



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

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

**Dydd Mercher, 30 Ebrill 2008
Wednesday, 30 April 2008**

Cynnwys
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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi 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)
David Lloyd	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Morgan Facknell	Prif Weithredwr, Cymorth i Fenywod Cymru Caerdydd Chief Executive, Cardiff Welsh Women's Aid
Sam Jones	Cydgysylltydd Cam-drin Domestig, Fforwm Cam-drin Domestig Sir Gaerfyrddin Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator, Carmarthenshire Domestic Abuse Forum
Nesta Lloyd-Jones	Cymorth i Fenywod Cymru Welsh Women's Aid
Jan Pickles	Cyfarwyddwr, Uned Diogelwch Merched Caerdydd Director, Cardiff Women's Safety Unit

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Chris Reading	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.06 a.m.

The meeting began at 9.06 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Janice Gregory:** Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Communities and Culture Committee. This morning, we will continue to take evidence for our committee inquiry into domestic abuse. Before I start, I have to go through the usual procedure. Headsets are available for simultaneous translation on channel 1 and for amplification of sound on channel 0. I ask you all to check that you have switched off your mobile phones and any other electronic device that you may have, as they interfere with our sound equipment. We are not expecting a fire drill this morning, so, if the alarm sounds, you will be asked to leave the

building in a safe manner, so please be guided by our ushers. I have received apologies from Mark Isherwood, Lynne Neagle and Lesley Griffiths and there are no substitutions for those Members this morning.

9.06 a.m.

Tystiolaeth i Ymchwiliad y Pwyllgor i Gam-Drin Domestig Evidence for Committee Inquiry into Domestic Abuse

[2] **Janice Gregory:** We move to item 2, which is evidence for the committee inquiry into domestic abuse. I am delighted to welcome Jan Pickles, who is the director of the Cardiff Women's Safety Unit. Thank you, Jan, for sparing the time to come this morning. It is important that we take evidence from people who are at the front line of this. We met when you came to the former Social Justice and Regeneration Committee some years ago now; it seems like only yesterday. I can still remember the evidence that you gave to that committee, it was so stark and so upsetting—I think that that is the only way we can describe it. I have briefed Members that some of the evidence that you will give us will be harrowing, but it is what is happening out there on the ground. Thank you so much for coming this morning.

[3] You are used to the committees of the National Assembly, I am sure, so, I invite you to make your presentation, if you want, and then Members have a set of questions that they will ask you. There are no trick questions; this is a serious attempt to try to gain as much information as we can for this inquiry. I ask you to start.

[4] **Ms Pickles:** I have not prepared a presentation because of the materials, but I would like to make an opening statement. When we came to this sector, it felt like this was an overwhelming, chronic social problem that many agencies were floundering over. In a way, it paralysed professionals, because these were the sort of problems that needed lots of people to work on them, and, because of our silo mentality, because of funding and targets—and it is the same in many sectors—that was not happening. So, what we had to do was quite simple. I felt that there was almost a leadership void and I knew that we could fill it. We had creative ideas from around the world, ideas that we had stolen with pride from Australia and Canada, and West Yorkshire, and we knew that we could shape it into a model, but there was no point shaping it into a model, unless we could demonstrate that it worked, because the world is littered with people with good ideas that have never taken off. So, we knew right from the start that we needed to externally evaluate, sharpen, and refine the processes that we were going to develop, and there was a group of us with quite clear-cut ideas about this.

9.10 a.m.

[5] My background is that I have worked in this city since the late 1970s in public protection; so, I have a huge amount of experience of public protection, front-line working directly with young people, offenders, women and men, particularly men who are abusive to their partners. Other people whom I worked with came from a policing background or a child protection background and we decided that we could take these ideas and shape them, but that this external evaluation was key and we were phenomenally lucky in that I approached Professor Mike Maguire at Cardiff University, who was 'Mr Victim' in the 1980s. He would hate me for saying that, but that is how he was known on the academic circuit, and I asked him if we could get a cheap evaluator from the university, which is obviously not a language that the university speaks. However, he came up with a new American academic who had just come over, Amanda Robinson, who was very interested in domestic violence and policing, and she was somebody who did numbers. So, we knew that we could take all the anecdotal stuff and all the qualitative data that had been around for years a step further; we knew that we could bring a quantitative approach to this.

[6] What does success look like? If you had asked that of many of the professionals working in this sector, they would not have been able to describe it. They would have described a utopia where men and women had equal relationships and everyone was lovey-dovey, and everyone knew how to work a washing machine and to look after children, but we were not interested in that. We were just interested in reducing harm and we were very focused about reducing jealousy and controlling behaviour, which is the key of domestic abuse, not violence, but also, clearly, in reducing the violence and physical harm that happens. So, we put together a model and, again, we talked to people, we refined it and we tried it in Cardiff. I was phenomenally lucky to find some funding in the first year from the violence against women stream of funding from the Home Office. That was just a year's 'Go away, sort it out' money. Wales was not even allowed to go into the national evaluation programme, which, in fact, was a stroke of luck, because it meant we brought in external evaluation which was produced to a deadline, whereas the English stuff took about four years, by which point good projects had floundered and gone, and there was absolutely no point. So the fact that Wales got shafted in that way worked in our favour.

[7] Therefore, we put together the evaluation on the model, which has become so significant that the model is now national Home Office policy. It was announced as national policy in March this year by the Home Secretary that by 2011 every victim of domestic violence across the UK will have access to a domestic violence MARAC—that is, a multi-agency risk assessment conference. That model came from Cardiff. We are now in a position whereby I can give you endless amounts of data on this. The conference meets every fortnight, and 15 to 18 agencies attend. Each case gets to 10 to 15 minutes, which is not much for these very high-risk cases. It focuses on the top 10 per cent of risk cases coming through this city.

[8] How do we work out who gets to MARAC? We work it out by a simple actuarial checklist that we designed in south Wales based on 47 domestic murders. A few of us reviewed those murders, headed up by Sally Burke, a police officer from South Wales Police, and Sean Kelly from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. We pulled out what the risk factors were and we ran with our top 20 risk factors, so that if someone presents to any front-line member of staff, whether they are a police officer, a midwife, a health visitor, a youth worker, they will ask questions about them. They have to be asked routinely by police in domestic violence situations. We have been in negotiations with the Association of Chief Police Officers this year, over refining those 20 questions and coming together on a national model, which is remarkable, because we are working with the Metropolitan Police and when you think of that force and the power that it has—and South Wales Police is a relatively small force—we punch above our weight.

[9] So there has been a working group comprised of myself, people from the Met, and Amanda Robinson, our evaluator, chaired by Brian Moore, who is the chief constable for Wiltshire and the ACPO lead on domestic violence. We have agreed 24 questions. The extra four will cover so-called honour-based violence. So we are improving and are still refining. Once people tick 10 of those questions, or your professional judgement as a midwife or a health visitor is such that the case really worries you, it will go to MARAC. A case gets 10 to 15 minutes at MARAC and an action plan is put in. Around each case there may be half a dozen actions. Those actions have to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely, and they have to be completed to a deadline so that everybody knows what the picture is. We know that, a year after this 15-minute intervention, 42 per cent of the families involved are safe; they are off the public protection agenda. I have never been involved in a process that is as successful.

[10] Who does the work of the MARAC? All these people have busy day jobs; if you are running an intake desk in child protection services, you are up to your neck in it and you are being given more work through MARAC. However, we are saying these are the high-risk and

critical few when we have learned from part 8s that children die or are seriously injured. If you look at a sample of children in Caerphilly who were removed by social services for neglect, the overriding indicator in those neglect cases is domestic abuse. This is core child protection business. Last year, 692 Cardiff children went through the Cardiff MARAC; they got a mention. They would not have met the thresholds of any other forum. Some of them might have, but the bulk of them would not. That means that 40 per cent of those 692 children are safe this year. These are fantastic outcomes, which is why the Government has chosen to roll this out.

[11] My work was about developing the advocates, who would do 80 per cent of the work from the MARAC, and I have a team in Cardiff, who come from a mixture of backgrounds: a police officer, somebody who was a social worker, two people who worked for the Black Association of Women Step Out Ltd, and somebody who comes from a counselling background. They offer crisis packages to our high-risk cases. Sadly, we do not have enough capacity—and I am not asking for money, because I know that this is not the place, although I am good at asking for money from people, in fact, 10 days ago I received £100,000 from a private-sector company in the city to do some work on the Flying Start programme to target domestic violence work at our most vulnerable children. We knew that we could work with half of the 400 high-risk cases in the city in the first quarter of this year. Of that half whom we contacted, the vast majority engaged with us. Of those who come through our unit, 70 per cent will be made safe by a four-month deadline. On day one, we assess their risk level—they are very high-risk cases—and, by the four-month point, when they are reassessed, their risk has reduced to a safe and manageable level. It is a short-term intervention, but it is not just a quick fix, because the MARAC data show that, at the year point, 42 per cent of those people are safe.

[12] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you, Jan. I could listen for hours to such a success story.

[13] **Ms Pickles:** It is also a Welsh success story—that, for me, is key.

[14] **Janice Gregory:** You supplied papers, which Members will have read, so although I do not want to stop you in full flow, we are in danger of straying into the questions. So I will now start the questions and then, if we have time at the end, we can round it all up. The first question is from Paul.

[15] **Paul Davies:** I will just concentrate on the Assembly Government's strategy for a moment. Do you believe that the focus of the Assembly Government's current strategy, which employs a non-gender-specific definition of domestic abuse, is the right one?

[16] **Ms Pickles:** I was one of the authors of that strategy, so you would expect me to say that it is really good. Clearly, that is the way forward. We provide services for men. I manage the Dyn service, which is the development service for Wales for male victims and we were looking at this on Tuesday, because we provide services funded through the community safety partnership in Cardiff for Cardiff. However, we do not just want to do that; we again want a model that rolls out and we are looking at developing a pilot scheme, probably in the west, where we are looking at putting in advocacy services for male victims. The risk profile for male victims in same-sex partnerships is very similar to that of women. Stalking is an issue for them, so they sometimes need to flee a home, so we need to provide some sort of refuge space for men in same-sex partnerships. The risk profile is very different for heterosexual men, and I do not believe that refuges are relevant in terms of putting in safety measures for that group.

