



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau a Diwylliant
The Communities and Culture Committee**

**Dydd Mercher, 5 Mawrth 2008
Wednesday, 5 March 2008**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Paul Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Nerys Evans	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Janice Gregory	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Lesley Griffiths	Llafur Labour
David Lloyd	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol
Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Chris Reading	Clerc Clerk
Denise Rogers	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.01 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.01 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Janice Gregory:** Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Communities and Culture Committee. I start by reminding everyone please to switch off any electronic equipment that they may have about their person, such as mobile phones, BlackBerrys or pagers. In the event of an emergency—and I am given to understand that no fire drill is scheduled for today—please leave the building in an orderly and safe fashion. You will be guided by the ushers. I have received an apology from Lynne Neagle, who will be late this morning. There are no other apologies, so there are no substitutions.

9.01 a.m.

Cytuno ar Gylch Gorchwyl yr Ymchwiliad Nesaf i Gam-drin Domestig
Agree Terms of Reference for the Next Inquiry into Domestic Abuse

[2] **Janice Gregory:** Item 2 is to agree the terms of reference for our next inquiry, which will be into domestic abuse. Members will remember that we agreed this topic at our previous meeting. We now have to look at the important issues of terms of reference and the draft programme, because we will need to invite witnesses to give evidence to committee. Denise Rogers on my left is from the Members' research service, and did wonderful work with the previous Social Justice and Regeneration Committee. Denise has not prepared a briefing, but

she is here to guide us and answer any questions that we may have as to how we will take forward this inquiry.

[3] I ask you to look at the recommendations in section 2 of paper 1. The recommendations look at what we would want as required outcomes. I will take them line by line. It is recommended that the committee considers the matters set out in the paper: approves the terms of reference, which we will do in a moment; approves the programme; approves or amends the schedule of suggested witnesses at annex 1; and approves the call for evidence at annex 2 and proposed consultees at annex 3.

[4] Although this is not entirely relevant, I would like to put on record now that we add the Charity Commission to our list of consultees, if it is not already on there—and I apologise if it is. I had a meeting with the Charity Commission yesterday, and I understand that it now has a Wales office, but is not on either ours or the Welsh Assembly Government's database of consultees. Having worked on the inquiry into the voluntary sector, I think that it is vital that it appears. Therefore, I ask the clerk, with your permission, to add it to our list of consultees. I see that you are in agreement.

[5] I see that Peter and Lesley have arrived. Good morning. We are just looking at section 2 of paper 1, which outlines recommendations for the domestic abuse inquiry. Does anyone have any issues with the terms of reference? Let us look at them first. The first one is,

[6] 'Delivery of the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for tackling domestic abuse'.

[7] Are we all agreed on that?

<p>[8] Nerys Evans: O ran y cylch gorchwyl yn ehangach, cynhelir rhaglenni tramgwyddwyr yng Nghaerfyrddin, ond cânt eu hariannu gan San Steffan yn hytrach na'r Cynulliad, ac felly a fyddai modd i'r cylch gorchwyl edrych ar bethau a ariennir gan San Steffan? Dylem edrych ar bethau ehangach yn hytrach nag ar bethau sy'n cael eu darparu gan y Cynulliad a'i asiantaethau yn unig.</p>	<p>Nerys Evans: On the terms of reference more broadly, perpetrator programmes are run in Carmarthenshire, but they are funded by Westminster rather than the Assembly, so could we include initiatives funded by Westminster in the terms of reference? We should look at broader issues rather than just at what is provided by the Assembly and its agencies.</p>
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[9] **Peter Black:** I think that there is an issue in terms of a whole range of community safety matters where we have funding from the Assembly and the Home Office. The issue is not so much that we have two different funding streams, although that is an issue, but that there is a disparity between objectives. Although we cannot scrutinise what the Home Office does, we can look to see whether different objectives are being set for that funding that conflict with Welsh Assembly Government objectives, and the impact that has on the service.

[10] **Janice Gregory:** I am more than happy for us to do that. I will ask Chris to add that, using a suitable form of wording.

[11] Other than that, is everyone happy with the terms of reference? Does it go far enough, or too far?

[12] **Peter Black:** This is also outside our brief, but I do not know whether there is a role to look at how the police respond to these issues.

[13] **Janice Gregory:** Strangely enough, just before you came in, Chris was telling me that the police have been in touch and are very keen to engage with us. I suppose that the

scrutiny of how the police respond and what action they take can be robustly scrutinised when they come in, or when the agencies come in. Do you want that added to the terms of reference?

