trips. Teachers plan purposeful activities about the importance of healthy and safe relationships, including how to stay safe online. In all schools visited, pupils felt happy, well cared for, safe and listened to. They all gave relevant examples of how school staff keep them safe and develop their understanding of having positive emotional and mental health.

Schools say they receive valuable support and advice from children's services when referring new concerns. School staff feel listened to and able to challenge decisions. Many schools report that relevant agencies within the local authority are forthcoming in sharing information with them when it is necessary. Schools are well represented in a wide range of multi-agency meetings. The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in schools is particularly effective in bridging children's services and education. This ensures relevant information is shared with schools and that there is consistent support for headteachers with their queries.

Processes and systems have greatly improved over the last few years. There has been a strengthening of safeguarding culture at a corporate and school level. The schools' service is the strategic link between the local authority as a whole and schools. Local authority education officers at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of keeping learners safe.

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

The force records allegations of crimes effecting children and assigns them without delay to investigating officers. Investigating officers make effective safeguarding plans and use bail conditions to protect vulnerable children and their families.

The Force Communication Centre (FCC) managers routinely sample calls to make sure the risk assessments are accurate and are responded to appropriately. FCC managers train their personnel to research information on the force's systems to back up their decisions.

The FCC system identifies previous calls and incidents at addresses. The system includes risk markers for vulnerable children, such as those on the CPR. This information helps personnel to assign the right level of response. It means many vulnerable children are identified at an early stage, and relevant information is sent to responding officers to help them assess the risk to children, for example, from domestic abuse. Warning markers on the system alert officers about the locations of persons who are a risk to children, such as registered sex offenders. FCC managers check that these markers are accurate. But we saw some markers for children who were no longer on the CPR were still on the force system.

The specialist intelligence personnel in the FCC use local and national information to support frontline responses when children are thought to be at risk of harm. Such as those who are missing, being trafficked, and exploited.

We found that FCC personnel don't routinely prompt responding personnel to record the voice of the child when they attend a domestic abuse incident. But when we raised this, the FCC manager immediately issued new guidance to staff with instructions, *'Can I remind you to use your body-worn video and please remember to capture the voice of the child'*.

The Force and the Police and Crime Commissioner support a scheme where youth workers complete return home interviews with children who have been missing. The

information the youth workers get from the children is used to update risk management plans for these children.

## **Children's Services**

Skilled practitioners assess situations effectively, balancing what is working well for children with any risks and concerns, and closely tracking change and progress. We saw consistent evidence of direct work with families including well-run family network meetings to support people. Newly created innovative posts such as well-being officers help support the delivery of care and support plans.

Children's assessments are comprehensive and include historical and situational context. Complex family situations are well understood and documented in reports. Care and support plans incorporate a positive use of support services. Practitioners use case summaries and chronologies to develop an understanding of the child's lived experience.

Children's services practitioners use the Signs of Safety approach to child protection. Improvements could be made to support the model, including through more proportionate recording which succinctly captures information about strengths and risks. Plans are in place to review the child protection forms to make them more child friendly and to improve engagement with children and families.

When plans do not sufficiently reduce the risk of harm for children, appropriate decisions are taken to escalate. Parents receive clear letters helping them understand what needs to change for children to remain safely in their care prior to public law outline proceedings.

## **What needs to improve**

### **Powys Teaching Health Board**

Multiple IT recording systems used within the health board can make the finding and timely sharing of relevant safeguarding information challenging for staff. This was supported by 40% of 114 health care staff survey responses. It presents a risk that key information could be missed, or multi-agency decisions might be made without the availability of all relevant health information.

## **Education**

It is positive that schools now complete annual safeguarding audits. The local authority officers have quality assurance processes in place which are at an early stage of development. There is further work to be done to improve the effectiveness



of these school audits to drive improvement. For example, linking fixed-term exclusion figures to the safeguarding audit.

A small number of headteachers noted that they are not routinely invited to take part in strategy discussions or meetings concerning their pupils. A few schools noted that although the police adhere systematically to Operation Encompass to share information about domestic abuse incidences, they do not always share information about offences involving their pupils in the community.