9.20 a.m.

[17] **Nerys Evans:** Diolch am y papur ac **Nerys Evans:** Thank you for the paper and

am eich tystiolaeth. Dywedasoich mai chi oedd un o awduron strategaeth Llywodraeth y Cynulliad a gafodd ei greu yn 2005. Wrth edrych ar y sefyllfa tair blynedd yn ddiweddarach, pa elfennau o'r strategaeth a ddylid eu cryfhau, oes unrhyw elfennau o gwbl, ac a oes unrhyw elfennau sydd heb gael y sylw priodol?

for the evidence that you have provided. You are one of the authors of the Assembly Government's strategy, which was created in 2005. Looking at the situation three years on, which elements of the strategy need to be strengthened, if any, and are there any elements that have not been given the appropriate attention?

[18] **Ms Pickles:** The prevention agenda is, in my opinion, as endless as a piece of string and I am not sure that we have a model—can you hear me? I see that you can, but I am getting a lot of feedback. I am not sure that we have a model that is focused on the outcome of prevention. A lot of time and energy goes on raising awareness and creating goodwill, and you cannot measure that. I want a performance culture within this environment and I think that the strategy is weak on that. At the time, it was the right document at the right time, but the agenda has moved on. That document set an overarching goal of safety but, within that, we need to name people's definition and understanding of safety and put performance targets on it.

[19] This needs to be pushed on the schools agenda. I have just done training for nearly 500 teachers across the city, and they are out of their depth in dealing with domestic violence. We have a good strategy in Wales and we need to do more on that. I understand that the personal and social education slot is heavily targeted by many agencies, but we ought to be developing a culture about positive relationships, as opposed to dealing with domestic violence. There needs to be a much broader context, which is about sharing, trust and basic values, and I think that that needs to be put across. I have an 11-year-old and a 12-year-old who are in school in this city and I asked them what happened in their PSE slot last week and they did a rehearsal for a play. I am frustrated, because I want them to learn about the danger of paracetamol, not necessarily domestic abuse. One of them, a few months ago, had a session on how to write a cheque; I am not even sure cheques are currency anymore, so I do feel that certainly the prevention agenda could be dealt with.

[20] I would also like to see targets right across the piece, I appreciate that targets can do an awful lot of harm, that if we have a target that relates to the overarching commitment to safety and is not about individual agencies' targets, then I think we are speaking a creative language which will take the agenda forward.

[21] **Joyce Watson:** My question is about addressing the needs of particular groups. The strategy seems to be all-encompassing. What I really want to ask you is, in your opinion and experience, are there any groups of people who are less well-served by your organisation or partners, or by public services in general?

[22] **Ms Pickles:** I will start with the MARAC because that is the key to much of this. If we look at the black minority ethnic population who go through MARAC, last year in Cardiff it was 12.4 per cent, which is good. So, MARAC works for the black minority ethnic population, and Jasvinder Sanghera, who wrote the book, *Shame*, and who set up Karma Nirvana in Derby, spoke at a select committee two months ago at Westminster, stating that she felt that MARAC worked in honour-based violence. I feel that the model works for that group.

[23] I do not think it works so well for people with disabilities or for people who are elderly. I have recently done some training, which was Home Office-funded, for a group from Age Concern. Many people see abuse as something that happens to younger people, but we pick up referrals of people over 80 and we do pieces of creative work around those people. Often, these people grew up in a time where there was nowhere to go and the attitude was that

you made your bed, so you had to lie in it, you should get on with it because this is what married life is like. So, abuse could have been going on for 56 years and clearly they feel that there is no choice and no way out. We did a piece of work where we brought forward a hospital appointment for the alleged perpetrator and when the hospital transport service picked up them up they telephoned us. We then went in and saw the victim, who could not come out of their home. So, co-ordinated pieces of work through MARAC are happening with regard to the elderly, but we are not so good with that group, because the voluntary sector that works with this group sees it more as carer abuse, and many people do not meet the threshold for vulnerable adults.

[24] I do not think that the model works as well for young people. Those aged between 16 and 18 are old enough to be married, but they are also falling out of child protection procedures. This is an overlap between public protection, domestic abuse and child protection, and it is the people on the edges who fall through the gaps. I do not think that we are that good. I would like to have a young persons' worker who specifically works with, for example, a 16-year-old who has two children who comes through the unit. We always ensure that we have a young person on the team because it is important that the team reflects the city that it serves. Most of us are of a certain age, so it is quite nice to have one or two younger people because sometimes they want to talk to someone who reminds them of their mum and sometimes they do not.

[25] I have covered honour-based violence, age, the BME population and young people. There is also a vulnerable group of young people who are involved in sexual exploitation. Domestic abuse for them would be from the person who is running them and who is taking their money. That group is difficult to access. The organisation that I work for, Safer Wales, has a service called Street Life for these young people. Street Life has made a referral into MARAC, but only one so far. There is a group of young people, particularly the vulnerable ones, who we are poorer at accessing, because they are hard to reach.

[26] **Peter Black:** What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current arrangements for funding actions that tackle domestic abuse?

[27] **Ms Pickles:** I will give you an example. The community safety partnership in Cardiff is moving to a commissioning model. I have a post that is vacant, a domestic violence co-ordinator for the city, and I have been given confirmation that I will have funding for it for the next six months. I am not going to get a good candidate. The Home Office has agreed to top up that money, which comes via the Assembly to the CSP. I need three years' funding in order to plan and move forward and I am so grateful to the Assembly for providing that core to me. My lease runs out in January in the building that we are in; it is expensive to get a town centre building. No-one will give us a year's lease. I certainly cannot get a six-month lease. My long-term plan is for us to move to the Cardiff Royal Infirmary site, for which we have gained consent. This is where the sexual assault referral centre that we are opening in June will be located. The plan is to have the police public protection unit, us, and the SARC underneath it, so that we begin to develop for this city, as a model for other places, the idea of an integrated protection unit. However, you cannot make those plans if you do not have the long-term funding. So, the Assembly is unusual.

9.30 a.m.

[28] I understand the Home Office in Wales has just had £350,000 in order to support the development of MARACs and independent domestic violence advocates. It will make a decision in May, and that money will have to be spent by next March. Ten days ago, when I received the large private sector donation, it told me that there was no deadline by which I had to spend it and that it would trust my judgment. I am not used to that amount of freedom. That almost spooked me as much as being told I have only six months. I want some guidance,

I want guidelines, but I think that three-year funding is key.

[29] **Peter Black:** So, if you were to start a funding regime from scratch, how would you redesign it to make it more sustainable?

[30] **Ms Pickles:** I think we have to take out the competition element because it stops areas sharing, and we are often competing with each other for funding. So, Cardiff is competing with Swansea. That is such a negative culture for us to be in. If we want to create a sharing environment where ideas and intellectual property moves across freely, we have to take that competition out, we have to look at what an area needs. Commissioning is the way forward. I am aware that they are offering us a carrot of three-year funding at the end of it if we go through this sticky process. It is about commissioning by looking at what the data tells us and identifying the gaps. On my shelf, I have a range of bids that go from £10,000 to £50,000 according to what money is going to be announced. I do not know what will be announced next. That is no way to strategically plan. I also think that we need some overarching strategic management. The Assembly team does a fantastic job and I have a good working relationship with it. Last year, when I went through financial difficulties, it came in and supported me, not with money, but with time, energy, and encouragement. We sorted those difficulties out, and that is partly due to the hard work from that team.

[31] If we had someone who had an all-Wales brief, we would be aware of where the gaps are. I know where there is not a MARAC in Wales; I can tell you where there is a gap in terms of provision and in terms of MARAC provision, but we need someone who has that view. SARCs are a classic example. We had a really good one in Merthyr. Libby Jones, a remarkable woman, set up a SARC in Merthyr. There has been ad hoc development since. The Home Office offers £70,000 sweeteners; you go for it and then you find that you have to raise another £400,000. However, there we are; that is the story of the sector. Those who went for that money and had the ambition to grab that money and maybe just had the circumstances to take that money, will be able to develop the services. I do not think that is what victims want. We want to look at what victims need and provide for it. Cardiff has well-developed services and we are not greedy; we want to see development across Wales. What I personally want more than anything is that roll-out, so that you can get the same service in Colwyn Bay as you would in Carmarthen, and Llandeilo, or wherever you go in Wales.

[32] **Peter Black:** Thank you for that. The Deputy Minister for Housing recently informed the committee that she is developing a new Supporting People strategy. What changes to Supporting People do you believe could be used more effectively to support victims of domestic abuse?

[33] **Ms Pickles:** I have never had any Supporting People funding. My initial commitment was never to tread on Women's Aid's toes because Women's Aid has done a fantastic job for the last 30 years and I did not want to be the new girl on the block with the bright ideas who took funding from them. So, I have never applied for any of their funding streams. I know that there is a degree of frustration among Women's Aid groups, with regard to their having to employ someone to organise the returns for Supporting People, as opposed to employing someone to do the direct work. So, I know there is a massive issue, but there are people much better qualified to talk about it than me.

[34] **Joyce Watson:** To what extent, in your opinion, are the victims of domestic abuse identified and offered support as a result of their abuses being referred to perpetrator programmes or convicted of a domestic abuse related offence?

[35] **Ms Pickles:** A very small number come through the system, and we introduced specialist domestic violence courts in order to beef up the system. There are three things that you need to do to reduce your peaks in domestic violence: support victims, work with

perpetrators, and beef up systems to ensure that whether it be criminal justice or health, the systems there flag up domestic violence, communicate with other people and ensure that that victim accesses support. However, people are not in a position where perpetrators can access work.

[36] I worked for six years at the NSPCC men's work programme and have worked with many perpetrators of domestic violence on the Duluth model. I believe that those models work. At the moment, the probation service has a huge waiting list for the integrated domestic abuse programme, although I believe that it is going down. I understand that it has just completed its first IDAP programme in the prison, and I think that eight men went through it. This is just anecdotal and you must obviously take evidence from those people. My understanding is that two of those men are believed to have really changed. The difficulty with doing a programme that is very confrontational and challenging for male perpetrators is that it needs to be done in the community, because then they can practise what they are learning. If you do it in prison, it is very difficult for people to practise. It is also quite attractive going out for a programme, because it gets you out of your cell and it is quite stimulating and interesting. I am sure that if I was a prisoner I would be keen to attend a programme.

