



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

**Y Pwyllgor Cyfle Cyfartal
The Committee on Equality of Opportunity**

Dydd Iau, 28 Chwefror 2008

Thursday, 28 February 2008

Cynnwys
Contents

- 3 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau Introduction,
Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 4 Ymchwiliad i Weithwyr Mudol
Inquiry into Migrant Workers

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Gill Grainger	Cydgysylltydd Cydlyniant Cymunedol, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wrecsam Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, Wrexham County Borough Council
Trevor Jones	Rheolwr Datblygu Economaidd, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wrecsam Community Cohesion Officer, Flintshire County Council
Rebecca Lowry	Rheolwr Datblygu Economaidd, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wrecsam Economic Development Manager, Wrexham County Borough Council
Fiona Mocko	Swyddog Polisi—Cydraddoldebau, Cyngor Sir y Fflint Policy Officer—Equalities, Flintshire County Council
Prif Uwcharolygydd / Chief Superintendent Phill Thomson	Pennaeth y Rhanbarth Dwyreiniol, Heddlu Gogledd Cymru Divisional Commander of Eastern Division, North Wales Police
Y Tad / Father Adrian Wilcock	Esgobaeth Wrecsam Diocese of Wrexham

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

Claire Griffiths	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Tom Jackson	Clerc Clerk

Cynhaliwyd y cyfarfod yn Athrofa Addysg Uwch Gogledd Ddwyrain Cymru
The meeting was held at the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 11.18 a.m.
The meeting began at 11.18 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

[1] **Ann Jones:** I welcome everyone to this meeting of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity at NEWI, the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education, here in Wrexham. I am delighted to have brought the committee out and about. This is the third Assembly, and we are here as part of our inquiry into migrant workers.

[2] I have some housekeeping rules to announce. I remind Members and the public to switch off pagers, mobile phones, and BlackBerrys. Could you please switch them off completely, as they might interfere with the broadcasting otherwise?

[3] Translation is available on channel 1 of your headsets. If you are hard of hearing and want to hear the verbatim proceedings through the headset, turn to channel 0. Our witnesses and committee members are free to speak in English or Welsh and the translation will be available for us.

[4] We are not expecting the college to have a fire drill today, so, if the alarm sounds, we should follow the directions of the ushers who are next to the door on my left. The nearest assembly point is at the front of the building, next to the car park.

[5] I remind those at the table that we do not have to touch the buttons on our microphones. There are some fantastic experts in broadcasting and sound technology who will do all that for us.

[6] I have received apologies from Huw Lewis, Joyce Watson, Helen Mary Jones and Angela Burns. So, the committee is slightly depleted in number, but those Members will be able to read the transcript of the meeting.

11.20 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Weithwyr Mudol Inquiry into Migrant Workers

[7] **Ann Jones:** This is the second evidence-taking session of the committee's inquiry. We have called for written evidence, and have received 28 responses, which is a fair number. Committee members have been e-mailed copies of those responses.

[8] We are delighted to have with us Fiona Mocko and Trevor Jones from Flintshire County Council. Fiona is a policy officer for equalities and Trevor is the community cohesion officer. It is also superb to be joined by Chief Superintendent Phill Thomson from North Wales Police. He is the divisional commander of eastern division, which is where we are currently located, so we know that we are in safe hands. It is nice to see you again. Also with us is Father Adrian Wilcock, who represents the diocese of Wrexham. We are also expecting Rebeccah Lowry, the economic development manager, and Gill Grainger, the community cohesion co-ordinator, both from Wrexham County Borough Council. I am sure that they will join us later.

[9] This is the first time that we have had all our witnesses together. The purpose of this is to ask you to speak briefly to your papers, which Members have received, and then we will have an open dialogue and debate, in which Members can ask questions. That may result in our getting more of a feel for what is happening, rather than just having one of you come in, make your presentation, us asking you questions, and then you going away. You could all interact, which may also be of greater benefit to us.

[10] I will start with Chief Superintendent Phill Thomson from North Wales Police, and then we will move on to our witnesses from the county councils. We will see how it goes. So,

Phill, could you give us a five or 10-minute overview, and then we will move on?

[11] **Mr Thomson:** Of course. While the police as an organisation are aware of the expansion of the European Union, like everyone else, it is no secret that we were a little surprised by the number of migrant workers who arrived in the area of my division as a result of that expansion. I am always asked how many of them are here, and my truthful answer is that I do not know. In Wrexham, the estimated figures are between 8,000 and 15,000, but, if you were to ask me my opinion, I would say that it is nearer to 15,000 than 8,000, though that is only anecdotal.

[12] That issue brought with it its own challenge for the police service and for me as the divisional commander. While I had already invested in a police officer post, namely a diversity officer, to deal with the diversity issues in the division, there was a particular issue around the eastern European migrant workers. I was fortunate in that I had a linguist for a police constable who was able to learn Polish in a frighteningly quick time, which I encouraged him to do. There has been some expense associated with that: I have sent him to Poland a couple of times to learn about the language and cultural issues, and we have also had some exchange visits, with Polish police coming to Wrexham and Flintshire.

[13] That officer, PC Sinclair, is committed to dealing only with the migrant worker issue in this division, and he and the diversity officer are well known to, and trusted by, the migrant community. That is no mean feat, bearing in mind that these people have come from a previously communist environment, in which relations with the police are not as good as they are in the United Kingdom and Wales.

[14] Apart from his policing duties with the migrant community, PC Sinclair does many other things; he is the link between North Wales Police and the Polish migrant community. I am also fortunate in that he also speaks Portuguese, as we have a sizeable Portuguese community in my division. Among the main benefits of this 'investment', if you like, has been the ability to speak to the migrant community in its own language. For example, a Polish national was murdered quite recently, and there was always going to be the possibility of tension between the migrant community and indigenous people. Having the ability to communicate directly to that community through PC Sinclair, to allay fears and to get across the fact that it had nothing to do with that person being from a different place to Wrexham was invaluable. The trust that the community has in that officer and, therefore, the police is also invaluable, because it got the message straight from the horse's mouth, rather than getting a police spokesman to say it.