In a very few cases, frontline professionals in children's services do not have a clear enough understanding of how schools work. To this end, beneficial joint professional learning would further strengthen the working relationship of all professionals.

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

Staff working in children's homes make many reports of children missing to the police. Often the same child is reported missing repeatedly. Children's carers are responsible for making the initial enquiries to locate children who have not returned home. But on too many occasions, these basic enquiries are not done before they are reported as missing to the police. The Philomena protocol<sup>1</sup> is inconsistent and underdeveloped in Powys.

Inappropriate reports of missing children can stigmatise looked after children who feel they are treated differently by professionals. It also diverts police time and resources from dealing with other high-risk incidents. In other areas where the Philomena protocol has been implemented, there are reductions of up to one third in looked after children being reported as missing.

The force policy for recording information about missing children on public protection notices (PPNs) is inconsistent. In October 2023, personnel didn't complete PPNs for 43 of the 73 missing children. It means that in too many cases information which can help the force find a child quickly isn't recorded on force systems or shared with safeguarding partners.

### **Children's Services**

Children whose names are on the CPR are not always seen alone in accordance with the expectations set out in the WSP. We found occasions when child protection visits were mainly announced; it is important some visits are unannounced to provide a balanced perspective of the child's quality of life.

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<sup>1</sup> **Philomena protocol:** An agreement between the local authority, the police, and providers of children's residential care about steps to be followed by care staff if they are concerned about children not being at home.

We found limited evidence to confirm that the Welsh active offer is consistently being made, other than at the first point of contact via the automated response. Managers informed us Welsh speaking practitioners are available but further work is required to ensure people's language preference is recorded and facilitated. We found variable practice in relation to recording and considering a child's ethnicity and religion, in addition to recording who has parental responsibility for the child.

## **2.2 People**

### **Partnership arrangements**

#### **Strengths**

Leaders and managers understand the prevalence of need and risk in their area. They have a good understanding of the experiences of children and families who need help, and they work together to plan strategically for this. A child-centred approach is evident at an operational level particularly when children are seen in school.

We found competent and experienced professionals working in child protection in Powys. Despite the context of increasing volume and complexity of work, we found good operational relationships. There is commitment to continuous improvement with robust scrutiny and learning processes in place. This includes thorough child practice reviews, incident reporting, and promoting a culture of continuous learning and openness.

The police and other safeguarding organisations work effectively in several themed multi-agency risk management meetings. Such as the multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) for domestic abuse, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) for sexual and violent offenders, the multi-agency exploitation meeting (MACE) and a weekly meeting to manage the risk for missing children.

#### **What needs to improve**

There has been a large increase in the population of electively home educated (EHE) children in the region and we consider this may represent a risk to some of these children. The EHE guidance<sup>2</sup> from Welsh Government outlines an overriding objective for agencies to ensure that these children's development is protected from significant harm. This area requires a multi-agency response to provide assurance about the safety of children in these arrangements.

The police force contributes to some multi-agency child protection audits. An example is the audit of incidents where children were taken into police protection

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<sup>2</sup> [Elective Home Education Guidance \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/elective-home-education-guidance)

across the Mid Wales area. Multi-agency audits need to be completed routinely to disseminate the good practice we have seen from some agencies in this area.

## **Strengths**

### **Powys Teaching Health Board**

Due to its geographical location, the health board commissions all tertiary care. Within the contract with the commissioned service, the health board's safeguarding team sets out the minimum safeguarding processes expected for its population using cross border services.

The health board demonstrates full commitment to working in partnership in all areas of safeguarding, both at an operational and strategic level. The health board's safeguarding team is a valued resource, offering support, advice, supervision, and training to staff. This was supported by almost 96% of the 114 healthcare staff surveyed, who said they felt supported when they have a concern regarding a child's safety or well-being.

We also found the health board responds proactively to learning from practice reviews, such as, Child, Adult and Domestic Homicide Reviews. Examples of this include newsletters, training videos, and expansion of domestic abuse routine enquiry into sexual health clinics and minor injuries units. All referrals from healthcare staff are sent to the safeguarding team for information and quality assurance. The safeguarding team offer support via a debrief session when staff attend Procedural Response to Unexpected Death in Childhood (PRUDIC) meetings and a referral to external support via the third sector organisation [2Wish](#).