[14] **Peter Black:** I do not know whether it needs to be added to the terms of reference, but I think that in terms of the inquiry, we could visit them—they have especially designed suites, do they not?—and have a discussion with them about how they liaise with the various agencies, what problems they face and what is good about it. That would be very helpful in helping us to assess how good the service is.

[15] **Janice Gregory:** That is a good point. In fact, when I discussed visits with Chris and Sarah, I mentioned a suite in Merthyr Tydfil, which is solely for dealing with this type of abuse and rape. I thought that we could perhaps look at going to Merthyr Tydfil and holding the meeting in the Assembly offices there, which is what we did with the former Social Justice and Regeneration Committee. We could then go to see the suite, which is literally a stone's throw away. I think that it would be important for the committee to visit that.

[16] **Peter Black:** That is an excellent idea, and I think that the suite in Merthyr Tydfil is a good example. I hope that they have such suites elsewhere also. Most major centres of population should have that sort of thing.

[17] **Janice Gregory:** We can explore that further. It was just an idea that we had.

[18] **Joyce Watson:** I am very keen to explore, because I see that the provision of compulsory and voluntary interventions aimed at perpetrators is mentioned in the terms of reference, how much money is spent on the perpetrators compared to how much is spent on the victims. I am extremely keen to look at that, because I know what the figures are now.

[19] In terms of the police, it might be advantageous for us to note the incidence of death of females between the ages of 25 and 40, and to look at how many die as a direct result of domestic abuse, which is the greatest cause of death as a result of crime.

[20] I also wish to look at police authorities' targets, if that is possible. You have a national target, and then the police authorities have a target whereby they decide where to target their resources. We should see how many have tackling domestic abuse as a target, compared to the figures that we find, and whether we can try to influence that. I think that is where it starts. If you do not have it as a target, you are not putting your resources in. I know that Dyfed-Powys Police used to have it as a target, but then it dropped it, and we need to ask why it did that.

9.10 a.m.

[21] **Janice Gregory:** Okay; I think that we can work that into the terms of reference. We will add another line in terms of—

[22] **Joyce Watson:** One aspect that is crucial in delivering all of this is health. That is the other thing that we need to look at, if we are going to take a holistic approach to ending domestic abuse, because most women present to their GP—and they are a very weak link in the chain, I must tell you—or to an accident and emergency department. I know that there are issues at the moment—not in every case, but in many—in terms of the health service accepting that it needs to play its part as a major player.

[23] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. Lynne wanted to ensure that we will look at issues of sexual abuse. We will factor all of that in by including another line in the terms of reference. We will prepare that line for the terms of reference and e-mail it to committee members, so that we

will know that everyone is happy with it. Please come back to us as soon as you open it, if you have any comments to make. If you do not e-mail back, we will assume that you are content. Is everybody happy with that? I see that you are. That was very useful; thank you very much.

[24] We are happy with the terms of reference. I think that we have also covered section 6, which is 'Some of the issues to cover during evidence gathering sessions'. However, I think that it is important to incorporate the issues raised during the previous discussion in the terms of reference because if we do not do it now, we may well not look at those under the heading 'terms of reference'. On the issues to cover during evidence-gathering sessions, does anybody have anything to add, bearing in mind what we have just discussed? What if, so that the earlier discussion in terms of sexual abuse on record, we include that, as well as putting a line in the terms of reference that would cover all of that? Would you be happy with that? We would be specific in section 6 and have a more succinct line in the terms of reference about looking at the issues. I see that you are happy with that. That is great.

[25] On section 7, the programme, covering March, April to May, April to June, and July, are the periods allowed too long or too short? Is there not enough time? Are there not enough meetings? Do you think that we will cover it all in the time given?

[26] **Peter Black:** The end of this calendar year is a reasonable aspiration.

[27] **Janice Gregory:** I think that it is as well. That is what we worked to, but it will mean that we will meet near enough every week in some months. We agreed at the beginning that we would meet every other week, but that we would meet on additional Wednesdays to scrutinise the Ministers. If you look at our list of meetings, you will see that that has been factored in. So, we are happy with that and we think that the end of the year is a reasonable aspiration. I think that it is, if we are going to do justice to this subject and get out for visits, with the difficulties involved with a 12.30 p.m. start to Plenary on Wednesdays. I think that aiming for the end of the year is reasonable.

