



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

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

Powys County Council recognise the importance of young people's voices living in rural Wales. Services for children in Powys County Council are working in partnership to develop ways to ensure young people's voices are heard and included in decision making. The following developments are established and will continue to develop to ensure young people have a voice and are listened to and included in the decisions being made.

The Start Well Board which reports to the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) now has a new workstream called 'The voice of the child' which will include actions to ensure children and young people have an opportunity to actively participate and feed into the decisions being made regarding services for children, young people and families across Powys.

The Junior Start Well Board, is a newly established young people's board, that will meet bi monthly with the chairs of the Start Well Board (Jan Coles and Alison Davies) to discuss the work taking place across all services working with children, young people and families. The Junior Start Well Board will discuss different areas of work and projects and will be an opportunity to engage in consultation and provide young people's points of view so as to influence decisions which directly impact children and young people. The Junior Start Well Board members will also raise topics and issues that are important to them and the young people they represent to be addressed at the Start Well Board. The first Junior Start Well Board took place on 25th March 2021.

We also have 3 participation Officers in Powys presently. We have a participation officer based in Children's Services who works with children looked after, we have a participation officer who works in the Children's Commissioning Team and who works universally with children and young people and a third participation officer who is specifically working on engagement with 16 and 17 year olds in relation to voting rights.

The main purpose and role of the participation officer who is working universally with children and young people is to grow and develop Powys County Council's participation work and profile with children and young people. The Participation Officer works to support the implementation of the Councils Pledge to Children and Young People and supports the Organisation to ensure Children and Young people are provided meaningful opportunities to influence decision about their lives.

We continue to promote and support the delivery of training on children's rights for staff across the organisation.

In terms of the Youth Service, Powys maintains a well-staffed and resourced team, working with 11-25 year olds across the county in a range of targeted and open access settings.

The Youth Service has identified and is supporting young people to be part of the Junior Start Well Board, helping to ensure the board has a diverse membership. The service is also working with some of the secondary schools' School Councils, working with young people on a range of topics that affect them within their school and the wider community.

The Youth Service is supporting the work of the participation officer leading on votes for 16 and 17 years olds, by inviting them to be part of outreach street-based work and by sharing relevant information on social media platforms.

It is the role of all youth workers to promote participation with young people, and to develop opportunities for them to be involved and to participate in decisions and on issues that affect them, for example, developing their voice and their understanding of politics. This is achieved through 1:1 work, group work discussions, issue-based work, and has included participation on interview panels and educational visits to The Sennedd when these were allowed.

Opportunities to continue this area of work and awareness raising for young people are being considered by the service as Covid-19 restrictions are gradually reduced.