[37] Perpetrator programmes work. They need to increase their capacity within the statutory sector, within prisons and probation, through the national offender management service. We need voluntary sector based perpetrator programmes in the community that work to Respect guidelines. The risk is that—and, again, it is this lack of strategic development—you get people who have a bright idea and decide to run a programme for six weeks. Respect has a minimum number of hours of contact time. We can make people worse; we can teach perpetrators an emotional language, which means that they can control their victim better and they can control professionals. Any man who goes on the IDAP programme in Cardiff comes for mention at the Cardiff MARAC. So, if you are a health visitor going into that house and that chap, instead of going out the back door when you come in the front door, is sat there taking responsibility, using emotional language, and communicating, you are not just thinking, 'I have done a good piece of work here'; you are thinking, 'Am I being turned over by a very strategic perpetrator?'. We have to remain suspicious, because stopping jealousy and controlling behaviour is difficult. Stopping violence is relatively easy on those programmes, but we can make people more controlling. There is four year follow-up research work being done in the States—I think by Gottmann. He would reiterate that stopping people assaulting is relatively easy, but we can make them more dangerous because the tools of therapeutic work are very sharp and they will learn that. My experience is that perpetrators are very clever people. They may not have qualifications but they are streetwise and sharp.

[38] **David Lloyd:** You indicate in your written evidence that a co-ordinated response that best serves survivors of domestic abuse will sometimes require agencies to work against their targets in order to achieve an overarching target of increased victim safety. Can you elaborate on that and give some examples?

[39] **Ms Pickles:** We may have a couple who have separate homes that belong to the local authority—this is a case that I can think of. We had a woman who lived with her children on one side of the city and he had a flat on the other side of the city. His behaviour was such that he could be evicted, and he should be evicted. At the MARAC, we agreed that they would hold back on that eviction. If they evicted him, he would be on her doorstep and he would be more of a problem. So we were asking them to work against their target. CPS has a target to reduce discontinuances, cases that have been discontinued in the public interest. We may be asking them to discontinue a case against a woman who has, under duress, been forging prescriptions, committing offences in order to keep him happy. If we want to engage her as a high-risk victim, we cannot prosecute her at the same time, so we may ask them to discontinue. It is a challenging agenda for agencies and that is hard for them to package for

their masters, but it is about having this overarching safety target.

9.40 a.m.

[40] **Joyce Watson:** You mentioned in your evidence that advocacy is extremely important. Could you tell me what you think are the benefits of advocacy as a key component in tackling domestic abuse?

[41] **Ms Pickles:** When the police have gone to a call the previous night they will email us through the PPD1 form—they love this language—public protection document 1. It comes through to us and we will ring that victim directly. We do not wait for the victim to contact us. It is a much more directive process than any other process we have had. We ring them and say that we are aware that they have had a bit of trouble, and ask how we can help them. We do not necessarily focus on the domestic violence. She may say, ‘I have terrible financial problems, I have awful problems with the children, I cannot leave him because of the cats’, and so on. We will engage on the level on which she wants to engage. The advocates have been trained to NVQ3 on a 13-day course that we have set up and developed with 450 advocates now trained and another 400 coming through this year for the UK. They have training in everything: criminal, civil, child contact cases. They have training right across the board so they can start where somebody is. In fact, the first person to contact from our unit is usually our administrator, who used to run the complaints department at NTL, so is clearly very good at telephone work. I think that must be one of the toughest jobs in the world. She has a natural ability to engage people. I have heard her talking to a rape victim who did not want to come and see us. She got this woman, who would only give us her first name, to come to us. We would have sent a cab for her but Claire got her onto a bus and talked to her; she stayed on the phone all the way through. So, advocacy is about starting where people are, but talking to them about safety.

[42] When they come in, they will have normalised to their level of risk. We had a woman who was working in the city—and about half the women we work with are in work—and he was putting orange juice in her ears and taping it up with plumbing tape; it was a watertight seal so she had no balance. In order for that to happen, she was co-operating; she was putting her head to one side and allowing that to happen. People may think that she had a mental health problem. However, that is normalisation. She is normalised to that because that keeps him happy, which means that she can get through that day. So, we are working with people who do not have an understanding of risk. We sit down and go through a risk assessment with them. We tell them that, if they had called the police, they would have sat with them and completed this risk assessment and they would have said that they were in a high-risk group. We try to give people information so that they can make decisions.

[43] We will take people to MARAC without their consent and we have a legislative framework. We have met with the data commissioner in Wilmslow, and we have advice from human rights lawyers. We will work under Human Rights 1 and 2. We will sometimes breach article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998, which gives the right to a private life. We will breach a perpetrator’s right to a private life, and even a victim’s right to a private life, if we believe that someone’s life is at risk. We have the tools to tell us that that is true. If that is the case, then we will make those decisions. So, it is much more directive than any other contact that a victim will have and I think that it is very informative. I believe that risk assessment is now getting out there. I have recently done four training sessions for Women’s Aid across Wales on risk assessment and lots of places are doing it now. Five years ago, this was anathema and now, as an organisation, it is changing. When I did the training with Age Concern I was trying to get them to risk assess as well, not to talk about somebody’s risk of falling, which is important, but there could be a greater risk to them than that.

[44] **Janice Gregory:** We have come to the final question, which is from me. As I said at

the beginning, your evidence, written and oral, will form a very important part of the inquiry, as will all of the evidence that we have received. We will have to make recommendations in our report at the end of the inquiry. Have you one key recommendation that you would like to make? I am putting you on the spot slightly, but you may have one, and I am sure that our other presenters are currently thinking about that now. I am more than happy for you to write to us or ring the clerking team. However, you may have one recommendation that springs to mind immediately.

[45] **Ms Pickles:** Obviously, I do; I have thought about this. Wales is in an unique position. In some of my work in England, I see the difficulty they have because of their distance from Government. Even though there is an inter-ministerial group on domestic violence, it has its failures. I would like to see that overarching commitment to safety so that the health services pulled more into this agenda. I know that little of the criminal justice system is devolved. I think social inclusion works and I am not convinced that health is comfortable with this agenda. It hides, I believe, behind Caldecott, which is guidance, it is not legislation. It also lacks confidence about information sharing. On a daily basis, it sees people come through its doors whose lives are being blighted and devastated. It is recording that and not doing anything with it. So, if you could sort out health, that would send a really clear message to the Department of Health in London. I think that it would be a really big first for Wales.

[46] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you, Jan. As you know, you will be sent a transcript of today's vidence gathering. You are not able to change anything that you wish you had not said—although some of us would like to do that; it is only if it has been taken down incorrectly.

[47] **Ms Pickles:** I am sure it will come to me, and I will think, 'Oh, no'.

[48] **Janice Gregory:** I am sure it will not, from what we have heard this morning. I am sure that you have plenty of time with your day job as well. Please just check the transcript and make sure that you are happy with what is in there. Thank you, once again, for taking the time to come to committee.

[49] **Ms Pickles:** Thank you. I am really pleased that this is happening.

[50] **Janice Gregory:** We are going to move on now to our next presenters. I ask Morgan and Nesta to come to the table. We are moving on now to important evidence from Welsh Women's Aid. I would like to welcome Morgan Facknell, who is the chief executive, and Nesta Lloyd-Jones, who is the legal issues co-ordinator. Thank you very much indeed for coming to committee. You were not here at the beginning of the meeting, so I ask you to switch off all mobile phones, BlackBerrys or any other electronic device. If you need simultaneous translation from Welsh to English, it is available through the headsets on channel 1. If you need to amplify the sound, that is available on channel 0. I thank you for the paper that you have submitted, which Members have had the opportunity to look at. I ask you to state your names and your positions in your organisations for the record. Who will lead on this? I see that Morgan will. Are you going to speak on your written paper or would you prefer to go directly into questions from Members?

[51] **Ms Facknell:** I will start by saying that I am the chief executive of Cardiff Women's Aid and I am an executive member of the board of Welsh Women's Aid, so, although I do not speak for Welsh Women's Aid, I speak as a member of the federation and of the board. I am fairly confident that nothing I say will be controversial within the federation and Welsh Women's Aid. Nesta is from Welsh Women's Aid to support us.

9.50 a.m.

[52] **Janice Gregory:** Can I ask you to say who you are for the record, otherwise I will be in trouble? We will then move to questions. There are set questions from Assembly Members but, as I tell all of our presenters, there are no trick questions in this. This is a serious inquiry into what we know is a very serious issue.

[53] **Ms Facknell:** I am Morgan Facknell and I am the chief executive of Cardiff Women's Aid.

[54] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** I am Nesta Lloyd-Jones; I am the legal issues co-ordinator for Welsh Women's Aid, which is the umbrella organisation for Wales.

[55] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you very much; I am out of trouble now. So, shall we go straight into questions?

[56] **Ms Facknell:** We are very happy to go straight into questions.

[57] **Janice Gregory:** That is fine. Our first question is from Paul.

[58] **Paul Davies:** I will start by concentrating on the Assembly Government's strategy on domestic abuse. Do you believe that the focus of the Assembly Government's current strategy, which employs a non-gender specific definition of domestic abuse, is the right one?

[59] **Ms Facknell:** As you will have gathered from my paper, I do not think that it is. It is a great strategy document, which now needs to evolve and to take a gendered approach, not least because we have to begin to look seriously at how we can eradicate domestic violence and not just stem the flow and hold our own. In Cardiff, and across the Women's Aid movement for 35 years, we have been working effectively on the issues and, in fact, that is one of the reasons that domestic violence and violence against women have consistently been put on the agenda. We have worked really hard, and a lot of women behind me have worked really hard, to make sure that the issue is taken seriously. We worked hard back in the 1980s to get multi-agency working around the table, which has taken root, not just in the domestic violence arena, but across the board. So, I would say that we definitely need a gendered approach to domestic violence, if for no other reason than because we need to keep services directed at women and children in domestic violence specialist and also because, without that and without placing it within the broader violence-against-women agenda, I do not think we will ever get to the root causes and eradicate domestic violence.