The health board demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement, which is evident through the scrutiny and learning processes in place. This includes reviews of serious incidents, concerns, reports, and the shared learning from this. Operational and strategic meetings have a clear governance structure, with effective monitoring of improvements and actions, and generally completed within appropriate timescales.

We found the voice of the child; their wishes and feelings were highlighted in the healthcare records. There are several initiatives in place to capture the voice of the child. These include the provision of QR codes for children looked after (CLA) and their carers to access, to feedback on their experiences, and school nurse initiatives including 'CHAT', where young people can text the school nurse for advice and support.

We found that the children's records seen contained genograms<sup>3</sup> and chronologies, and the healthcare assessments highlighted the religion, ethnicity and first language of a child. There was evidence of staff advocating for the health and social care needs of children, and we found positive efforts to involve family members and wider support networks in decisions being made about children.

## **Education**

The Director of Education has a clear, strategic, and well considered vision to ensure schools are safe, and supportive learning environments for the children and young people of Powys. This vision is shared effectively across all service areas. The high priority given to safeguarding across the local authority has strengthened the understanding that it is everyone's responsibility.

Senior management restructure has resulted in clear roles and responsibilities. This allows for effective working arrangements which maximise the capacity of the local authority officers well. The interim Chief Executive places a high priority on the safety and well-being of pupils. Together with the Director of Education and heads of service they maintain a clear focus on safeguarding. The lead elected member demonstrates a high priority and commitment to safeguarding as a key focus for the local authority.

There has been beneficial work developed around, for example, Children Missing in Education (CME) which has been underpinned by the CME policy completed in September 2023. The policy has purposeful information which is helping to increase awareness of CME processes and ensure cases are reported and resolved appropriately.

School leaders are confident in the safeguarding support and guidance they receive from the local authority. Partnership working has been strengthened recently, and this allows for more effective sharing of information to support pupils and families. For example, the Team Around the Cluster (TAC) approach is viewed as a strength by schools. Schools highly value the support and advice from the local authority education safeguarding manager and the wider safeguarding team. The capacity of this service has been further strengthened recently and is viewed by schools as extremely positive.

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<sup>3</sup> **Genogram** - This is in effect a family tree covering two to three generations. It is an effective, visual tool that helps practitioners and families understand familial relationships Using established symbols and connecting lines family members work with practitioners to depict develop a graphical representation of their inter-and intra-generational family structure.

[Safeguarding Wales](#)

School staff undertake regular safeguarding training at the appropriate levels, and this normally includes governors. Relevant school staff also have child protection, PREVENT and violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence (VAWDASV) training. School designated safeguarding leads (DSL) highly value the support, guidance, and training opportunities from the local authority. For example, the training to support staff in completing multi-agency referral forms.

The local authority expects all governors and elected members to undertake safeguarding training. As a result, they have a deeper understanding of safeguarding arrangements and are better equipped to offer support and challenge in their schools. Governors are beginning to have an increased involvement in the safeguarding audit tool processes in their schools. Where practice is effective, governors can hold schools to account in meeting the safeguarding audit action plan.

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

Police leaders understand the importance of their personnel speaking to children and recording their voices. Positively we saw no police records with victim blaming language.

A senior police leader chairs the daily management meeting. They check domestic abuse incidents and records for the recording of children's voices. They also scrutinise the recent force responses to high-risk incidents, crime, and vulnerability to make sure that the necessary resources and capability is in place.

Police supervisors audit some investigations and PPNs each month. The results are reviewed by managers and personnel are tasked if additional action is needed. These audits provide a useful insight about the quality of the safeguarding services and the focus on outcomes for children. But currently the small numbers audited limit the positive benefits of this practice.

Specialist personnel in the force's central referral unit (CRU) research force systems to complete risk assessments. The CRU follows the multi-agency threshold policy to make referrals to other safeguarding organisations. This process is effective, and we found no delays in sharing information about children who needed help with other organisations.