[28] The suggested witnesses are in annex 1. As you can imagine, there is a whole host of witnesses that we could call in or go to see and we have tried to cover as many as possible. We have tried to include things such as the Dyn Project because we know that men are also victims of abuse, although not to the same degree. We have tried to cover everything that we can think of, including the Commissioner for Older People in Wales and the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Does anybody else have any other ideas?

[29] **Nerys Evans:** Yr wyf am ychwanegu Fforwm Trais yn y Cartref Sir Gaerfyrddin sy'n gwneud llawer o waith radical yn y maes hwn. Mae enw da gan y fforwm o ran cyflawni rhaglenni yng Nghymru. O ran gwybodaeth, mae'r fforwm yn cynnal cynhadledd un dydd ar ddiwedd y mis hwn. Efallai fod hynny'n rhywbeth inni ffactora i mewn i'r gwaith.

Nerys Evans: I would like to add Carmarthenshire Domestic Abuse Forum, which does a lot of radical work in this field. The forum has a good name in terms of delivering programmes in Wales. For your information, the forum is hosting a one-day conference at the end of this month. That might be something for us to factor into the work.

[30] **Peter Black:** The minority ethnic women's network that is based in Swansea—

[31] **Nerys Evans:** That is on the list.

[32] **Peter Black:** It is there, is it? It is in the list of witnesses?

[33] **David Lloyd:** It is on the last page.

- [34] **Janice Gregory:** It is one of the consultees in the big list, in annex 3.
- [35] **Peter Black:** I was talking about annex 1, in terms of witnesses.
- [36] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. So, that group is in Swansea.
- [37] **Joyce Watson:** There is also MEWN Cymru.
- [38] **Peter Black:** Well, I know the Swansea one; I do not know the other one.
- [39] **Joyce Watson:** I did ask for MEWN Cymru and MEWN Swansea to be added. What happened to them? They are on the consultation list, are they?
- [40] **Janice Gregory:** Yes, we are talking now about the people that we would call in as possible witnesses.
- [41] **Joyce Watson:** I agree with having South Wales Police here. However, if you are really going to look at rurality and policing, we need to add Dyfed-Powys Police.
- [42] **Janice Gregory:** I would imagine that when the police are approached, they will probably send whoever has responsibility for this within their police sector.
- [43] **Peter Black:** It depends on which force you approach. If you have South Wales Police and Dyfed-Powys Police in together, so that both forces are represented in one session, you will cover the larger population and the urban area of south Wales plus the rural area of Dyfed Powys and perhaps you could compare and contrast the evidence.
- [44] **Janice Gregory:** I am conscious that we have no—
- [45] **Peter Black:** It does not involve an additional meeting; it would mean them giving evidence side by side.
- [46] **Janice Gregory:** I understand that, but I am conscious that we are a bit south-Wales-centric, unfortunately, and we need to move out. We could invite the four police forces. If you are happy with that. I am in your hands in terms of meetings. We will have a meeting where we just look at the police issues and we will have the four forces in. We may have to add another meeting to do that.
- [47] **Joyce Watson:** I see that the National Criminal Justice Board and the Crown Prosecution Service are on the list. Does the National Criminal Justice Board cover magistrates? It is about training—
- [48] **Janice Gregory:** You mean training for magistrates?
- [49] **Joyce Watson:** That is what I want to look at. There is a training programme and we have played a part in getting that pulled together and perhaps even in funding it, but it might not be equally delivered or adhered to. The time by which someone gets to a local court is a fairly important part of this, because, at that point, the injuries may not be hugely significant. It is about how it deals with that and sends the message out. Also, large numbers of the chairs are men, and it is about understanding, and so on.
- [50] **Janice Gregory:** We will add that to section 6, because that has come up there. Chris, perhaps we can look at who would be best to come in for the issue about magistrates.

[51] **Peter Black:** There are several organisations on this list whose written evidence I would like to see before we decide to take their oral evidence. Relate, for example, may have something important to say and I would like to see what its written evidence says. The same goes for some of the other institutions. I am not sure whether we have covered probation and social work here and whether they need to be covered. The probation service certainly does. The Welsh Local Government Association will be coming in and I would hope to question its representatives, but that is the only organisation on the list that we could ask about housing issues. The Association of Directors for Social Services in Wales, for example, should come in because that could give us a social work perspective on this. I am conscious that we are adding to the list, which is why I suggested that some of the organisations may not need to give oral evidence.

[52] **Janice Gregory:** Yes, absolutely. The term ‘possible witnesses’ means exactly that; this is just a starting point, and we can add and take away as we choose. That is what today’s meeting is all about.

9.20 a.m.

