# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Powys County Council – removal of enhanced monitoring arrangements for social services** |
| **DATE** | **02 November 2020** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services** |

This statement informs members of the outcome of Care Inspectorate Wales’ (CIW) September inspection of Powys Council’s social services for children and adults. The council has made substantial progress in improving its social services provision and the enhanced monitoring arrangements have been removed.

CIW’s inspections of children’s services in July 2017 and adult services in January 2018 identified significant failings and concerns, resulting in the local authority being placed under enhanced monitoring arrangements. It was required to develop improvement plans. An improvement and assurance board was set up to support the council leader and oversee progress in social services.

CIW has carried out nine pieces of monitoring activity, including a follow up inspection of children’s services in October 2018 and an interim assurance review of adult services in March 2020; a performance evaluation inspection in September and a multiagency improvement conference in October.

The September inspection was primarily to review how well the authority’s social services continue to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and wellbeing. CIW found the local authority had made significant progress since its previous inspections. Areas of strength were identified in respect of leadership and management, partnership working and early intervention and prevention in children’s services.

The October conference noted the commitment of the authority’s leader and the portfolio holders to continue to develop services and sustain the improvements made. Relationships and engagement between partners were also judged to be much improved with observations made about robust arrangements, honesty, transparency, shared goals and constructiveness.

CIW has concluded significant progress has been made and enhanced monitoring arrangements are no longer required.

This is consistent with the outcome of a wider review of the improvement and assurance board conducted earlier this year, which concluded the organisation was now much better placed to drive its own improvement. On this basis the Minister for Housing and Local Government has agreed to move from a statutory improvement and assurance board to local arrangements to oversee and drive improvement.

I am pleased the local authority intends to keep a close focus on social services as part of these local arrangements, with a dedicated social services service improvement board. External challenge and advice will continue to form a key part of these new arrangements as will a strengthened assurance role for scrutiny.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and determination demonstrated by senior leaders and staff at all levels of the authority to change and improve services for the people of Powys.

Powys is described as a ‘learning authority’ and keen to continue delivering improvements in performance. People in Powys can be assured the local authority is committed to enabling people to have their voices heard.