[60] **Paul Davies:** Are you saying, therefore, that there will be an advantage in changing the focus of the strategy from domestic abuse to violence against women?

[61] **Ms Facknell:** Yes, I am.

Ms Lloyd-Jones: I would like to add that all of our member groups—we have 34 throughout Wales—all support having a gendered definition. The Wales domestic abuse helpline is a gender-neutral helpline and, so far this year, 2 per cent of the victims calling have been male; last year, it was 3 per cent. So, a small minority of calls that it receives are from men. Violence against women costs the Government £40 billion a year in England and Wales. That covers domestic abuse and sexual offences. Domestic violence in England and Wales costs £23 billion. So, it is costing the Government a great deal of money and more needs to be done to recognise the fact that the majority of victims are women and that it is a power and control issue. There are some men out there who are victims, but their needs are very different to those of women.

[62] **Nerys Evans:** Diolch yn fawr am **Nerys Evans:** Thank you very much for your

eich tystiolaeth. Yn dilyn ymlaen o'r cwestiynau ynglŷn â strategaeth Llywodraeth y Cynulliad, a oes unrhyw elfennau eraill o'r strategaeth y dylid cryfhau, ac a oes unrhyw elfennau nad ydynt wedi cael y sylw sydd ei angen yn y strategaeth?

evidence. Following on from the questions regarding the Assembly Government's domestic abuse strategy, are there any other aspects of the strategy that need to be strengthened and are there any significant gaps in the strategy?

[63] **Ms Facknell:** I am sure that Nesta will talk more fully about any gaps or changes that she sees. From my perspective as a front-line service provider, and also looking at it from a strategic standpoint, I would say that what really needs to be strengthened is the preventative agenda. Obviously, I do not want to see any resources taken away from front-line services to do that and I know it is difficult when there is a limited amount of money. However, we have to keep delivering front-line services and develop them to meet the needs of a broader range of women and children. However, it is only through prevention that we will eventually stem the flow of domestic violence. Work is being done with children in a front-line capacity and on funding services for children and young people, and there is recognition that children and young people need the kind of interventions that come with good counselling and good therapy, but we need to do more work within that context of prevention. When children access domestic violence services, it is our first opportunity, not only to support them through their immediate crisis, but it is about laying the foundations for prevention in the future and to support them in recognising that the relationships that they are witnessing are not healthy and are not positive. However, it needs to form the wider agenda around prevention. In Cardiff, we have a young people's worker working on preventative programmes, and, as I said in my paper, we are developing a children's centre of excellence model which is looking at the long-term effect and supporting the long-term needs of children and young people. From my perspective as a front-line service provider, I have to say that has to be balanced against maintaining services.

[64] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** I would like to add that, as an organisation, Welsh Women's Aid represents women and children. Half of the people in the refuges last year were children and we clearly recognise there is a need for the support of children in refuges. The only thing that I would add is that the strategy is three years old; it is still quite a new strategy. Going back to the previous question, the definition that we support and which we recommend that the Assembly considers is a violence-against-women strategy, such as that of the Scottish Executive. It has taken on board the fact that there are a number of positives to having the violence-against-women strategy, such as cost and time efficiency, and better inter-agency working. There is a raising of awareness, because, at the moment, there are sexual violence agencies and domestic violence agencies, which are seen as separate, but they are not, due to the fact that a number of women coming into refuges have experienced sexual assault as well. Roughly 36 per cent of women in Welsh Women's Aid refuges have experienced sexual offences and they should not be seen as separate. There is also the issue around forced marriage and honour-based violence; they all come under the heading of violence against women.

[65] **Joyce Watson:** I would like to follow on from your violence-against-women strategy. Perhaps I should mention at this point that, immediately before I came to the Assembly, I set up the all-Wales end violence against women working group. I want to place that on the record, because, having done that, it is obvious that I support your thinking. My question is along those lines. It seems obvious to me—and I want you to state whether it is the case—you are concerned, by not having a strategy that is based on ending violence against women, and which is particularly gender focused on women, that large numbers of cases are not recognised necessarily as fitting in within sexual abuse that is still within the domestic setting. Can I ask you to explain why you are so concerned about that?

[66] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** Like I said, a number of women going into refuges in Wales have

experienced sexual offences. Women's Aid groups that have a sexual assault referral centre in their area will refer to that SARC to get that specialist advice. The UK Government has signed the Beijing platform and has committed to having a violence-against-women strategy, but it still has not been done. As you said, under the EVAW campaign and its 'Making the Grade?' paper, the highest Government department mark was six out of 10, and that was the CPS.

10.00 a.m.

[67] The CPS is the only Government department with a policy to combat violence against women. The average mark was two out of 10. I believe that, next year, it will be marking the Welsh Assembly Government. As I stated, the Scottish Executive has taken this on and has draft proposals on violence against women. The Scottish Executive has seen many benefits to having a violence-against-women strategy.

[68] **Ms Facknell:** One of the benefits as a front-line operational agency for Cardiff Women's Aid would be that we could work to a national strategy that reflects the work that we do on the ground. We work with the whole range of violence against women, and it would, in some ways, give us a helping hand to be able to deliver that much more effectively. We work with women who are escaping from forced marriage and so-called honour-based crimes. We work with women who have been involved in prostitution and trafficking. So, it would reflect what we are working with on the ground and it would marry the two up. We could then be much more strategic in the way that we deliver services.

[69] In Cardiff, we recognise that the gaps are around rape crisis, and we are working at the moment to develop our 24-hour support line. We take calls on sexual violence and sexual assault within the domestic violence context, and it is a very small leap then for us to be able to take such calls, particularly as we have the new SARC opening in Cardiff; it makes sense. We can deliver economies of scale and expertise and do that transfer of knowledge much more effectively.

[70] **Ms Facknell:** One of the benefits for Cardiff Women's Aid as a frontline operational agency would be that we could work to a national strategy that reflects the work that we do on the ground, because we deal with the whole range of violence against women and it would, in some ways, give us a helping hand, and enable us to deliver that much more effectively. We work with women who are escaping from forced marriage, and so-called honour-based crimes. We work with women who have been involved in prostitution and trafficking. So, it would reflect what we are working with on the ground, and it would marry the two up. Then we could be much more strategic in the way that we deliver services. In Cardiff, we recognise that the gaps are around rape crisis, and we are working at the moment to develop our 24-hour support line. We take calls around sexual violence and sexual assault within the domestic violence context, and it is a very small leap then for us to be able to take other calls. It makes sense, particularly as we have the new SARC opening in Cardiff, and we can deliver economies of scale and expertise, and transfer that knowledge much more effectively.

[71] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** Welsh Women's Aid gets a number of calls from the media, for example, on a range of violence against women issues, such as prostitution and trafficking. Although we are focused on domestic abuse, and provide comments on that, the media are coming to us because there are no specialist prostitution and trafficking organisations in Wales. So, much of the media thinks that Welsh Women's Aid deals with all these issues anyway. The other point is that the Government has an action plan on domestic violence and a separate action plan for sexual offences. There will be a separate action plan for honour-based violence, so Women's Aid organisations will have to consider all these action plans, and the Government will have to consider all these action plans, instead of having one action plan with them all. It would be a lot easier for us, and it would be a lot easier for the Government,

to have one action plan dealing with violence against women.

[72] **Janice Gregory:** For clarification, for anyone watching at home, and although we are all used to acronyms, SARC is a sexual assault referral centre. I just mention that for people who do not have the benefit of the paper in front of them.

[73] **Peter Black:** Moving on to funding, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the current arrangements for funding action to tackle domestic violence and domestic abuse?

[74] **Ms Facknell:** If I can give you a flavour of the local picture in Cardiff, we are delivering two contracts, one from the Welsh Assembly Government—because we are an approved support provider, delivering refuge and some units of tenant support—and one with the local authority, also to provide tenant support. The deal with the local authority used to be a grant, but this year we have turned it into a contract to deliver children’s services. The rest of the money that we rely on is sponsorship fundraising, grant trust money, and money arising from specific projects. We have a turnover from our rent that does not give us any profit; it is ploughed back in to deliver refuge, because there are quite high, intense costs. So, the advantage of Supporting People contracts is that at least we know that we have money coming in regularly, and that is really useful. I know that there are going to be issues in terms of how Supporting People may, in the future, be moved around, but that is not the focus of this discussion. So, I am much happier to concentrate on funding for ourselves, from our perspective as a frontline agency.

[75] The one thing that I would ask for, if we go down the commissioning route, is that services should be commissioned that meet the agreed strategy, and support the expertise that you already have in the sector. We have seen this in the advice sector, with the pile them high, sell them cheap philosophy, and there are citizens advice bureaux that are working hard to deal with the ongoing and long-lasting effects of poverty and social justice. The same could happen within the domestic violence sector, if we are not careful. There is an issue about stripping down costs. Personally, I think the Assembly should set the tariff, and local authorities ought to stick to those tariffs, because, if we negotiate tariffs at a strategic level, then we all know what we are trying to deliver, and you know that you will get a consistent quality of service across the country. In that way, people cannot make excuses for variations in the quality of service—because if we can deliver quality services in Cardiff with the contracts that we have from Cardiff Council and the Welsh Assembly Government, then there is no reason why that cannot be done in other parts of the country. I, for one, believe that women and children deserve the best services that we can deliver with the money available. I am a keen fan of commissioning, because I have no concerns that Cardiff Women’s Aid would not be successful in the commissioning process, so long as it is a level playing field and so long as you want us to deliver women-centred services that do not just tick the box for the numbers of women and children that we get in and out. It is about short-term and long-term solutions and about addressing the issues, because our focus is the same as your focus—that is, on eradicating domestic violence for women and children in the long-term. For the long haul, you have to make a commitment to the sector.

