

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
25th January 2018**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Rosemarie Harris, Leader

SUBJECT: Question from Elizabeth Hunter

Following the highly critical report of CSSIW, what assurances can the leader give that the apparent lack of clear understanding of priorities on Children's Social Services between senior council staff and the political leadership Powys Council have been addresses effectively to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children are now being met, and given the coming inspection of adult services, how confident is the leader that the cabinet are sufficiently aware of all the issues facing that service?

Answer

Following the inspection we quickly put an improvement plan in place, we worked with the WLGA and took their advice on how to approach the significant issues facing Children's Services and the Council.

We put in place an independent Improvement Board as was required by the Welsh Government and it has met on 3 occasions and its membership is independent of the Council and appointed by the WLGA / WG.

We meet regularly to receive briefings about progress and issues facing children's services and we have developed an Improvement plan and a risk log to help keep a focus on progress.

We have invested in the service both in terms of finance and in support from senior officers and County Councillor engagement. We have increased the staffing numbers in the workforce as well as bringing in specialist consultants (advisors) to support improvements to practice. This will allow us to make further progress in our working with families.

We have made data about activities in Children's services available to Members and have increased the volume and quality of management information to all of our front line managers.

We have held roadshows with the staff to ensure they are informed about steps we are taking and progress we are making.

In December Inspectors from CSSIW came to the authority for 3 days to review children's files and assured themselves of the current levels of practice and management. They reported they have seen positive, albeit early, signs of

improvement but noted there is still much to do. We have taken their advice and ensured that we incorporate their findings into our action / improvement plan and our staff's learning.