



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

We are aware of the report and also the Commissioner's wider Protecting Welsh Children from the Impact of Poverty a response to which is due for submission on 18 January.

Education lead on Child Poverty and Sarah Quibell Professional Lead for Education Support Services has provided the following information on the impact of COVID 19 on children and young people in Powys in terms of poverty, either witnessed or predicted.

The Children's Commissioner's report Coronavirus and Me [copy attached], whilst not focusing directly on poverty, provides an understanding of how children and young people feel affected by COVID 19, and as we have the results for Powys [copy attached], we are able to see the responses from children and young people in our county.

FSM claims provide a barometer of the impact of COVID 19 on families in Powys in terms of poverty, with a 39% increase in claims in the 18 months between April 2019 and November 2020.

April 2019	April 2020	August 2020	November 2020
1,957	2,311	2,572	2,716

Officers are also analysing counselling figures and details will be available in due course.

Working with colleagues across the council, including Catering and Income and Awards, there is a wide programme of work that is currently being undertaken as part of the Strategic Equality Objective, which includes the activity shown below:

- Working with schools to appropriately target the Pupil Development Grant (PDG)
- Delivery of the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP). Although the funding was removed by the Welsh Government for summer 2020, they have confirmed that increased funding will be in place for summer 2021
- Period dignity, including the supply of free products, is fully supported in all of our schools
- Working with Income and Awards to ensure that that PDG Access / Uniform grant is available to all those families that are eligible, which also ensures that support for families is available from a single point of access
- Raising awareness of free school meal (FSM) entitlement

- Supporting families who are 'in work' poverty in individual cases through debt / budgeting / benefits maximisation and fuel support
- Income and Awards have undertaken work to look at reducing council tax for care leavers
- Provide Financial Hardship support through a council tax scheme
- Providing Housing Support through a Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme

SSMT are aware of the report.