[76] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** Welsh Women’s Aid has done a separate report, which I can hand to you today, and it deals with Supporting People. I want to make the committee aware that, in England, commissioning has advanced a little bit more, and there are local authority agreements out there. The Women’s Aid Federation of England is gravely concerned about what is happening there, with regard to the fact that non-specialist services are receiving these contracts, which means that they cannot support women with specialist needs, such as those around domestic abuse, and complex needs such as mental health issues, drug dependencies and so on. I would also like to raise the fact that a number of our groups have problems with funding. They get the funding on a yearly basis, so there are yearly applications that have to be made, and they cannot plan strategically. For example, one group in January thought eight

of their staff would be leaving, because they had not heard from organisations such as the Big Lottery Fund, and Children in Need. That group did not know whether half of its staff would be leaving, so the confidence in that group was diminished, and there was no guaranteed support for women in that group. There are grave concerns in a number of our groups, and I am sure that some of them will send their responses to you. When it comes to core funding, that is their biggest issue—the fact that they have to make yearly applications, and they cannot plan strategically because of that.

[77] **Peter Black:** Just to clarify, the issues with commissioning are in England, not Wales—is this something that has not happened here yet?

[78] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** No, but it is happening in England, and they are having massive problems with commissioning.

[79] **Peter Black:** Is there any sign of it happening here? We are concerned with Wales.

[80] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** It is probably going to happen here, the problems that have arisen in England will probably arise here as well, but I am sure that the paper—

[81] **Peter Black:** Who is the prime mover behind that? Is that the Government or local councils?

[82] **Ms Facknell:** I think that it is local authorities across Wales. It is interesting because I have just been involved in a process in Cardiff where the compact group put together some guidance and advice on commissioning; I think that Cardiff has agreed to that, and it is a good model. When it comes to commissioning and procurement, councils get a bit twitchy, and they are reluctant, when commissioning, to specify that services should be women-run services, or women-only services, because they fear that will fall foul of the EU legislation.

10.10 a.m.

[83] So, there needs to be lot of education for local authorities. If they are to go down the commissioning route, it is perfectly okay, within that commissioning process, to say that ‘This is what we want our local services to look like,’. That would not contravene any legislation, and local authorities would get support. We come back to the strategy: if the strategy says ‘This is what we want our services to look like across the country’, and if you tie that in with local area agreements or targets for local authorities, you begin to build a wall of support for how you want to see services delivered locally, and you support local authorities to do that.

[84] **Peter Black:** For further clarification, you were talking about short-term grants, and they were mentioned by the previous witness as well. Are they largely from local authorities, or is there Assembly Government involvement?

[85] **Ms Facknell:** They are largely from local authorities, but again, it comes back to the gender definition, because local authorities are putting pressure on our groups to provide mixed services, and there is no evidence that there should be mixed services. The gender equality duty even says that, as domestic abuse is predominantly a crime against women, local authorities should be doing their utmost to prevent it—and they are not doing so.

[86] **Peter Black:** Are you therefore suggesting that the funding should be based on the evidence of what is needed, as opposed to a strategy that has no evidence to back it up?

[87] **Ms Facknell:** Yes.

[88] **Peter Black:** To move onto my other question: we have mentioned Supporting People and, as you know, a review of that strategy is under way. What changes should be made to Supporting People to ensure it is used most effectively to support victims of domestic abuse?

[89] **Ms Facknell:** One of the key things that the Welsh Assembly Government can do around that is to ring-fence Supporting People money for domestic violence services. I know that Nesta will talk about Welsh Women's Aid taking a part in that, but whether that is at regional level or local authority level or national level, I think that the competition for Supporting People money, if it goes to local authorities to dish out, means that they will be under pressure to deliver local services across the board. So, from my perspective, it is about ensuring that that money is ring-fenced, and I think that ties in with your strategy. We all know there is not enough money to do everything that everybody wants to do, but if we work strategically, we can say that there ought to be a baseline level of services across the country, with a level of basic service below which no local authority ought to allow their services to fall. That would go a long way to giving us a level playing field from which we can develop. Then we can add modules onto that, and say in one area, we will also deal with forced marriage, or honour-based crimes, or a high incidence of mental health issues—and that puts the price up, in terms of delivering services. So, I would say that ring-fencing is important, and should be tied into the national strategy so that we know what we want the services to look like locally.

[90] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** As Morgan said, ring-fencing is extremely important, and it is one of our key recommendations. Usually, Supporting People just recognises refuge support, and Women's Aid groups have moved on from that, and now do outreach and floating support. That is not being recognised by the Supporting People fund, and nor is the work that groups do with children—they do not receive that much money from Supporting People with regard to the children that they are supporting. Due to the concerns of Welsh Women's Aid about ring-fencing, and the possibility of not having ring-fencing, we have now become an accredited support provider, which means that the money that would go to the local authority would come to us. We act as accredited support provider to five groups, so the money comes to us and we give it to our groups, taking a small percentage, but not as much as the local authority would have taken.

[91] **Peter Black:** Just to be clear, Supporting People is split into two parts—one of which is paid through the local authority, and one of which is paid direct. Is all the money at the moment for domestic violence paid directly, or is it half and half?

[92] **Ms Facknell:** Speaking for Cardiff and our contract with the Welsh Assembly Government—because we are an accredited support provider, and I think that, along with the Black Association of Women Step Out, we are the only groups that are ASPs—our money comes directly from the Welsh Assembly Government, and it comes directly to us. However, the money for our floating support comes via the council, so the council is the ASP, if you like, and therefore we get a slightly lower level.

[93] **Peter Black:** It is a mix across Wales then?

[94] **Ms Facknell:** Yes.

[95] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** Smaller groups will get the money directly from the local authority. As Morgan says, BAWSO and the Welsh Women's Aid groups in Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil are the only ASPs, and because of the concern around this issue, other bigger groups will be looking at becoming their own ASPs, but at the moment the majority of money comes from the local authority and not from the Assembly Government.

[96] **Janice Gregory:** What are ASPs?

[97] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** Accredited support providers.

[98] **Joyce Watson:** I will now talk about the perpetrator programmes and, given the hidden nature of domestic abuse, how does the impact of the Move on to Change programme evaluated?

[99] **Ms Facknell:** I would like to echo part of your previous witness's evidence, in that there are concerns about perpetrator programmes if they are not delivered effectively and efficiently and for long enough, because it can equip the perpetrator with another set of skills and another language with which to maintain their violence and abuse within a relationship. I also strongly believe that perpetrator programmes alone will never eradicate domestic violence. I do not think that they will ever do that alone, although they could as part of the overall strategy. I also believe that perpetrator programmes will never have the effect that we really want them to have if they are always conditional, and until male perpetrators say 'No, I want to change my offending behaviour,' they will not have their heart and soul in it. We all know how difficult it is to change behaviour patterns, even for ourselves. Even self-defeating behaviour patterns are difficult to change, and with behaviour patterns that meet the distorted needs of perpetrators—because that is exactly the case with perpetrators—where is the carrot? You can use the stick as much you like but, in the end, we all know that it is people's own motivation that makes them change.

[100] So, what I would like to see, coming back to preventative work, is an effort to stop young men and young women getting into those unhealthy relationships in the first place. That is why, in my evidence paper, I said that we need to have some kind of perpetrator programme. I strongly believe that if perpetrators go on the Freedom programme, for instance, then their partners ought to have gone on the Freedom programme first. If women go on the Freedom programme and then want their partners to follow, that is really useful. The other issue is that women want to make their relationships work, and we need to give men every opportunity to change their behaviour and make those relationships work, both because there are children involved and because of the dynamic. It is not easy for women to leave a violent, abusive relationship, not least because of the power and control issues, but also because we all know it is a complex emotional relationship, particularly where there are children involved. So, Cardiff is particularly keen to be able to offer male perpetrators a range of programmes that will support them in leaving behind their violent, abusive behaviour.

[101] However, I cannot stress enough the need to stop that behaviour developing in the first place. If there are any priorities in the plan, I would like to see earlier intervention—work in schools is crucial, and children need to learn about healthy relationships and emotional communication skills, and that ties in with bullying in schools. So, as we say that domestic violence sits within a broader violence against women agenda, working on prevention of unhealthy, violent and abusive relationships also sits within a broader agenda in schools, and for young people.

10.20 a.m.

[102] It is about relationships, bullying, and being able to express yourself; it is about frustration, lack of motivation, and all of those things that come with social inequality. So, perpetrator programmes must be evaluated properly, with qualitative evaluation of the programmes taking place within the prison and probation service, to see whether we are just making the perpetrators cleverer, and to ensure that they do not just carry on in different ways that are more difficult to report.

[103] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** Just with regard to Wales, as Morgan said, international good

practice is that the men should go on these programmes, but the men need support as well. The recent map of gaps shows that there is only one perpetrator programme like that in the whole of Wales. So, there is only one programme in Wales that ties into international best practice. That is a concern for us.

[104] **Paul Davies:** You have touched on this, but what should a long-term generational attitude-changing approach to prevention incorporate?

[105] **Ms Facknell:** We need to look very clearly at the point of crisis for women and children, and the services that we deliver at that point are exemplary in meeting their needs. We need to recognise that women with complex needs must be accommodated within that, and we must recognise that that is more expensive to deliver. Cardiff Women's Aid and Women's Aid groups across Wales are absolutely committed to delivering the same level of support to children as to women, because that is the first point at which we can start to try to undo some of the damage that children and young people have experienced.

[106] That crisis support, including refuge and keeping women in their own homes, is crucial. We need to make sure that we are removing perpetrators from the home, that women and children are not doubly damned by abuse and violence, and that they can remain in their own homes. Part of that approach is about proving to the community that it is unacceptable, that male perpetrators will be removed, and children can keep going to the same schools and can still receive support. It is almost as if we can give the same level of support that women and children will get in refuge, but in their own homes. So, we have to look at ways in which we can do that through Supporting People, in terms of support and outreach schemes and working with children. Of course, it needs to be balanced with preventative work, and I think that they are two halves of the same issue. We have to deal with current short-term needs, but we also have to look at long-term damage, and preventing this from starting in the first place—because it is much easier to prevent it than to deal with the fallout.

[107] Supporting People is a nil-cost programme, and the exercise that took place last year shows that domestic violence services in Wales, funded by Supporting People, does not just break even, but saves the Assembly Government money. If we look at preventative programmes in the same way, preventing rafts of children from growing up to be perpetrators—and I know that that is hugely difficult when you have a crunch budget—then that will save you money in 10 years' time.