When officers place children into police protection there is always a strategy meeting. At night, police inspectors hold these with the local authority emergency duty team staff. This means there is a multi-agency approach to safeguarding these children.

But sometimes there are delays in finding these children suitable accommodation meaning they are kept in police stations for too long. The CRU reviews all these incidents to make sure the children remain safe until the incident is resolved.

CRU supervisors hold timely strategy meetings with local authority and health staff. If joint investigations are agreed, these are allocated to investigators who then hold

further strategy meetings with locally based professionals from the other safeguarding organisations. These meetings are well attended but we saw that some of them lacked a focus on the safeguarding priorities.

Positively most detectives in the force are trained specialist child abuse investigators following the College of Policing specialist child abuse investigators development programme.

## **Children's Services**

Corporate support for children's services has been prioritised amongst competing Council demands. There are effective governance arrangements across children's services. This provides visibility on the delivery of duties and risks, coupled with an understanding of the quality of children's experiences. Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the quality of practice as data is used in sufficient depth to scrutinise performance. Senior leaders accurately evaluate the performance of children's services with an effective quality assurance framework. Detailed analysis of performance means leaders can target resources where needed.

Senior managers in children's services are visible and supportive. Practitioners spoke positively about the support offered to each other and the ethos of a team approach. We heard about excellent peer support, informal and formal supervision, and approachable and available managers. There is clear investment in newly qualified social workers, with identified management posts in the structure to target support for these workers. Practitioners have access to a clinical psychologist within the local authority. Complex situations can be discussed as a team with psychology input and oversight to help support and upskill staff to achieve positive outcomes for people.

Supervision occurs frequently and promotes staff induction, development, and well-being. In the best examples supervision is reflective, considers the link between research and practice, and promotes opportunities for professional development.

## **What needs to improve**

### **Powys Teaching Health Board**

Whilst there is evidence of commitment to a learning culture, compliance with level 3 safeguarding children training is significantly lower than the national target of 85%. A recent data cleansing of the electronic staff system (ESR) will support the accuracy in recording of compliance data, however, the availability of the safeguarding team to deliver additional training sessions to meet demand is an issue. Therefore, improving access to and compliance with level 3 safeguarding training should be prioritised.

Safeguarding supervision is a self-identified area for improvement by the health board. Consequently, a recent policy change to reduce group supervision from 3 to 6 monthly has been introduced to align with the wider national picture and to support greater compliance. However, there needs to be a greater focus on ensuring the triggers for individual supervision are used, as outlined in the health board's policy, to ensure the safeguarding team has oversight and scrutiny of individuals who meet this threshold.

The health board acknowledges the continuing expansion of its safeguarding responsibilities, such as the new Serious Violence Duty, and the lifting of the cap on numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC). The impact of these changes will require further monitoring to ensure adequate resourcing to meet these requirements.

The health board's safeguarding team need to raise awareness of the triggers for requesting one-to-one case specific supervision in complex cases, where there is drift or disguised compliance in line with the PTHB safeguarding supervision policy.

## **Education**

Processes for monitoring children and young people who are electively home educated (EHE) involving multi-agency working require strengthening as they are at an early stage of development.

There is currently a lack of regular opportunities, facilitated by the local authority, for school designated safeguarding leads (DSL) to meet to support each other, share effective practice and concerns.

## **Dyfed Powys Police**

The force's audits focus on child protection and domestic abuse investigations. These audits are reviewed by senior leaders. But the force would benefit from developing its qualitative focus further. And embedding a stronger audit culture within its routine management practices.

Not all police personnel have received vulnerability training. Frontline personnel responding to incidents don't always speak to the children. So, they don't always record information about these children's demeanour, lived experiences and wishes.

We found police supervisors didn't always direct investigations effectively. There are supervisory entries on records, but these don't always focus on the risk to children. Such as from repeated incidents or when safeguarding action should be escalated. Some investigations are closed without information about the risks to all the children being considered and shared with other safeguarding organisations.

We found inconsistency in how personnel record information about children on PPNs. Some included the voice of the child, ethnicity, risk, and vulnerability. But some personnel didn't identify the impact of all vulnerability factors, such as a disability, on the lived experience of the child.