[15] Another issue is that migrant workers in Flintshire, as I am sure you will hear later, are employed on the Flint and Deeside strip. The diversity officer, PC Gary McLeod, with the help of the community safety partnership in Flintshire, started a project called the Open Door Project, which I understand you may have received some evidence about. It was set up in Flintshire and it provides information and guidance using interpreters. It enables the migrant community, particularly the Polish community, to access advice on all sorts of issues, such as community safety and local authority issues. PC McLeod, who is one of my officers, is currently the project manager, and he deals with a huge range of issues. The project is spreading beyond the Polish community to include Lithuanians and Latvians, of which there are a number in Flintshire. As I said, you have probably received evidence on the Open Door project, so I will not labour that point.

11.30 a.m.

[16] The migrant worker situation in my division came on the back of some disturbances here in 2003. That had nothing to do with migrant workers, but there was some community tension in 2003, as I am sure you are aware. Therefore, the action that we took, which I hope

was speedy and innovative, was taken in that context. Both local authorities in this area—Wrexham and Flintshire—have been extremely good, working with us on this issue. Both counties have—as I am sure you will hear later—done quite a bit to dispel myths, and I believe that Wrexham County Borough Council has produced ‘Myth Busters’ leaflets, which are extremely good.

[17] I will mention some of the other things that we have been involved in. I have arranged some basic Polish language skills training for my front-end staff—response officers and front counter staff. As you will no doubt be aware, the first few minutes can be vital when attending the scene of a crime or an incident, and it is vital that my officers are able to communicate, even at a basic level, with these people. I am happy to say that I have managed to recruit two Polish nationals to be special constables, which is positive.

[18] My operational officers are also aware of the importance of being seen by all the community—but this community in particular—not only as enforcement people but as people who work in the best traditions of the police service in Wales, who are there to assist them with all sorts of issues. However, as I said before, the ability to communicate with these people allays many tensions that may arise in other areas where that service is not available. The diversity officer and PC Sinclair have also done many other things. I will not go into all of those today, but one thing that they have done is to facilitate a 20-week English language course, which takes place at Flint police station. My officers are not teaching English—they are just facilitating the course; there are plenty of volunteers around to do that.

[19] I would like to leave you with a few points. First, these services do not come without a cost, and, like many other organisations, we have had to adapt financially to meet this challenge. I will give you an example. In the last year, we dealt with 33 different languages in policing. To give you some idea of the scale of increase, in 2002-03, I spent £5,000 on interpreters’ fees; this year, I am likely to spend in excess of £100,000 on interpreters’ fees.

[20] Secondly, I want to stress that this is not just a Polish issue; there are many people from many different countries in this divisional area, and while, anecdotally, the biggest slice is from Poland, there are other nationalities. I am aware that, as an organisation, because of the percentage of Polish people, we may have centred on the Polish community to the exception of others.

[21] **Ann Jones:** Thank you for that, Phill. That has given us a good start. I am pleased to hear that the police have done quite a lot. I know that you have personally driven some of that, which is good. Thank you very much.

[22] I would now like to turn to both local authorities. Would you do similar presentations? Given that we are in Wrexham, Gill and Rebecca, perhaps one of you could briefly introduce your paper to us. We will take an introduction, similar to that given by the chief superintendent on his paper, from all of the witnesses. We will then, hopefully, open it up to questions and an open dialogue so that we can get the best out of the session to make our report meaningful. I do not know which of you wants to start.

[23] **Ms Lowry:** I will start. We will do this between us.

[24] Community cohesion has been a priority for Wrexham County Borough Council since 2003. Phill mentioned the disturbances that occurred at that time in Caia Park. As a result of that, following a review of the situation, it was obvious to a number of agencies that there was a need for us to look proactively at the situation. From that time, we have taken forward a number of immediate measures, such as Gill’s role as community cohesion officer within the council, and a small unit is currently being developed. We also developed the ‘Myth Busters’ leaflets, particularly on the issue of economic migrants, but also in relation to

asylum seekers and refugees, and Gypsies and Travellers, in order to try to dispel the myths. At the time, there was evidence of an increase in the communities in Wrexham from the eight new accession countries, along with pressures on public services. We were not entirely sure how that would play out.

[25] In 2004-05, we started looking at a migrant workers action plan to assess the pressing needs at the time. This was an initial response. We have sent you a copy of the migrant workers action plan. That has been a task-and-finish-type project as opposed to a long-term strategic approach. We have considered the issues here and now that are placing pressure on public services and the ways in which we can respond and understand them. You have the detail in the action plan.

[26] After the initial short and medium-term responses, it has been felt that there needs to be a long-term strategic approach to the work that we are taking forward in Wrexham, and that this cannot be carried out by the council alone. So, we have been working with all of our partners in Wrexham, such as the police, the higher and further education establishments, the health board, the voluntary sector, and so on. We all work closely together to contribute to the cohesion agenda in Wrexham. Through that, we have developed a community cohesion strategy, which has just been approved by our executive board to go out to draft. That is our long-term approach for Wrexham in relation to how we aim to be proactive on the agenda in terms of the integration of new communities as they arrive in Wrexham. It is about integration. It is not necessarily about just responding to the needs of new communities, but about the communities of Wrexham and how they are living together cohesively. While cohesion is wider than race and ethnicity, our immediate response is about the new communities in Wrexham, which is about country of origin. That is the focus in the immediate term. However, in the longer term, we would look to widen that to the wider diversity agenda, because the principles of cohesion apply across the board.

[27] That is the overall introduction in terms of the background and our strategic approach. I will hand over to Gill, who will provide more details on our submission and the immediate responses on public services, particularly around the education side.