[108] The other thing that we want to do at Cardiff is to look at long-term studies, particularly of children and young people, where we have made effective interventions, including therapeutic interventions like counselling, and we can track families and give them ongoing light-touch support, to see whether we are making a difference. I want to be held to the same standards that I like other people to be held to, so there should be a long-term qualitative evaluation of whether we are making a generational difference across the board. I was in a meeting yesterday where it was mentioned that a target hardening service in Rhondda Cynon Taf had had 256 referrals from women and 56 referrals from men. There were comments later that we kept talking in terms of women, and not in terms of male victims of domestic violence. What I would like to see around that is some qualitative research into what exactly we are talking about when we talk about male victims.

[109] So, when I say that, I also expect you to hold me to the same standard and if I am saying that my interventions can make a real difference, then we need some long-term research. It is really difficult for local groups to commission that, and it is quite expensive, so the Assembly could look at working with a university on long-term stuff like that.

[110] **Joyce Watson:** Just following on the issue of from keeping women safe in their own homes rather than moving them into refuges—which I would fully support—my point would

be that you have to be sure that everything is in place. It would not just be about the work that you do—you would have to be backed up by all the other agencies playing their part. My understanding over the years has been that where there are injunctions to keep the males away from the home, they have not been reliably enforced by the police. So, I would have serious concerns about those people that you are trying to protect in their homes—although I fully support that—being at risk, because I would not necessarily be convinced that all the other agencies, such as the police in the example that I cited, are playing their part. We know that it is when the man leaves that the risk is highest—they are in serious danger. So, how could you assure me that everybody would play their part in keeping those victims safe?

[111] **Ms Fackell:** I will hand this over fairly swiftly to our legal services representative.

[112] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** The first thing to say is that a breach of an injunction is a criminal offence. The number of calls I have had from groups suggests that even the police do not know that—they are not aware of this development in the law. If a man breaches an injunction, will he be sent back to court, will he be sentenced? In the majority of cases, the injunction is breached five or six times, and either the police do not come out, or they do not take notice of it, or if the woman in question does not have the paper saying that she has had this power of arrest or injunction in the first place, they will not do anything about it.

[113] The other issue is that, as you said, Joyce, if a woman remains in a property and she is in, for example, a sanctuary scheme, what happens if the man comes to the house? If she phones the police, how long will they take to get to that property, given the geography of Wales? She could be with her children; she could feel like a prisoner in that house, even though she is pushing the buttons and trying to get the police to come out. As the report will show, the conviction rates have gone up, the number of perpetrators being arrested has gone up, but there is still a lot to do with regard to police training, and making them aware of domestic abuse issues. If she does not want to give a statement—and there are reasons why that might be the case—they should not just walk away, because she will be calling again. As you are aware, police callouts cost a lot of money. So, there are a number of things that other agencies can do as well.

[114] **Ms Facknell:** If I can reflect on our own practice in Cardiff, last year we delivered a homelessness prevention project for the local authority, and it is part of our mainstream work, so we continue to do that. When it comes to target hardening, the risk assessment process that we use is the one that reflects multi-agency risk assessment conferences. So, we would be talking to women and evaluating whether it was safe for them to remain in their own homes, and having a discussion about that. However, you can only go so far in terms of target hardening, I agree. Even though we have access to community alarms—we have recently raised some money so that we can put CCTV cameras in, as well as doing the usual other stuff—I think that everybody playing a part is really important, and communities must recognise that they need to pull their own weight as well. If it is known that somebody has been in a violent relationship previously, and they have come home, people in the community can phone the police and ensure that they turn up. In my experience, putting occurrence markers on the houses in Cardiff is not working too badly, but we will keep a check on that. Certainly, we are much more likely to talk to women and try to dissuade them from remaining at home if we feel that the risk is too great—although it has to come down, in the end, to a woman's choice, because we are not going to hoik her out and shove her into refuge. Then there are child protection issues that we also need to recognise.

10.30 a.m.

[115] One of the most exhilarating things that has happened this year so far has been the appointment of the new recorder in Cardiff. I do not know if any of you saw his comments in the paper, but his attitude is that, in his court, violence and abuse from men is absolutely

unacceptable. Someone had a very poor probation report, which stated that a woman had been injured; the probation service said that it was not a serious issue, and the recorder threw the report back, and asked for it to be re-written. So, I think that things are changing, but it is all well and good for me to say that things are working in Cardiff—the picture might well be very different across Wales. We need to look at good practice where it happens and really roll it out.

[116] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** The majority of perpetrators receive a fine.

[117] **David Lloyd:** Just considering the diversity of provision—and you have partially answered this question anyway—in your paper you stressed the victims need to be able to access a diversity of services through a variety of routes. That is sensible enough. You also say in your written evidence that the Assembly Government needs a keen understanding of what a diversity of services would look like in practice. So, in your view, what are the most significant gaps in service provision in Wales today?

[118] **Ms Facknell:** I would say, would I not, that you need Women's Aid groups, or women-focused and women-run services to be accessible with the correct level of service. That obviously has an implication for funding. We only need to look at the recommendation for the number of refuge places per 10,000 head of population that was made 20 years ago—we still do not have those levels, and that is just for mainstream refuge. If we are also talking about recognising that women have enhanced needs and will have mental health issues and will have substance dependency issues as well, either because of the violence and abuse or as a coping mechanism, then we need to say that all of the local agencies that deal specifically with those issues, and all children's services, need to have an enhanced understanding of domestic violence and abuse. We hope that the strategy will have that effect, and begin to make the links locally for violence against women. So, it is about having a good, positive lead agency locally delivering targeted services, and part of the role of that agency, and part of any local domestic violence, sexual violence or violence against women task group or forum, is to make sure that we have all the other key agency players, both statutory and voluntary sector, completely up to speed with the issues. They must understand what violence and abuse against women looks like, even if they are not reporting it. I think it is around 24 per cent or 26 per cent of women who experience violence and abuse that go through the criminal justice system. So, only 24 per cent or 26 per cent will get phoned up by the women's safety unit. They are the ones who will get sieved into MARAC, although agencies like Cardiff Women's Aid—which get women coming in from other routes, outside criminal justice—will also MARAC women in the same way. So, we have a role to play there in bringing in other women who would not necessarily get there otherwise—because MARAC is very focused on criminal justice. A diversity of access points would include, for instance, the domestic violence nurse at the hospital—this is where we need health to pick up the baton in some ways, and get a bit smarter about its work. The health service could save money by circumventing the cycles of abuse. I suppose that is the way that I would like the local picture to look. All the agencies that are going to come into play across the board have domestic violence on their agenda. One of the key ways in which the Welsh Assembly Government can help is to ask that a specific category for domestic violence or violence against women is put into all of the health and social care strategies locally. It hoiks it up the agenda; the health and social care strategies sit pretty much under the remit of health and social services and I think it is for you to send that clear message through. This is not about giving them more work, but about working smarter and saving money in the long term. I know how difficult it is to invest in order to save in the future, but if we are looking for long-term solutions for an end to violence against women, we have to start doing this; we have to start taking the long-term view.

[119] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** A number of perpetrators go and see their GP wanting help, and some GPs will send them on to counselling services, and not recognise the perpetrator

programmes. So, if domestic violence is on the health agenda we should be supporting victims, but also getting help for the perpetrators out there as well. Secondly, there is a need for specialist refuges in Wales. One of our member groups carried out research two years ago and 25 of our member groups replied. Just to inform you, there were a number of difficulties of access to services for women with mental health problems, for example. There were no counselling services for women experiencing domestic abuse in their local areas, and there are gaps in refuge provision for women who have drug and/or alcohol problems and so, as I stated earlier, 46 per cent of women in refuge last year had domestic abuse issues as well as another complex need. That needs to be recognised. Women's Aid can support them, but the health service also has a role to play through counselling. The waiting list for counselling is massive in Wales and that does need to be considered as well.

[120] **Ms Facknell:** In Cardiff we have been running for a huge number of years a counselling service for women that is free at the point of delivery. We are looking to extend that at the moment, but it is built on a local group trying to scrimp and save money, and even we have a three-month waiting list. I think I said in our paper that counselling for children and young people is absolutely essential.

[121] **Janice Gregory:** For the purpose of the record, MARAC is a multi-agency risk assessment conference.

[122] The final question is one that I asked earlier of our previous presenter. Would you like to suggest one key recommendation that you think would have the biggest impact on tackling domestic abuse in Wales?

[123] **Ms Facknell:** I would like to suggest that we have a violence against women strategy in Wales, in relation to which we recognise that domestic violence is probably the key element. All of the other changes and differences will flow from that.

[124] **Ms Lloyd-Jones:** My recommendation would be awareness raising and the promotion of healthy relationships. It comes back to teaching children that domestic abuse or any kind of power controlling relationship should not be allowed. Something that we have not mentioned at all is the need to review women's lack of recourse to public funds. Some 2 per cent of all women in refuges last year had no recourse to public funds. They are being forced, in many circumstances, to return to their abusive partners because they have no finances available to them. Again, my report will have a lot of detail on the lack of recourse, because it is an issue; it is a human rights issue and the Assembly Government can do something about it.

[125] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you very much for your presentations this morning and for answering our questions. You will be sent a transcript of your evidence to us today. Please check through it when you have a moment and make sure that you are happy with what is written. As I said, you cannot change something that you wish you had not said, but you can check the facts. I thank the three of you very much indeed.

[126] We will move on now. I welcome to the table Sam Jones, the domestic abuse co-ordinator for the Carmarthenshire Domestic Abuse Forum. Thank you very much, Sam, for taking the time to come to committee today. As with the previous presenters, I invite you to state your name—who you are and where you are from—for the purpose of the record. Would you then make a brief presentation to your paper? Thank you for the paper that you have supplied to us, it has been most useful.

10.40 a.m.

[127] **Ms Jones:** I am Sam Jones. I am the domestic abuse co-ordinator for

Carmarthenshire. I have come from sunny Carmarthen this morning. Thank you very much for letting me be here. I have a couple of things to raise, and I will obviously echo some of what the other presenters have spoken about this morning. To give you a rough idea—and you have probably heard this figure being bandied around all day today—domestic abuse costs England and Wales approximately £23 billion in service costs. However, the long-term impacts upon families and society are even wider.