PPNs are not consistently used when children are perpetrators. In one incident, a child who was on the CPR was racially abused by other children. This information was not recorded as a separate crime, or on a PPN and shared with other organisations.

Not recording vulnerability on PPNs also means the CRU do not identify other relevant information and inform other organisations about the risks to a child. Some PPNs didn't include other children in the family who were affected by the incident.

## **Children's Services**

In common with many local authorities across Wales, the challenges in recruitment and retention have affected child protection arrangements. We acknowledge recent successes in appointing to managerial posts permanently but do not underestimate the challenge of moving away from a reliance on agency workers. It is positive workloads are manageable, and no children are left unallocated.

Proportionately only a small number of children and young people are attending their child protection meetings. The reasons for this need to be explored further. There is a welcome focus on the participation agenda, including the Momo App, use of advocacy and family network meetings. At a strategic level, the participation agenda does need to be developed further to provide children with opportunities for meaningful input into the design of services.

## **2.3 Partnership and Integration**

### **Partnership Arrangements**

#### **Strengths**

Powys contributes significantly to the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board and leads on many aspects of its work, for example, the regional exploitation strategy and training sub-group. Relationships are now well established with clear leadership responsibility across agencies for child protection. For example, the police assistant chief constable attends the Safeguarding Board executive and chairs the force's strategic vulnerability board. This means strategic decision making is informed by both police and partnership information and in consideration of multi-agency priorities. The Junior Safeguarding Board (CYSUR) represents the views of children and young people by actively contributing children's voices at a strategic level.



There are many examples of innovative multi-agency working in Powys. For example, between the local authority and health board with proactive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) arrangements and resource for a new joint therapeutic team. There is also the effective commissioning of an organisation to complete the return home interviews for missing children which are detailed and meaningful.

At all levels we found strong and established professional working relationships in child protection. Within the social care staff survey, 47 practitioners rated partnership working as excellent or good (71%), with 25% recording this as adequate. The local authority has a professional support network from which it can draw expertise, knowledge, support, and constructive challenge. We found record keeping in respect of child protection was detailed across agencies. Key stakeholders share valuable information within strategy meetings, core groups, and conferences.

### **What needs to improve**

The frequency of multi-agency training should be increased to ensure there is a consistent approach to safeguarding practice. Police personnel are not benefitting from more regular multi-agency safeguarding training. They do receive some inputs during continuous professional development training from non-police subject matter specialists, such as domestic abuse, but would benefit from joint training. Recent multi-agency training on subjects such as professional curiosity has been welcomed.

The Safeguarding Board covers four local authorities and two health board areas and has a regional threshold guidance which is due to be reviewed. Ensuring a joint understanding of the threshold for significant harm is an area which requires strengthening. Feedback from the safeguarding team in PTHB reported that there has been little to no need to use the dispute protocol which is in place as these are usually resolved at operational level.

For some families, actions outlined in the CASPP need to be progressed more quickly. This is particularly noted in complex family situations with longstanding neglect. Partners need to consistently work together to ensure measurable actions which improve outcomes for children living in these circumstances. Clear supervisory direction is needed in the police force to ensure child abuse investigations are timely and effective and prioritise all the safeguarding issues affecting the outcomes for the children.

## **Strengths**

### **Powys Teaching Health Board**

There is evidence that CAMHS teams work in close partnership with multi-agency colleagues to safeguard and engage children. It is noteworthy that the presence of senior CAMHS practitioners with backgrounds in social work has markedly enriched the team dynamics and multi-agency collaboration. In one example, a school was able to contact CAMHS for advice around a child's self-harm and together developed a joint risk management plan. We saw CAMHS making continuing efforts to engage with children, including offering to visit the child in school, if the child felt more comfortable with this location.

We found the health board's perinatal service to be robust. The service actively engages collaboratively with various agencies, internal disciplines, and partner agency professionals such as Police, Probation and Social Care. The proactive approach to discussing complex cases during meetings highlights the service's commitment to comprehensive and inclusive care strategies.