11.40 a.m.

[28] **Ms Grainger:** Through the development of the action plan, the work fell into two parts: the impact on the services and consideration of what migration means in terms of service development, and the impact on our indigenous communities. It became apparent that migrant communities were struggling to access public services. Our council departments then were in the position of having to develop services in response to emerging need rather than according to previous experience. An example of that is our public protection department, in that we had many examples of houses in multiple occupation that were highly dangerous. That also has an impact on the wider community. Our departments were very proactive in using legislation on houses in multiple occupation as well as providing support and information for the residents of those properties about their rights and entitlements. Other partner organisations such as the fire service and the police were involved to provide fire safety information and so on.

[29] We also liaised with other local authority areas. There were several instances of illegal and inappropriate gangmaster activity in the early days, and work by our legal department and our public protection department was able to address that in the local area. However, there is always a danger of moving such problems on to other areas, so we liaised with neighbouring authorities.

[30] We began to get a growing sense that particular council departments were feeling most pressure from the changes in our demographic composition. Those were the education

department, the housing department and our public protection department. You have received quite a detailed submission from our education department, so I will only touch on that. One of the crucial factors affecting the department is that it does not know how many children will be coming or what their needs will be. There will be children in a new intake who have general educational needs, and language issues will be common to all of them. However, there will also be children in that group who have what we would call special educational needs. So, there were many issues there for the department to begin to support teachers with. The department has developed a comprehensive and robust programme of introduction now for new families, and staff recruited from these communities will go out to families to prepare them for when their children start school, so that they understand what our education system is about and the children are ready to come to school. There is additional support in the classrooms for children with language issues.

[31] The department has also taken on board the need to support the wider school community in understanding the cohesion issues raised by newcomers to the school. As a practical example, games played on the yard at playtime take very much a multicultural approach—they can think about Polish playground activities, Welsh ones and so on.

[32] On access to housing, accommodation has been a pressing issue for migrant workers in Wrexham. We have very limited public sector housing available, and that has put pressure on providers. It has also put pressure on the indigenous community who may have wanted such accommodation themselves, as well as on the migrant workers. Again, there are instances of them being used as houses in multiple occupation. Our public protection housing department has been very proactive again in liaising with organisations and private sector providers in trying to smooth that move.

[33] Within the local authority, we have reviewed our homelessness criteria and housing allocations policy to ensure that they are in line with our race relations responsibilities and to ensure that the system is fair and appropriate to the needs of the whole Wrexham community. We are now confident that we have a robust and fair system, as we had in the past, and there has not been a particularly significant number of applications from the migrant community for public sector housing. Equally, there has been a very small allocation of properties.

[34] Some of the bigger issues have been noted, particularly in the voluntary and community sector, and they have been taken forward through the need for English-language provision in the community. Yale College Wrexham has provided many courses in the college and, where possible, in the workplace, but, as you will know, the funding for English for speakers of other languages provision has been significantly cut. We have very limited ESOL provision in the community now, and I know that Yale College Wrexham is very oversubscribed. You have probably had a submission from Yale in relation to that. A voluntary organisation, Caia Park Partnership Ltd, which you may have had a submission from—

[35] **Ann Jones:** We visited that organisation this morning.

[36] **Ms Grainger:** That has been a key partner for the council in terms of developing our relationship with the migrant worker community.

[37] I will move on to some of the good practice that we believe we can put forward. We have brought with us examples of leaflets, which we will leave with you. We have produced two 'Myth Busters' leaflets. The first addresses asylum seeker and refugee issues and the second is about migrant workers. You will probably be aware that there is much confusion among the general public about the different status of these new groups of people that are moving into the area. We are very keen to work with local businesses to understand their staffing needs so that we can then, hopefully, try to understand what the future may hold for

us in terms of migration. So, we have produced our profile newsletter, which specifically targets migrant worker issues, in terms of giving information to employers but also trying to engage them in a dialogue so that we can understand a bit more what their needs and perspective are.

[38] Through our business week activities, we have had workshops on employment and support for migrant workers, again to try to understand what the issues might be for employers. We also have migrant workers present at those, to share their experiences and to enable us to try to tease out some of the best-practice areas. One of our local employers, through its personnel department, checks back with recruitment agencies to ensure that people's accommodation and pay deductions are appropriate, and so on. So, some organisations are now taking this very seriously.

[39] We have produced a housing information booklet. The 'Myth Busters' leaflets were very specific. They addressed misconceptions about housing allocations. We have taken a broader perspective on that. Information on the allocation of local authority housing is important for everybody, and that is the way in which we have couched that.

[40] We have also worked, to some extent, with the local press and there have been several very positive articles about migration, written particularly from a human perspective. They have been about why people are here and the impact that it has on their own lives. We have an information booklet on how it works around here, and that provides information across a range of subjects: relationships with the police, seeking employment, getting children into schools, qualification equivalents, and so on. Its aim is to help people to get started. There is a debate locally about the volume of things that we translate. We have so far taken a very pragmatic approach to that, by taking the view that we need people to have basic information in a language that they can understand to get them started, but that needs to be backed up by the provision of ESOL classes so that people become independent and utilise the mainstream services and access points.

[41] There were issues around childcare and childcare training, which are being robustly addressed. These issues often stem back to cultural differences. You will know that there are very strict regulations governing the number of children that a childminder can look after; in Poland, traditionally, there would be more informal childminding arrangements with it being the norm for a childminder to look after significant numbers of children. So, it is about an information exchange. Colleagues, such as our police officer who speaks Polish, have been instrumental in helping us to understand those cultural nuances, to break down the barriers and to provide the information to people in an accessible way.

11.50 a.m.