[128] The main way to help combat domestic abuse is to work in partnership and in tandem together; this is crucial. I will give you an idea of what happens across Wales from a co-ordinator's perspective. There are now 18 co-ordinators across Wales, so there is almost one for every local authority. The difference is that they have all come on on different boards. I am one of the longest standing co-ordinators, and I have been in post for nearly six years. However, we have new ones that have taken up the role very recently—they have been in post possibly a couple of months. So, if people have been working in the services for a long time, there are many in some areas, very few in others. Every co-ordinator has a different pay scale, a different job description, and a different line of reporting. Some report to the police, some report to the local authority, some are registered charities within their own right. So, it is very different.

[129] Each community safety partnership views domestic abuse at a different priority level. I have been doing some research across the local CSPs across Wales. Some community safety partnerships invested between £20,000 and £60,000 on their community safety plan towards domestic abuse last year, while others gave £2,000. So, across Wales, it is totally different. Supporting People was mentioned earlier, the criteria for which have changed quite substantially on supporting victims. That has also changed within local authorities. So, again, there is no parity between any of the services across Wales.

[130] Many fora like us spend hours each month completing funding applications. I probably spend around 40 hours per month completing funding applications. The only funding that we receive currently from the Welsh Assembly Government is for the co-ordinator's post which, for the last three years, has been £27,500. That covers part of the cost; it does not cover any on costs, national insurance details, or anything like that. So, we spend hours completing funding applications. The main things that we look for through funding applications are alarms and safety features for women, which are key; staff costs; and even things like information leaflets and school programme resources and so on. Yesterday, I had a phone call requiring a specialist alarm for a victim of an incident at the weekend. We have purchased 30 alarms over the past five years, but we have some specialist alarms that do not require a telephone line and they work on a GMS mobile. They are £1,000 each, plus £100 per year monitoring costs. We have four in our county, and we are one of the luckiest because we have some. I know that other counties across Wales do not have the money for such things. So, unfortunately, we had to risk-assess the woman, take one out of someone else's house and put it in there yesterday because she was at great risk. Getting down to grassroots, it is really quite sad that we are scrabbling about looking for alarms.

[131] Some fantastic work is being done in west Wales and north Wales on a shoestring. The most important thing we can do, if we want to help victims—and I would also include male victims, because I work with male victims and their children—is to ensure that domestic abuse is classed as a very high priority across every single local authority. This echoes things like Supporting People and the agenda on the strategy for social care. It is so important to have it classed as a high priority. I also think that money needs to be earmarked for each area. I know that Cardiff does some fantastic work as well, but there is life outside Cardiff and some really good work is being done across west Wales. I know some of the co-ordinators in Torfaen and north Wales, and it is as if nothing exists outside that area, unfortunately. Everyone has a moral and social responsibility to make sure that domestic abuse is combated; we all have that responsibility because of the communities and societies that we live in.

[132] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you very much for that, Sam. We will go into questions from the Assembly Members. I will tell you the same as I tell everyone: there are no trick questions; they are a serious attempt to drill down. The first one is from Paul.

[133] **Paul Davies:** I would like to concentrate on the Assembly Government's domestic abuse strategy. Do you think that the focus of the Assembly Government's current strategy, which employs a non-gender specific definition of domestic abuse, is the right one?

[134] **Ms Jones:** Yes and no. Women and children should be mentioned, but I also think that male victims should be included. I know that the statistics given by the British crime survey suggest that one in four women and one in six men are affected; I would tend to disagree with the one in six men statistic. In Carmarthenshire, I have probably worked with around 30 men as opposed to around 1,000 women over the past six years. So, there are men suffering from domestic abuse. They do not talk about it, will not go into a refuge, and are very unlikely to meet you. It is important that the non-gender part is there, but it should then be broken into groups and there should be some support for men, and obviously women and children.

[135] **Paul Davies:** Are you saying, therefore, that there should be two different strategies?

[136] **Ms Jones:** Yes.

[137] **Nerys Evans:** Thank you for your evidence. First, I would like to congratulate you on your recent conference, which I was fortunate enough to attend. It was a fantastic event, and was really well attended. I would also like to reiterate what you were saying about life outside Cardiff. I think the work you do in the forum shows that there is great work going on in Carmarthenshire. With respect to the Assembly Government's strategy, are there any areas that need to be strengthened, in your opinion? Are there any significant gaps in the strategy as it stands now?

[138] **Ms Jones:** I think preventative measures are huge. There needs to be more work on preventative measures. I know that my other two colleagues stressed that earlier on. I have worked within schools with the school liaison police officers for the last four years and it is so important. Recently, we have been working at primary school level as well, very lightly touching on safe relationships and safety. This is key. I do not think that there is enough emphasis within the strategy on preventative measures. We could prevent an awful lot of domestic abuse. Some 50 per cent of domestic abuse is learnt behaviour. So, children who see the behaviour will go on to be perpetrators or victims themselves. We have to do something about that. I think that we could even break it down into key stages. We could do key stage 1, and then I would probably do key stage 3 and key stage 4. We could really do some good work there.

[139] **Joyce Watson:** I know that there is life outside Cardiff, because I live in Pembrokeshire. I also recognise that a lot of good work goes on. That being said, do you have groups of people who you think you are not serving and who you might serve?

[140] **Ms Jones:** Over the last 18 months or so, a large Polish community has moved into our area. I have been trying to set up some links with the Welsh-Polish Mutual Association, which is based in Llanelli. That is a huge area, because a number of immigrants are coming over from Europe. A lot of the time, they are coming over because they are recruited—so I have been told—by employers bringing them into the area, but many of them have no idea of what they are coming into; they think that they are coming over for a better life. Very few of them speak English, because they are told that they do not need to if they are working in factories. Very few of them have housing that is linked to their employers, and they are told

that it is better if they do not speak the language, which then holds them up if there are issues regarding health and domestic abuse, and so on.

10.50 a.m.

[141] Llanelli Women's Aid had about three months' worth of funding, which is obviously not huge, to put some Polish posters together to send out to the local community. However, there is a language barrier there if they do not speak English. So, I think that we need to do something. Within the Carmarthenshire area, it is the Polish community, but our county council should provide a guide to Carmarthenshire in various languages. In Bristol, for example, the guides are available in around seven different languages; we have only English and Welsh. Wales is now far more diverse than that.

[142] **Peter Black:** What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current arrangements for funding actions to tackle domestic abuse?

[143] **Ms Jones:** Where would you like me to start? What tends to happen is that he who shouts loudest gets funding. I know that, from a co-ordinator's perspective, the Community Safety Division sorts out funding for each co-ordinator's post across Wales. That is all that we get from the forum's perspective. We then have to look around for funding applications. So, we have to go to websites such as those of the Home Office and maybe the Welsh Assembly Government, and there is a bidding process. So, if you are very good at completing funding applications you are able to get further funding. If you do not have the ability to do that or you are dealing with other issues so that you cannot necessarily complete funding applications, then there is a huge issue there. I would like to see money earmarked to each of the community safety partnerships, but earmarked specifically for domestic abuse and for it to be targeted on how it should be spent. So, for argument's sake, if there was £50,000 a year coming in to every single local authority, we know that the money would be spent locally, we would know that targets could be set so there could be £10,000 for preventative work, £20,000 for victim work and, say, £20,000 for a perpetrator programme. Then, everyone would have the same. It tends to be that those who shout loudest seem to get the funding and, unfortunately, other areas do not.

[144] **Peter Black:** The Deputy Minister for Housing has recently said that she is developing a new strategy for Supporting People. What changes do you believe you can bring in to Supporting People to ensure that it could be used more effectively to support victims of domestic abuse?

[145] **Ms Jones:** I think that Supporting People needs to have an understanding of what domestic abuse brings. I can only talk from Carmarthenshire's perspective, but we looked at our Supporting People plan and our Supporting People were saying, 'Do you think we need a male refuge in our area because we could have some money to spend on that?'. Ideas were just being plucked out of the air. We need to make Supporting People understand the impact of domestic abuse. It is not a matter of taking someone into a refuge or working with them for a month, waving a magic wand and everything is going to be fine. Many of the women and children in particular suffer from long-term impacts, and some people will need a certain amount of support for years. I know some of the women that have had to come off the Supporting People revenue grants from our local Women's Aid offices and they have been supported for nothing. Women's Aid support these women because they cannot shut their door to them and say, 'You have had your allocated time, off you go'. We need to be aware of what domestic abuse does and what impacts it has on the family and the woman, and the long-term effects. If Supporting People was fully aware of that, I think that it would view the help and the support required for domestic abuse totally differently.

[146] **Peter Black:** Can you clarify whether the Supporting People revenue funding in

Carmarthenshire comes from the local authority?

[147] **Ms Jones:** Yes, it comes from the local authority in Carmarthenshire.

[148] **Peter Black:** None of it comes directly from the Welsh Assembly Government?

[149] **Ms Jones:** No.

[150] **Janice Gregory:** Nerys, you wanted to ask a supplementary to the previous question, as does Joyce.

[151] **Nerys Evans:** How difficult was it to get the funding to set the perpetrator programme up and to continue that programme? Is there any confusion in the fact that some of this agenda is devolved to the Assembly and some remains at Westminster? Does that create problems in terms of funding?

[152] **Ms Jones:** Again, yes and no. There are issues regarding funding. I had to apply on three occasions. It took me about three and a half years to source funding to set up our perpetrator programme. When setting up such a programme, you do not look at plucking a perpetrator programme out of the air and hope that that is the best one that you can do. So, I did a lot of research all over the country and was in contact with Canada and America to see exactly what works. I managed to get money from the Home Office for the programme pilot, for which we had £40,000 last year. That covered staff costs and that was it. The other work was funded via our forum. So, we had small amounts of reserves and I was applying for little bits of funding from other areas to have a venue, video equipment, to set the thing up and run it. The training that we had to deliver the programme cost us £7,500 because it came from Duluth in America. Finding £7,500 to train a number of people was a huge task. Once we got all that in place we then ran the pilot for the last year. I am starting the programme for this year on 1 May. We have a huge shortfall and we are applying for funding left, right and centre at the moment to try to continue it.