### **Education**

There are strong working practices between schools and other agencies such as health and children's services who work effectively in partnership to plan, implement, and review provision for vulnerable children in Powys. This is well supported through the termly Team Around the Cluster (TAC) meetings where multi-agency professionals attend a workshop style event to discuss common issues and agree interventions and support. These meetings are normally well-attended by education staff, CAMHS, school nursing service, Careers, Police, Youth Service.

Schools when invited, attend, and contribute fully to child protection conferences and reviews. Data on the child's attendance, punctuality and attainment are shared in school reports. Parents' contact with schools provides useful intelligence that supports the care and support planning for pupils well. Schools prioritise the importance of safeguarding their pupils and provide a range of purposeful support. For example, establishing a trusted adult for children to have access to, specific intervention programmes and facilitating rooms for social worker visits. Most schools keep appropriate school records, and information is shared when a child moves school suitably.

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

Police personnel contribute effectively to child protection conferences and supply reports to help the multi-agency decision making. But police personnel are not trained in the Signs of Safety approach used by conferences in Powys.

## **Children's Services**

Opportunities to work in partnership are positively led and taken up by children's services. We saw good working relationships between families and professionals. Parents told us they valued the support of children's services with some of their own vulnerabilities, including understanding how their own adverse experiences impact on their parenting capacity. We also heard of difficulties at times with communication and the adverse impact of changes of social workers.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) have a critical role in overseeing the quality of practice and provide a valuable contribution in challenging delays where necessary. They prioritise visits to children prior to children looked after (CLA) reviews, building meaningful and consistent relationships with them. They consult parents in all cases prior to initial and review conferences.

We found in general effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver good quality support to children and families in Powys despite the geographical challenges. Positive examples were shared of the good outcomes of this work. Third sector partners are clear and confident in their roles but feel their profile could be enhanced across early help.

## **What needs to improve**

### **Powys Teaching Health Board**

Owing to its geographical location, children in Powys frequently require access to healthcare services across borders. The different Information Management Systems in place can introduce risks associated with communicating safeguarding information. It is imperative for the health board to incorporate an acknowledgment of these risks, along with their corresponding mitigation strategies, into both the Safeguarding Maturity Matrix (SMM) improvement plan and the Risk Management Plan.

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

Supervisors are not consistently recording reviews of investigations and giving clear direction on investigative and safeguarding priorities. They don't always act to escalate changes in risks in ongoing investigations. Review strategy meetings aren't always held in a timely way. It means that some investigations can take too long, and investigators don't always fully consider the long-term outcomes for children.

There is inconsistency in how investigators record information for the victim's codes of practice (VCOP) including a victim's needs assessment and informing the child of the outcome of the investigation.

We found some duplicate records of children and family members on the force's system. These need to be identified and reconciled to make sure the force has a clear understanding of the vulnerability and risk for these people.

## **Children's Services**

Records of child protection meetings, such as conferences and core group minutes, are not consistently shared with parents and key partners. This means agencies may not receive key information to enable them to safeguard and support children and families.

Core groups provide regular updates to evaluate progress against children's plans, but there is inconsistency in this area. The link between risk and safety needs to be more explicit, with plans measuring progress rather than the delivery of services.

Signs of Safety is recognised and well used by practitioners and partner agencies, however, with the appointment of newly qualified social workers this could be an opportunity to ensure a model is embedded in practice.

## **2.4 Prevention**

### **Partnership Arrangements**

#### **Strengths**

For all agencies in the current context of increased demand, it is a challenge to prioritise the preventative agenda in a way which reduces the need for more formal care and support. Despite this, many children in Powys benefit from early help with plans evidencing a wide range of statutory, community and voluntary services which are child-focused and are used well to meet children's needs.

There are good relationships between children's services practitioners at the front door and their partners with regular interface as part of child protection procedures. We saw consideration given in general to identifying the needs of other children and adults at risk who may be affected, such as siblings and/or those children in contact with alleged abusers.

At times the availability of partners can be a challenge. Further work is required to ensure the expectations set out in the WSP are consistently adhered to, and the referrer is invited to participate in strategy discussions and/or meetings. Similarly, practitioners from education should always be invited to contribute to strategy discussions if they have worked, or are working, with the child.