[42] There has been funding for several short-term projects with Caia Park Partnership Ltd and Citizens Advice, which have been largely around giving information and support to the migrant worker community. In advocacy, there has been an outreach format, which has been very helpful in terms of getting information out to the community and, again, in terms of trying to develop a relationship and a dialogue. Anecdotally, we are told that it is not usual for Polish people to attend information-giving sessions. If we held an information day, we would naturally expect the community to attend, if there were enough items of interest, but that is not the norm in Poland, so we have to think more laterally about how we might do that. We are still developing those procedures. Our colleagues in the voluntary and community sector have been particularly helpful with that. I think that I will stop there.

[43] **Ann Jones:** That is fine. I am sure that there will be more to tease out; I have written down various points, so I am sure that there will be. I will now turn to Fiona and Trevor. I do not know how you want to put your presentation together, but feel free to do whatever is

suitable for you.

[44] **Ms Mocko:** Thank you; I will go first. I would like to say that some of the comments that we will be making have already been made, so we will not expound on some of them.

[45] I would like to reinforce one of the first points that we made in the paper that we submitted to the Equality of Opportunity Committee, on the lack of data and accurate numbers in terms of the current make-up of the population of Flintshire because the change has been so rapid. It has been very difficult for services to be proactive in responding to needs because we do not know what they are, so there has tended to be a reactive response to those needs. There is also a difficulty in that because we are relying on anecdotal evidence and what the perceptions are of services, who is out there and who is in the community, there is a danger that we will have hidden communities, that we will miss out some groups of people's needs, and that we will be targeting one group of people, as Chief Superintendent Thomson said about the Polish community.

[46] We are also concerned about services. We want to provide the right services for people, which will meet their needs and the needs of both new and established communities. Services need to know about predictions of what the population will be like in the future, what changes there will be with the possible future enlargement of the EU, and what the trends will be in terms of the people who will settle in Flintshire. Will they want to relocate families, will they have caring responsibilities, and how will that change the population of Flintshire? While those services are looking at that, they want to capture the evidence to say, 'These will be our resource needs for the future'. There have been difficulties for some of them, where the population has changed quite quickly, because they have had an increase in service users, but they have not had the resources to meet those needs. That has been an issue, which I think that Gill raised, with schools in particular.

[47] The second point is that we have held a workshop with different sectors to find out their experiences of the impact of migrant workers. I think that that highlighted that some services are feeling the impact, such as schools, the health service and midwives, and so on. What we had not expected was that registrars were saying that they were feeling the impact, with an increased number of births and marriages being registered. One of the things that they also said was that there were generic issues that were coming out, which were common to all services. We highlighted data, which we have spoken about already, as services need to know the predictions for the future, so that they can meet people's needs.

[48] Another issue was resources, because with an increase in the number of people using services, they might need increased staffing levels and capacity in those services. Also, there is an increased cost for interpretation and translation in Flintshire, although it is not as great as the cost to the police. Voluntary organisations are really struggling with some of that. They want to provide a good, effective service, but they do not have interpretation and translation services or the money for them, and therefore they are not meeting people's needs and are very concerned about that.

[49] Another issue that was raised by all services concerned communication barriers. It is about having interpretation and translation services, but some services also identified a need for face-to-face translation, such as in mental health or some of the other health professions where working with a three-way translation service does not work. They need face-to-face translation, which is an additional cost.

[50] Another area of discussion was that the English-as-a-second-language classes in Flintshire are held on only one day a week, which is just not enough for migrant workers to be able to pick up a new language. Also, we found that migrant workers cannot attend some of the classes because they do not fit in with their shift patterns, or they have rotating shift

patterns and can only attend one class every so often, so that does not work for them. There is a big need for English-as-a-second-language classes to help people to assimilate the English language, which would help them to access more services and to find out more about them.

[51] **Mr Jones:** Another point in our paper that we would like to highlight is the fact that we held what we think was a successful joint conference in December last year. In terms of data, it is important to know what each sector is doing and how people in particular sectors are trying to keep up with demand—in terms of local authorities and their partners. A range of good practice is going on—I am sure that we will come on to that—and there are certainly pockets of good practice in Flintshire, but people within education services, for example, were not aware of the needs of families, as has already been said by colleagues from Wrexham. They did not know about the needs of individual children as they stepped through the school gate, so schools would be trying to respond on an individual basis. The great difficulty then is in making a connection with the families outside the school gate and looking at their wider needs. Various sectors highlighted the fact that we do not know enough about individuals. Health colleagues were also saying similar things, such as, ‘We have no health records; how can we possibly respond to their needs when we don’t have the data on the ground at a local level?’. These issues were coming up from a range of organisations.

[52] In terms of pockets of good practice, our schools have been trying to respond in different ways and they are looking to produce packs for new migrant-worker families coming into Flintshire. They are looking at developing further links with schools in Poland and other countries to ensure that the work and studies that children who are in our county now are undertaking will complement any work or studies that they may undertake if they decide to return home, and to ensure that their work is in some way similar or compatible with the work that they have done previously.

[53] Another small area of good practice in Flintshire County Council’s play unit is that it found that it wanted to introduce more children into the open access play provision that it provides and steps were undertaken, in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local authority departments, to target families. Again, it is about the cultural difference. Would you expect to go to another country and drop your child off at a free access play session and just carry on? It is normal for us to accept that provision in Wales, but it may not be normal if you come from another country. So, steps were taken to allow that to happen, and the numbers increased as people came forward. We cannot rejoice and say that they were massive numbers, but there was a significant number, and we hope that that will encourage others and that there will be an increase this year.

[54] It is interesting to hear that our colleagues in Wrexham had similar experiences with housing options. Our housing options team has produced information in different formats, but there has not been a massive increase in demand for local authority housing; people have been looking more to our colleagues in social housing and the private sector.