[153] I will explain how it worked. We had a safety and intervention worker for the women's perspective, because you really need to work with the women, just as much as you do with the men. I am also a Freedom programme trainer and the Freedom does not work for men; it is not a strong enough programme. You need to be quite hard-hitting and you need to have echoing, challenging their beliefs and their behaviour. If you do not challenge their beliefs and their behaviour, the programme will not work. So, we had a safety intervention worker for the women, I and a perpetrator worker delivered the programme for the men and, to date, we have worked with 18 men. Of the 18 men, six were social services referrals, and four were self-referrals. The self-referrals were fantastic; they were really keen on completing the programme. We had a couple of police referrals. The older men from the social services referrals worked exceptionally well. The younger men in their early 20s were the ones that we had problems with because they thought their behaviour was fine. This year, we have put in some changes; there are some one-to-one sessions, but we are working in more of a group scenario and we have a mentor, who is one of the completers from last year.

[154] **Joyce Watson:** Following on from funding, I want to ask some very specific questions. Commitment usually means that money might flow. I know quite a bit about your forum and I know that you work with many agencies, one of which being the police. Do you think that possibly, if domestic abuse or violence against women was incorporated into a local policing plan, as it has been before, that it might be of some advantage to you? The other question that I am concerned about, because it is about funding and commitment, I know that it was the case that Pembrokeshire County Council used to give more money to the Young Farmers than they did to Women's Aid in Pembrokeshire. Again, would it not be better for agencies that are genuinely committed to working together to have to put the money where

their mouths are?

11.00 a.m.

[155] **Ms Jones:** Regarding the police perspective, because they have BCU grants and so on, it depends on what your relationship is with your local policing team. I know that Ceredigion and Carmarthen have quite a good relationship with the police, so we get some funding from them, though not a huge amount. I know other areas that get nothing at all. I would go four steps beyond that. I would like to see a private Member's Bill long-term for domestic abuse to be an arrestable offence. I am an ex-police officer and I know the difficulty of going in and dealing with a domestic violence situation where you have police officers who have been in the job a very long time, who go back to the same house time and time again and are told that the woman does not want to do anything about it. You come away feeling quite dejected. It was not until four or five years ago that there was positive action. Prior to that, you would think that it was another domestic, and off you would go. So, things have changed because positive action is being put in place. However, a new police officer would have to sift around to see whether there is an offence that they can use. Has there been criminal damage; has there been a section 47 assault; is it a common assault; is it an arrestable offence; is it protection of harassment? There are so many things that a police officer has to do. In America, domestic abuse is an arrestable offence; it is called spousal abuse, and two or more offences of spousal abuse result in arrest. That covers financial, emotional, psychological and physical. We know, from a domestic abuse perspective, that emotional abuse is the longest long-term effect from domestic abuse so, if we had an arrestable offence, we could do something about it. It would make the police officers' jobs a lot easier and it would make the criminal justice system a lot easier, because people would not be fitting things in boxes.

[156] **Joyce Watson:** Following on from that, to what extent are victims of domestic abuse identified and offered support as a result of their abusers being referred to perpetrator programmes. I would like to link this with your Move on to Change programme and the evaluation. How can you establish that none of the men who have been on the Move on to Change programme and have completed that programme have used any violence against their partners over the last four months?

[157] **Ms Jones:** I will answer that one first. I am currently evaluating the programme. Initially, the programme was 12 to 14 weeks; we have now increased that to 16 to 18 weeks. Once the programme was completed, we have gone back on a monthly, two monthly basis and we will go back on a four and six-monthly basis to both the partner and the man, speaking to them separately to see if there has been any violence. We are also getting the men and the partner to complete an aggression questionnaire to see whether or not their levels of aggression have decreased, whether their parenting skills got better, and whether we are on the right track with the programme. Because the programme was set up in Duluth in America, when we initially ran it, we found that there was not enough emphasis, for example, on parenting. Because we had issues—because people were referred by social services—some of the simple questions that we were asking the fathers were: who is your child's teacher; what is their favourite colour? The fathers could not answer simple questions about their children, so we built in another module around parenting. From the prevention side of things, that should help as well. We have been in very close contact with both the partner and the perpetrator. From Christmas time until now, from what the women have told us, none of the men that have completed the programme have used any violence against the women. We have also checked with local police to see whether or not there have been any phone calls from there. I do not think that you can cure domestic abuse by putting men on perpetrator programmes, but if the men want to change, then they can change. However, it is not an easy task to make sure that that happens.

[158] **Janice Gregory:** The first question? Joyce, do you want to repeat it?

[159] **Ms Jones:** It was about the women, was it not?

[160] **Joyce Watson:** I asked about the extent to which victims of domestic abuse are identified and offered support as a result of their abusers being referred to the perpetrator programme.

[161] **Ms Jones:** Some of our perpetrators come via MARAC, so the women are supported by Women's Aid or another agency. If that is the case, we work alongside the support worker. We complete a quite heavy referral form and the standard risk assessment, which is the MARAC risk assessment. Certain aspects—and one of them is when you are talking about sexual respect—are flashpoints. It is the same flashpoint as the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme has, because it could increase the violence when you are talking about a woman saying no and what consent is. That is a huge issue. When you are covering that side of things you need to make sure that the women are supported.

[162] With regard to the safety intervention work, I go and visit the women while the men are on the programme, so there is support there. We also put together a safety plan for them and, if violence does increase, we would do things like the red card scheme where we would put a red card on the window and inform neighbours that if a red card goes in the window, it is their duty to call the police. If we think that someone is at particularly high risk, we would put an alarm into the property and inform the perpetrator that there is an alarm in the property and that she will press it if he is being abusive or violent. That seems to work quite well at the moment. We support a lot of the women by putting them onto the feeder programme. So, we are trying to empower them. As we go through the programme, we try to ensure that if there is any specific thing that the woman wants to target that she informs the safety worker, and we also bring that into the session. Again, we can get her views across without telling him that they are her views. We would use it in a roundabout way. So, if there was an issue regarding forced sex, we would put a DVD on about that, talk to the group about that particular issue, and question the others to see what they think of that.

[163] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you. For the purposes of the record and anybody watching, IDAP is Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme. Peter.

[164] **Peter Black:** Thanks you, Chair. To what extent does the rural nature of Carmarthenshire impact on attempts to identify domestic abuse and the provision of services to prevent or respond to it?

[165] **Ms Jones:** We do a lot of driving, as is the case in Pembrokeshire. It is totally different from the city perspective. You tend to find, especially further up in the farming communities past the Carmarthen area, that if you have a woman who is living on an isolated farm with her husband and who is suffering from domestic abuse, it could be a massive issue, because she might only come into Carmarthen town once a month. So, the likelihood of her going in and accessing the service is possibly next to nothing because he might be with her all the time. I dealt with a case a couple of years ago where a farmer brought his wife into the hairdresser and sat with her. Her hair was horrific; he had put oil on it and it was very badly matted and she was very bruised. The hairdresser rang us and said, 'I do not know what to do; what can I do for her?'. When they had finished her hair, we advised them to slip her the telephone number of the Welsh domestic abuse helpline.

11.10 a.m.

[166] In Carmarthenshire, we have had a poster and coaster campaign, where we put 10,000 beer mats in 185 pubs across the county with the Welsh domestic abuse helpline number and the local Women's Aid groups, trying to get the telephone numbers out there. We also do

GPs' surgeries and so on. The best approach would be for the Welsh Assembly Government to look at some sort of advertising, where you see television adverts about domestic abuse. I think that that would have more of an impact, because people would see it. It is about getting the numbers and details to people. I spend a fortune on little promotional materials. We have lip balms with the telephone number in the bar code so that we can hand them out safely to people. I am running Crucial Crew next week where we have 2,000 children. We give out the bugs with the telephone number on them, so it is about trying to get the details to people that you cannot reach. Over the past few years, we have borrowed the police van and have parked in car parks in villages, giving out information to people. Trying to get the message out is more difficult if you are living in a rural area.

[167] **Peter Black:** Would you say that you have additional funding needs as a result of the pressures of the rural area?

[168] **Ms Jones:** Definitely.

[169] **Peter Black:** Is that recognised?

[170] **Ms Jones:** No.

[171] **Peter Black:** That means that it is something that we need to take on board.

[172] **Ms Jones:** I also think that if you are living somewhere like Cardiff, where you have very good rail links and transport links, and so on, there is no issue. If it takes you an hour and a half to get to Carmarthen, it is a huge issue for someone. Therefore, we need to take those things into consideration in the rural areas.

[173] **Janice Gregory:** Like all presenters, I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that we have come to the final question. If you had one key recommendation that you could give us today that you think would have the greatest impact on the problem of the scourge of domestic abuse in Wales, what would it be?

[174] **Ms Jones:** I would like to have three, but I cannot have three.

[175] **Janice Gregory:** Go on, give us the three; we will pick one.

[176] **Ms Jones:** First, I would look at educational programmes with children. That is absolutely huge. Having worked within the school scenario for the past three or four years—and I have my programme here which is on DVD and CD-ROM—children learn what safe relationships are. It is important to teach children what respect is, and what equality is. That is one of the main things. Secondly, I would say that the right support for women and children is necessary, taking into consideration women and children who may have complex needs and issues; that is something that we need to look at. Thirdly, the NSPCC has a perpetrator programme; it has one in Cardiff and one in Conwy; there is a perpetrator programme in Powys, which nobody seems to know anything about; there is our programme; and that is it across Wales. So, if you are a perpetrator and you want help, you have to travel quite some distance to attend a community perpetrator programme. That is why I think we need to look at the three strands.

[177] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you very much and for taking the time to drive from beautiful Carmarthenshire this morning to Cardiff bay. You will be sent a transcript; I am starting to get on my own nerves now by saying that you cannot change anything you have said, but if you think there is anything that is not factual, please contact us and it can be looked at. Thank you very much for your time. It will form a very important part of this inquiry. Thank you.

[178] The next meeting will be on the morning of 7 May, when we will be talking to the Deputy Minister for Housing and scrutinising her on her portfolio and taking further evidence from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. So, that should be another interesting meeting. We will launch our report on voluntary sector funding on 21 May in the Senedd. Invitations will be sent out this week. Thank you all for your attendance. I declare the meeting closed.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.15 a.m.
The meeting ended at 11.15 a.m.