## **What needs to improve**

Despite a range of preventative services which are highly valued, we heard mixed accounts about their co-ordination. We consider arrangements for early help could be clearer, more streamlined, and consistent across Powys, but we understand there is a programme of work to expand this.

In some files we found gaps in analysis about specific and important areas for assessment. This included disguised compliance, parental motivation to change, the differing needs of siblings, and the impact of long-term and chronic harms. This resulted in cases where the individual needs of siblings were not considered in a timely way, and others where the risk of re-referral was not sufficiently managed.

As stated previously, we saw examples where children's plans were not reviewed nor updated in response to further incidents. This presents a missed opportunity to review the risks to children and to update the CASPP accordingly. For some children who have experienced long-term neglect, planning and interventions are ineffective across agencies, with insufficient focus on the safety and well-being of the child.

## **Strengths**

### **Powys Teaching Health Board**

Health board staff use the Signs of Safety approach to formulate conference reports and in safeguarding supervision sessions. They believed this supports holistic health assessments to identify both emotional and physical health needs, as well as wishes and feelings.

Pre-birth meetings occur between children's services and healthcare services in line with the regional pathway. To facilitate communication, a specialist pre-birth social worker and lead safeguarding midwife attend the meetings to provide additional oversight.

Where there are wider risks, there is evidence to support the efforts in risk management and preventative work. For example, Domestic Abuse, County Lines, and serious organised crime involvement.

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

We found locally based personnel work effectively with other organisations to prevent crime and reduce risks to children and families. These personnel have extensive knowledge of their communities, and they know which local children are at risk. The force's 'Intact' initiative involves police and other organisations working jointly to prevent and disrupt crime and anti-social behaviour in communities.

## **Education**

Pupils feel listened to in schools, they have a strong voice. Vulnerable pupils are well supported to play an active part in school life. They are encouraged to join clubs and are often named persons such as prefects or ambassadors. There is good use of a one-page profile to ensure that pupils have a voice in the design of their support. Where practice is most effective, pupils have trusted adults in school to whom they can turn for advice and support.

Nearly all schools use a good range of strategies to support pupils with anxiety or anger issues to meet their individual needs. Where practice is effective, schools have a well-planned curriculum which teaches pupils the importance of strong mental health and emotional well-being. This supports their school placement and can help to avoid exclusion.

There is evidence of strong support for families from schools, with many employing family liaison officers. Schools provide children and families with a wide range of beneficial interventions to help support pupils' social, emotional, and behavioural development. This includes practical help such as parenting classes, opportunities to develop skills and support to complete forms. There is evidence of parents being consulted appropriately on decisions that affect them and their children.

Innovative work is led by the Educational Psychology Team to support vulnerable pupils in schools including children with neuro diversity issues, pupils with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and trauma. In addition, the development of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) for non-verbal pupils is highly beneficial. Nearly all schools are provided with useful and timely advice from social services front door staff.

## **Children's Services**

Children's services do not have waiting lists across teams and despite the context of increasing volume and complexity of referrals, staff express positivity about improvements made by the authority over the last couple of years. We heard about the support provided by well-being workers, who support social work practice with direct work to de-escalate need. On many occasions, parenting support, trauma informed practice, and crisis intervention were evident within care plans.

Practitioners considered the individual needs of children and monitored complex family dynamics.

Despite the demands on the service, performance indicators in relation to statutory duties such as timely child protection conferences and visits are generally good. In the period March 2023 to August 2023, the performance in relation to the number of section 47 enquires complemented within statutory timescales has consistently improved from a dip in April 2023 at 46% to an upward trajectory of above 80% for

all other months. Whilst it is positive that this is an improving picture, the local authority must ensure that it consistently maintains the improvements made in relation to performance in this area.

## **What needs to improve**

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

We found inconsistency in force managers' knowledge about accessing and using child protection performance information. This is partly because the force information systems were recently changed. And the force is also introducing a new system of cloud-based record storage. It means that previous practices of accessing information no longer work. Not all personnel know how to access the force's information systems to support operational planning. For example, in understanding a child's vulnerability after repeated low level incidents and to plan multi-agency interventions to reduce this risk.