[55] Chief Superintendent Phill Thomson mentioned the Open Door project. I have been involved in that with our colleague from the police, Gary McLeod, who is our diversity officer. We provide basic information on community safety, and give a whole range of information to people so that they understand the culture within the police, legal and fire services. That is one small project that is funded by the community safety partnership that has grown immensely in terms of what people are using it for. People’s needs vary so much and there is clear recognition that we need to move on and try to expand services of that nature, but there is also recognition that they should not remain focused on one particular group of people.

[56] Although we have not brought copies, we have also produced ‘Myth Busters’ leaflets that are more targeted towards the indigenous population, where we felt that there might be

some issues regarding community cohesion and rumblings and myths circulating in our communities. We are working with partners to try to get the 'Myth Busters' leaflets out to our communities.

12.00 p.m.

[57] A final key point from our paper is the fact that we recognise, as I said earlier, that there has to be a co-ordinated approach. It is not an issue that is left with local authorities or the police; it is about all partners, from the private, voluntary and statutory sectors, sharing knowledge and taking a joined-up, co-ordinated approach. We certainly recognise that we need to involve migrant workers in trying to meet their needs. It is not about us suggesting that we know what is best; we are trying to work with migrant-worker families to meet their needs at a local level. There are representatives from two local authorities here today that are very different.

[58] As we have said, there is a crying need for more accurate data on existing numbers and future predictions, because the situation is very unclear at the moment. It has been said by colleagues over the past year that it would be great to have ring-fenced funding to react to rapid change. The one area where there is rapid change is education; it does not know what it will be getting at any given time because of families moving in.

[59] We have felt that there is a general difficulty in terms of migrant-worker families accessing mainstream services. That is a job of work that we recognise that we must do. It is a long way from being perfect, but we are starting to make inroads in Flintshire.

[60] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. Finally, I turn to Father Adrian Wilcock. Thank you for coming here today. We look forward to your presentation.

[61] **Mr Wilcock:** Thank you. I am grateful for being asked to come to the meeting today. I represent the Roman Catholic diocese of Wrexham, which covers the whole of north Wales. Around a year ago, the Bishop of Wrexham, Edwin Regan, appointed me as the episcopal vicar for migrant clergy and migrants in the diocese of Wrexham. We have migrants not just from Poland, but from the Philippines and Portugal. Across the whole diocese of north Wales, many of our communities are dealing on a daily basis with the issues that have been raised. To put you in the picture, we have five priests from India working in the diocese of Wrexham, and they make a valuable contribution to the life of the diocese, the parish and the communities. They are helping us with the shortage of clergy that we, as other denominations, have encountered. We also have two full-time Polish priests working in the diocese; one works in Wrexham cathedral, and the other works in the parish of Holywell. The priest in Wrexham covers the needs of the Polish community in the area and is often called down to places such as Newtown and Welshpool. The priest in Holywell serves the communities of Flint, Prestatyn, Rhyl and Abergele. We also have a part-time Polish priest working in the Pwllheli and Caernarfon areas. So, the diocese is trying in a very real way to respond to the many needs of migrants, especially those from Poland. As we all know, what has become evident over the past two years is the fact that those needs have increased dramatically.

[62] The Bishop of Wrexham sees it as a priority, as does the diocese, to try to meet, pastorally, the needs of Polish migrants, as we have seen such a large volume of people coming over. I would like to remind the committee that the tradition and history of Polish people is very Catholic—90 per cent of Polish people are Catholic, and not just in name, as a large proportion of them are practising Catholics. As you can imagine, many of our parishes across the north Wales coast, and not just those of Wrexham and Flint, deal with this on a daily basis. Polish migrants will often knock on a priest's door for help—many priests could give testimony to that—and they are hopefully welcomed within the life of the parishes and communities.

[63] We saw the need, therefore, in the Wrexham, Flint and Holywell areas to try to develop links with Poland in order to bring full-time Polish priests over here, and that has happened. These Polish priests are young, enthusiastic, open, articulate and English speaking, so they are at the forefront of dealing pastorally with the many needs of migrants. Reference has been made to the incident in Wrexham, which highlighted the co-operation between the police and the church in responding to the pastoral needs of the family in the situation concerned. Our Polish priests are saying mass every Sunday, and I think that more than 300 people on average attend the Polish mass in Wrexham. In my own parish of Flint, where I am also a resident, more than 100 people attend the Polish mass every Sunday. Similarly, across the board—in Bangor, Llandudno, Rhyl, and so on—many people are attending churches. These people need help and support in many different ways, and, from the church's perspective, the church must respond to the practical need for baptisms, marriages and funerals, which hopefully it is trying to do.

[64] We have to encourage and support our migrant workers and their families in our schools. The established Catholic schools in all of these areas are strong, and high demand is being placed on them, particularly so in the Wrexham and the Flint areas. I know, from talking to some of our headteachers and teachers, that the relationship between teachers and pupils from Wales and those from other countries is working well. It is a healthy relationship; there is some good co-operation going on and there are many opportunities for sharing cultures and traditions. While there can be tensions in the schools, these are minute compared with the positives that can be gained from this diversity in school life.

[65] I will highlight and reiterate the reference to some of the problems that our schools are facing. Quite often, they do not know enough about a child's academic background. They come to a school and, for the first few months, they are catching up and the teachers are trying to see where the child's inability lies. Also, I know that schools in the Flintshire area, despite numerous attempts, need more support in terms of teaching expertise. For example, in our primary school in Flint, I think that there are 340 children, of which 40 are from eastern European countries. That is across the board, and you can imagine the kind of difficulties that some of the teachers face. So, help in this regard is very much needed.

[66] In terms of the problems or difficulties that have cropped up, language is still the huge one. While many different attempts are made to offer English-language classes—including in my own parish where parishioners give English lessons on a weekly basis to many of our Polish parishioners—accessing information is still a problem. It is difficult enough for those of us from Wales or England to access information about healthcare or housing, so you can imagine how much more difficult it is for people from abroad with English-language problems to access this information. I do not know the answer to that issue. There are many good things going on, but it is still a huge problem. Schools have developed many different things, such as signs in Polish, or bilingually in Polish and English, to help parents, but there is still a long way to go. That is all that I want to say at the moment.