[53] **Peter Black:** As we are looking at statutory services, I think that we need to look at probation, social work and housing, which should, hopefully, be covered by the probation service, the Association of Directors of Social Services and the Welsh Local Government Association.

[54] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. We will go away and think about how we can maximise the time that we have.

[55] **Lesley Griffiths:** We will ask for written evidence from those on the list of consultees in annex 3, and we could then draw some of those into annex 1.

[56] **Janice Gregory:** Yes, absolutely. If you want to add anyone to the list, please let us know; we have tried to cover everyone. These will all be sent a letter and asked to send in a written submission. I think that we had 60 voluntary sector organisations.

[57] **Joyce Watson:** If we asked a local authority—or any major player—to give written evidence, and they did not give it, I would be concerned. Would we then follow that through, and say, ‘Right, we would like to see you giving evidence’?

[58] **Janice Gregory:** You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink, can you? We would be disappointed if certain organisations did not respond; it is not just local authorities—there are many on this list that we would expect to engage with us on this inquiry. However, it would be impossible for our team to follow up every letter with another letter saying, ‘Can you ensure that you reply?’. The letters are nicely written, and they stress the importance of the inquiry. However, as I said, you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.

[59] Chris has just pointed out that, similar to the handling of the previous inquiry, we will try to group witnesses. We normally have about three to a session; that would allow us, under our work programme, 15 witnesses for the whole lot, so we are going to have to be robust in how we decide who we invite. You will be kept in the loop about that. However, as Peter rightly said, the first thing is that the written evidence needs to come in, which is what we did last time. We were successful with the last inquiry, having filtered through the written evidence and then called people in. I am keen to have people in who would not normally give evidence to an Assembly committee, so that we can get down to the grass-roots stuff.

[60] **Joyce Watson:** On annex 1, I cannot think of the name of the overall body, but we

need to consult the youth services, and the youth clubs.

[61] **Janice Gregory:** Are you thinking of the Clubs for Young People Wales—formerly the Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs of Wales?

[62] **Joyce Watson:** No, I am thinking of something else—I think that it starts with ‘Youth’. It has done many things with the Assembly—it empowers young people to find their voice, but I cannot think of the name.

[63] **Janice Gregory:** Is it Funky Dragon?

[64] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, it is Funky Dragon. It would be worth getting a young person’s opinion and seeing what they think, because, if we are going to change anything, that is where we need to start. We need to hear their opinions, if they can manage it—they may not be able to manage it.

[65] **Janice Gregory:** Funky Dragon is on the list of consultees in annex 3, on page 13, so it will be consulted, and we will have a look at its evidence. However, important as it is, I do not know whether I would want to subject someone to this. I am sure that we are all aware that the evidence that we will hear and that we will read will be harrowing, and we will need to steel ourselves to listen to some of the most difficult ones. I would not want to put a young person through that in public, so we need to think about those issues. The usual people who come in are fine, but we will have a chat with the clerk about that.

[66] I take it that no-one wants to add anyone to annex 3.

[67] **Peter Black:** We have the whole of Wales on the list.

[68] **Janice Gregory:** Or the universe. That is what I thought when we went through it.

[69] **Peter Black:** Despite what the One Wales Government may think, Wales is not yet the universe. I am positive about that.

[70] **Janice Gregory:** No, Ogmores is the universe.

[71] So, we are all content with that. Thank you for that, and for the additions. It is really important.

[72] We have done annex 3; is everyone happy with the call for evidence in annex 2? I see that you are. I now need to sit down with our team and work around the issues that you have raised this morning. I see that we are all content with that, and that Denise has made a note of all that. If we think of anything as we go along, we are flexible. Something might come up in the written evidence that we have not covered; if so, we will revisit it.

9.26 a.m.

**Blaenraglen Waith ar gyfer Tymor yr Haf
Forward Work Programme for the Summer Term**

[73] **Janice Gregory:** We have tried to look at this in the light of the inquiry. As we have just said, if we choose to have more witnesses in, we might have to look at additional meetings. We would have to apply to the Business Committee for that, if everyone is available on that Wednesday. So, if you are happy for us to do that, can we agree this forward work programme today? We should keep it in the back of our minds that we may need to be a bit flexible on dates if we need to call in extra witnesses, and we would need to meet on

additional Wednesdays. Is that okay with everyone? I see that it is.

[74] One thing that I need to raise with you is the question of whether or not we will consider the draft report on voluntary sector funding in a private session. When I raised this before, we said that we would think about doing it in a private session. Are you happy to do that, or is someone vehemently opposed to it?