### **Children's Services**

We heard there can be challenges around the progress of referrals which are rated a medium priority by the service as urgent contacts are prioritised. A prudent approach to resource allocation is required to ensure the right help is available at the right time. Senior managers should keep under review the resources within the front door/IAA service to ensure the team has sufficient capacity to consistently and effectively respond in a timely manner and to meet the levels of demand.

## **Next steps**

On behalf of the partnership, the local authority should prepare a written statement of proposed action responding to the findings outlined in this report. This should be a multi-agency response involving Powys Teaching Health Board and Dyfed Powys Police. The response should set out the actions for the partnership and, where appropriate, individual agencies. The head of service for children's services should send the written statement of action to [CIWLocalAuthority@gov.wales](mailto:CIWLocalAuthority@gov.wales) by (date to be confirmed as will be 6 weeks after report publication). This statement will inform the lines of enquiry at any future joint or single agency activity by the inspectorates.

## **Methodology**

### **Fieldwork**

Most inspection evidence was gathered by reviewing the experiences of people through sampling agency records and file tracking children's care and support arrangements. We case sampled ten files and tracked six.

Tracking a child's record includes having conversations with the child where appropriate, their family or carers, key worker, the key worker's manager, and other professionals involved.

We held focus groups with staff and two professional groups focused on the working arrangements and outcomes for two of the tracked files.

We visited a small sample of primary, secondary, and special schools where we conducted meetings with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead and groups of children.

We interviewed a range of employees across different agencies.

We interviewed a range of partner organisations, representing both statutory and third sector.

We reviewed supporting documentation sent to the inspectorates for the purpose of the inspection.

We administered surveys to children's services staff, third sector organisations, schools and children and family members.

We observed child protection conferences, a child exploitation strategy meeting and practice as part of our inspection activity.

We evaluated samples of health and well-being schemes of work and looked at samples of pupils' work. This included holding a 'listening to learner' sessions in all schools visited.

## **Acknowledgements**

The inspectorates would like to thank the people, staff, and partners who gave their time and contributed to this inspection.



# 6

## Learning and Skills Forward Work Programme Jan – July 2024

2024

Date and Time	Type and Detail	
Jan 15 <sup>th</sup> 2pm	Informal committee session – Schools Funding Formula Review	Mari Thomas / Nancy Owen
Jan 17 <sup>th</sup> 2pm	<del>Committee – Public</del> <b>CANCELLED</b>	
Jan 30 <sup>th</sup> 10am	Committee – Public Budget Scrutiny	
Feb	Pre-Meeting (if required)	
Feb 9 <sup>th</sup> 2pm (2)	Committee – Public JICPA - Update	Georgie Bevan / Lynette Lovell
Feb 26 <sup>th</sup>	Joint Scrutiny – Pre meet	James Langridge Thomas / Catherine James
Feb 28 <sup>th</sup>	Joint Scrutiny - Performance	James Langridge Thomas / Catherine James
Mar 14 <sup>th</sup> 2pm	Self-Assessment Private session	Committee Members Only
Mar 18 <sup>th</sup> 2pm	Pre-Meeting Schools Transformation 10yr Capital Programme Pre – meet for items on the 20 <sup>th</sup>	Marianne Evans
Mar 20 <sup>th</sup> 2pm (3)	Committee - Public To be discussed:- School visits To be discussed:- Deep dives Progression and Learning (Incl. LA level verified exam data) (max 1hr) The Offer –Yr 7 - Yr13  Post 16 (Confidential)	Cressy Murphy / Eurig Towns Georgie Bevan  Chris James John Forsey- Transport
May 20 <sup>th</sup> 2pm	Pre-Meeting	
May 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2pm (4)	Committee - Public  Q4 Risk All Heads of Service  Finance All Heads of Service	
June 17 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-Meeting	

Learning and Skills Forward Work Programme Jan – July 2024

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Type and Detail</b>	
2pm		
June 19 <sup>th</sup> (5)	Committee – Public  Post 16 to be brought forward date TBC	
July 12 <sup>th</sup> 10am	Pre-Meeting	
July 15 <sup>th</sup> 2pm (6)	Committee - Public	