12.10 p.m.

[67] **Ann Jones:** Thank you; that was helpful. I know that other Members have questions, but I will take the Chair's privilege and ask the first question. You all say that there is a lack of data collection, or that the data collected are not right. What do you think the Welsh Assembly Government could do to improve the collection of data, bearing in mind that we are dealing with people who may be uncomfortable with officialdom? How do we sensitively collect the data? Should we collect them across areas, should we nominate one agency to collect them, or should it be done by a voluntary organisation that can talk to migrant workers more easily? It might be that we use Father Adrian's figures relating to mass, for example, although that is only one area. How do we do it? We have all said that it is a problem, but are

there any ideas on how to solve it? The Assembly Government is accused of always looking for data and of setting targets—how many criminals is Chief Superintendent Thomson catching in Wrexham, for example, and has he noted them down? We are always being accused of that, so I wonder whether anyone has any views on how we can collect this important data set. Who wants to kick off? Trevor?

[68] **Mr Jones:** Obviously, it is not easy to capture all the data, but what I have found at a local level, for instance, is that where families have children of school age, they need to access the school. It has been said more than once that this is about establishing the child's educational attainment level. At the same time, we have found that we have similar issues with health. People need to register, particularly pregnant women who need to access health clinics, and so on. As Father Wilcock mentioned, people are suspicious about getting involved with statutory agencies—the small project has been mentioned more than once, and the Open Door project operates from a non-Catholic church, though it is not church-related, and is supported by the police and involves the local authority. These are three of the main authorities that people may not want to get involved with. However, education and health are areas that they would wish to engage with. That might be one way of starting to capture the data—by looking at collecting it from sources that are useful for the family. We could explain that we are not taking information to be logged so that we can keep an eye on them, but rather trying to help them to access mainstream services.

[69] **Mr Thomson:** I accept that it will be difficult to gather the data. The question was on what we think the Assembly could do. I would like to see the Assembly playing a co-ordinating role between the different agencies, and, even if it is only a best guess, collecting information on the numbers that each agency thinks that it has in a particular area. That would be useful. The second thing that would be useful from the Assembly Government point of view is environmental scanning—what do we think the future needs will be, given the expansion of the European Union and the possibility of Turkey joining? What impact would that have on Wales and on our services? That is something that the Assembly Government could usefully do.

[70] **Ms Mocko:** One thing that is happening in other areas is that agencies are proactively encouraging migrant workers to get national insurance numbers and telling them what the benefits are. If we had information from the Assembly, we could disaggregate it, rather than each authority or agency developing its own information. If we had the information from one central source, we could pass it on to people that we come into contact with. Having national insurance numbers would help with data collection also.

[71] **Ms Lowry:** It is certainly an issue that we have looked into in Wrexham, but if I knew the solution, I would have patented it, because I do not think that anyone knows. It is a grey area. The local service board in Wrexham has considered this, and there is an information-sharing protocol that it has signed up to and is willing to share.

[72] The issue is that we do not know how we can avoid any duplication by counting people, for example, more than once, twice or three times. Sometimes the data that have been recorded include only white Europeans and that is all of us, so we are not covering the eight accession countries and identifying who they are. Perhaps the monitoring needs to be more robust.

[73] The local service board will next week be considering whether to fund the commissioning of a feasibility study, to find out from a professional researcher or statistician how we can do this, because we are drawing many blanks. To try to get a picture that will assist with service provision, we are currently working on the migrant worker action plan with all those front-line services that have already identified that they have a relationship with the new communities. This is three years after the plan was put together. We have asked them

what they are starting to understand about the users of their service in the past three years, whether there are any trends or growing numbers, and how they are planning their services for the future based on existing experiences. At the moment, we feel that that is the best that we can do. If you can give us some answers, as an Assembly, we hope to reiterate some projections of trends that we might expect to see in the future, to help us with service plans.

[74] **Ann Jones:** Part of what we are trying to do is find some answers. Hopefully, with your help, I am sure that we will. Father Adrian, do you have a view?

[75] **Mr Wilcock:** Yes, I may be going off on a tangent here, but I think that something interesting is going on here. I hear often from my parishioners—Polish-speaking and Welsh and English-speaking—that they think that Polish people are here for a short time to earn some money and to send it back to their families. That is a huge part of it, but many young Polish people also come here with the intention of staying in the long term, because of the opportunities, the facilities, the standard of living and so on offered here, and the nature of migration and how Europe is developing. In some way, we need to tap into this often very skilled, highly articulate and aspirational workforce. We have not even begun to do that. It is a huge task, and I do not know how to do it. How can we encourage them to inform us of their skills and gifts, which are vast? Often, university graduates and very skilled people are working in jobs purely for money. They do not want to stay in such jobs; they are only a means to an end. That whole area has not been explored, as far as I know.

[76] **Ann Jones:** That is an interesting point, because we have just visited the Caia Park Partnership Ltd where the same points were raised. Often, the people who come over are highly skilled, but take jobs that are below their skill level just to get the money to make ends meet. That is an interesting point.

[77] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr oeddwn yn meddwl y dylwn ddweud ychydig yn Gymraeg gan fod criw y cyfieithwyr wedi teithio yr holl ffordd i fyny yma o Gaerdydd. Rhaid inni roi rhywbeth iddynt ei wneud.

Eleanor Burnham: I thought that I should say a little in Welsh given that the crew of translators have travelled all the way up here from Cardiff. We have to give them something to do.