[75] **Nerys Evans:** Beth yw'r rhesymau **Nerys Evans:** What are the reasons for dros gwrdd yn breifat i'w drafod? meeting in private to discuss it?

[76] **Janice Gregory:** I think that we need to look at where we are going with the report. The report will be published anyway—there is no hidden agenda, and I would hate it if anyone thought that that was the case. However, we can have a frank and robust discussion when we go through all of the recommendations.

[77] **Peter Black:** The report also has a greater impact when it is published and you get far more coverage for it if you do not signal what will be in it and if people do not cover the meeting.

[78] **Janice Gregory:** We are lucky on this committee, because we are all very consensual, and I do not envisage—*[Interruption.]* What did you say? I missed it.

[79] **Peter Black:** We are at the moment.

[80] **Janice Gregory:** I think that we always will be.

[81] So, if we can discuss it in a private session, as Peter said, we will have the maximum impact.

[82] **David Lloyd:** Will there be a Plenary debate on our committee report?

[83] **Janice Gregory:** Yes, there will.

[84] **Mr Reading:** We have to wait for the Government's response before we fix a date.

[85] **Janice Gregory:** I will not say when it is likely to be, in case I am held to ransom.

[86] We will have a private session after Easter during which we will discuss just that draft report.

[87] Joyce and Mark are going to see the community foundations in Manchester and Bristol. We have been contacted and told that there is a Welsh community foundation. Despite that, you are not off the hook; you still have to go to Bristol and Manchester. We thought that we would ask the Welsh community foundation to come in to give us a presentation. Where is it, Chris?

[88] **Mr Reading:** It is in the centre of Cardiff.

[89] **Janice Gregory:** It is not far then, is it? So, it will come in. Apparently it heard through the grapevine that Joyce and Mark were going, and rang to tell us where it is. That is useful.

[90] **Joyce Watson:** *[Inaudible.]*

[91] **Janice Gregory:** No, I understand that they were polite and very nice.

[92] Mark is sorry that he has to leave early. However, we will be finishing soon so it does not matter.

[93] **Peter Black:** You cannot say that.

9.30 a.m.

[94] **Janice Gregory:** No, I did not mean that it does not matter that Mark will not be here. I am grateful for his apologies, but we probably could have met him on the way, going back. Are there any suggestions about venues for the domestic abuse inquiry? Do not shout them out now—I would like you to go away and think about them, and e-mail me or the clerk if you can think of anywhere. We have already talked about a couple of issues, but bear in mind our strict timetable. I hate to say this, but Wednesdays are full up and we must be back by 12.30 p.m.. It has always been an issue, but if we were of a mind to get out a bit further, I am sure that we could.

[95] We will start the inquiry, as we did with the last one, with the Minister and the Deputy Minister, because we need to know where the Welsh Assembly Government is in terms of the strategy that Edwina has put in place. So, I was minded to invite them in first, to give us a grounding, as we did with the last inquiry, and then we can go forward from there. If you are happy with that, we will need to contact the Minister's and the Deputy Minister's offices. We thought that we would invite Gwenda in to give us an idea about the social services aspect.

[96] **Peter Black:** We also need the Deputy Minister for Housing, because there are housing issues around this, particularly in terms of refuge and aspects like that. So, we also need to have her in.

[97] **Janice Gregory:** Okay, so we will invite the Minister and the two Deputy Ministers.

[98] **Nerys Evans:** Beth am y **Nerys Evans:** What about the possibility of posibilrwydd o gael rhywun o'r Swyddfa having someone from the Home Office to tell Gartref i ddweud beth maent yn ei wneud ar us what they are doing at this level? y lefel hon?

[99] **Janice Gregory:** If I recall correctly, we did invite some Home Office Ministers for the last inquiry, but we were never quite able to match up our diaries.

[100] **Peter Black:** Have we invited Ben Bradshaw MP?

[101] **Janice Gregory:** We have done in the past, but not for a domestic abuse inquiry.

[102] **Peter Black:** He probably would not feel safe crossing the border. [*Laughter.*]

[103] **Janice Gregory:** Let us move on, thank you. We will look into that possibility. So, we are all happy—we all know where we are going and where we have been. You will receive an e-mail from the clerking team—please open it and do not leave it lying in your inbox—and any comments will be gratefully received, especially on where we can go and the witnesses that we can invite to come in. We will continue making the arrangements, and we will see you all after Easter. Thank you. I declare the meeting closed.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 9.33 a.m.
The meeting ended at 9.33 a.m.*