[78] Nid ydym wedi cyflwyno ein hunain. Aelod rhanbarthol ydwyf i. Yr wyf yn byw yn yr Orsedd, ond mae Mark a minnau yn cynrychioli gogledd Cymru yn gyffredinol, rhag ofn nad oeddech yn siŵr pwy ydym ni.

We have not introduced ourselves. I am a regional Member, and I live in Rossett, but Mark and I represent north Wales generally, just in case you were wondering who we were.

[79] Yr wyf yn lwcus i fod yn fam i ddau o blant, un yn byw ym Mwearést a'r llall yn Lisbon, felly mae gennyf ryw ymwybyddiaeth o'r materion cymhleth yr ydym yn eu trafod y bore yma. Yr wyf wedi mwynhau heddiw yn fawr. Credaf eich bod wedi dweud pethau pwysig ac addysgiadol, a hoffwn ddiolch i Phill Thomson yn enwedig, oherwydd bydd yn gadael ei swydd yn fuan. Yr ydym wedi cydweithio yn aml.

I am lucky to be the mother of two children, one of whom lives in Bucharest and the other in Lisbon, so I have some awareness of the complex matters under discussion this morning. I have enjoyed today a great deal. I think that you have said some important and educational things, and I would particularly like to thank Phill Thomson, because he will shortly be leaving his post. We have often worked together.

12.20 p.m.

[80] Yr wyf hefyd yn siarad yn aml ag arweinwyr y cynghorau, yn enwedig yn Wrecsam, a gwn am y gwaith da yr ydych

I have also spoken regularly to the leaders of the councils, particularly in Wrexham, and I am aware of the good work that you have

wedi ei wneud. O'r cyflwyniad a gawsom ym Mharc Caia, mae'n amlwg eich bod wedi gweithio yn galed ac yn effeithiol. Mae'r ffaith nad yw'r papurau newydd bellach mor negyddol ag oeddent yn y gorffennol yn holl bwysig.

done. From the presentation that we had in Caia Park, it is evident that you have worked hard and effectively. The fact that newspapers are no longer as negative as they have been is also vital.

[81] Mae gennyf ddiddordeb mawr mewn addysg, ac yn narpariaeth cyrsiau Saesneg i siaradwyr ieithoedd eraill. Yr ydym wedi sôn yn benodol am y ddarpariaeth Saesneg, felly efallai y gallem glywed am y Gymraeg. Er fy mod yn cydymdeimlo—ac efallai y dylem wneud ychydig o waith ar hyn yn ein harolwg—â'r syniad o roi cefnogaeth ariannol i raglen SSIE, sut mae'r ddwy sir yn ystyried y mater pwysig o roi darpariaeth addysgol ychwanegol ac nid darpariaeth addysgol arbennig?

I have a keen interest in education, and in the provision of English for speakers of other languages courses. We speak primarily of the provision in English, but perhaps we could also hear about provision in Welsh. While I sympathise—and perhaps we should do a little work on this in our review—with the idea of giving financial support to the ESOL programme, how do both counties consider the important matter of additional educational provision and not special educational provision?

[82] Bûm yn cadeirio'r Pwyllgor ar y Gorchymyn Arfaethedig ynghylch Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol, a gwn felly fod gwahaniaeth mawr rhwng darpariaeth ychwanegol a darpariaeth arbennig. Nid yw anghenion addysgol arbennig yr un peth ag angen darpariaeth ychwanegol. Nid oes gan y plant hyn anghenion arbennig; mae ganddynt anghenion ieithyddol ychwanegol. Fel y dywedodd y Tad Adrian, mae gan nifer o'r bobl ifanc hyn fwy o gymwysterau nag a sylwn, oherwydd nad ydym yn gwybod amdanynt ar hyn o bryd. Ym Mharc Caia, buom yn trafod un person sy'n arbenigwr ar yr ymennydd ond sy'n gweithio mewn ffatri. Pa ddarpariaeth sydd ar gael i'r plant hyn, gan nad oes angen darpariaeth anghenion addysgol arbennig arnynt?

I have been chairing the Proposed Additional Learning Needs LCO Committee, and so I know that there is a considerable difference between additional provision and special provision. Special educational needs are not the same as needing additional provision. These children do not have special needs; they have additional language needs. As Father Adrian said, a number of these young people have more qualifications than we realise, because we do not know about them at the moment. In Caia Park, we discussed one person who is a brain specialist, but who works in a factory. What provision is there for these children who do not need special educational needs provision?

[83] They are not backward; they just have language difficulties.

[84] Mae'r cwestiwn hynny i gynrychiolwyr y ddwy sir a phwy bynnag arall sydd am ei ateb.

That question is for representatives of both counties and anyone else who wishes to answer it.

[85] What I am getting at is that these kids are not backward; they speak a different language. SEN is not appropriate for them; they need support for their additional learning needs.

[86] **Ms Grainger:** I think that your point was that, within that larger group of children with additional learning needs, there may be children with special needs, and the issue is identifying them quickly enough to respond to their needs. You are absolutely right in that the vast majority of the children coming into our schools in Wrexham have additional learning needs that are a result only of their linguistic needs. Linguistic support is the bulk of the additional support being provided to those children. That is very difficult, because the funding

is paid retrospectively, so it creates a raft of issues for our schools.

[87] However, to talk about the positives and what is being done, I mentioned the phased admissions process earlier, and that involves staff going out to migrant families to help them to understand the schooling process and what the school day is like, so that the children can be more confident. In the classroom, there are classroom assistants who can provide direct support in English as an additional language to those children, with the aim of increasing their skills in English, so that they can take up the opportunities in their mainstream language.

[88] It has been recognised that many of these children are highly intelligent and will eventually do well in the educational system, but that they will struggle initially because of the language. So, there are now opportunities for children to take GCSEs in their home language, so that they could come out of school with a GCSE in Polish. The aim is to make the learning experience for these children positive, but also to begin the process of capturing that capacity for Wales, so that those children move forward through further and higher education, on to the workplace. Mainstream teachers are very skilled in the general experience of the classroom, but additional training needs have been identified because of that, and those have been taken forward within the very limited budgets available.

[89] On a broader scale, schools are very much linked in with wider children and young people's services, both statutory and across the voluntary and community sector. So, we are taking a holistic approach to the learning needs of these young people. After-school provision, such as homework clubs, form part of the overall jigsaw of educational opportunities for these young people.

[90] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have just one last point, Chair. My understanding—

[91] **Ann Jones:** We will ask Flintshire to respond first. You can come back after that, Eleanor.

[92] **Ms Mocko:** Just to add to Gill's comments, we realise that the more migrant children integrate with the indigenous population, the quicker they will learn the language. As Gill said, we have classroom assistants to support them in learning the language and in integrating as much as possible. We have some courses coming up for teachers to help them to include in the everyday curriculum a language-rich environment to help people. However, we know from one authority that children sometimes have a learning difficulty too, which can be missed because teachers assume that their problem is to do with language difficulty rather than a learning difficulty. We are very aware of making sure that we have the right assessments at the right time for pupils, which is why it is important to have background information on them when they come into schools.

[93] **Eleanor Burnham:** How do you cope with the fact that pupils from Poland, for instance, are used to an entirely different system? They go to middle school and then to high school when they reach the age of 14. Has that caused any difficulties?

[94] **Ms Grainger:** That has come down to the relationship between our staff working on English as an additional language, the school and the family. The phased admission and the direct relationship with the family has allowed for the exploration of those issues, so that families understand. They are given the information in a written format in their own language.

[95] **Mr Wilcock:** It might be helpful if our schools, across the board, had some professional person from Poland briefing teaching staff about the teaching methods used in Poland. They are very different, I believe. In Flint, one of my parishioners, who is a Polish teacher working in a factory, went to see the teaching staff to explain the teaching method used in a Polish primary school. I have not heard a report back on how that went, but that

could help. I do not know whether anything like that has been done in Wrexham or elsewhere, but it would be useful.

[96] **Ann Jones:** I want to pick a point up that Chief Superintendent Thomson made in his presentation. He said that he had dealt with 33 different languages while policing in 2007. Are there sufficient interpreters available to deal with those 33 languages, or do you have difficulties finding the right level of interpretation?

[97] **Mr Thomson:** There are two different levels of translation, and perhaps I should focus on those people who come into custody. When people are brought into custody, they have certain rights under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. We can obtain interpretation through Language Line, which is always accessible to us. Most people who are brought into custody require interviewing, and, again, under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, there are strict guidelines about interpreters having to be independent and qualified. While we do not have problems getting hold of interpreters, there are some problems to do with timings, such as how long it takes them to reach our custody blocks for us to conduct the interviews. We are also limited by how long we can keep somebody in custody. Timing is an issue for us rather than the availability of translators.

12.30 p.m.

[98] **Ann Jones:** Thank you for that. Sorry, I keep jumping in and taking liberties because I am not sitting in Cardiff. Do you want to come in, Chris?

[99] **Christine Chapman:** First, I wish to thank you all for an excellent presentation. I will begin with a question to Phill. I think that you have caught the press's attention quite a bit, because I think that the chief inspector of Cambridgeshire made some comments about resources for the police, and the fact that the crime levels have gone up and that we should not be sweeping these things under the carpet. Do you have any comment on that? Are levels of crime going up and, if so, how are you addressing that?

[100] I was interested to hear your comments, Father Adrian, about the Polish community and the high level of practising Catholics. We had a discussion this morning about potential tensions regarding access to the local Catholic schools. I do not know about the history of the school system up here, but do you have comments about any tensions that could emerge because of the high level of demand on local Catholic schools?

[101] My next question is possibly to the representatives from Flintshire and Wrexham. I know that there has been some talk in England that there should be less emphasis on translation, that money for translation facilities should be pulled away and that more should be spent on language learning. Do you agree with that? We do not have to do things in a similar way in Wales. Do you feel that that is a not a good way forward?

[102] As I have mentioned to other people today, my area does not have the same situation as you have here—we do not have a large influx of migrant workers, although there is a growing community in Merthyr Tydfil, which Bethan covers. I am sure that there are lessons to be learnt as to how local authorities prepare for influxes. Can you summarise what those lessons would be?

[103] My other point is that if we look at when we have had influxes of migrant workers in Wales historically, we see that they have always correlated with probably the most dynamic periods of prosperity in Wales, and I think that the media sometimes forgets that. The difficulty with history is that it is always retrospective, and when things are happening, people do not always appreciate them. I was taken with some of the points that you made about the fact that we need to be positive about this, but that we also need to look at the practicalities.

[104] **Ann Jones:** You were mentioned first in dispatches there, Phill.

[105] **Mr Thomson:** I am aware of what the chief constable of Cambridgeshire and others up and down the country have said around this issue. The fact of the matter is that it does mean spending extra resources for the police service, and it means spending extra resources locally for me. If the figure for migrants in Wrexham is 15,000, that is 10 per cent of the population that has changed over the past three years, and, yes, I must put resources into that that I would not have to if there were no language and cultural difficulties. So, yes, there is a resource issue and no additional resources have been given to any police service throughout the United Kingdom to take account of this issue.

[106] The second part of the question was about the crime issue. Migrant workers and people from eastern European countries are not disproportionately victims of crime, and they are not disproportionately offenders either. There was one slight issue around alcohol and drink driving, which was an education issue—perhaps we are slightly culturally different to our eastern European neighbours in terms of the use of alcohol, but I think that that was just an education issue, and we have got to grips with it.

[107] **Ann Jones:** I think that Father Adrian was mentioned in despatches next.

[108] **Mr Wilcock:** I am not aware of any tensions with regard to admissions to any of our Catholic schools at the moment; I know that there are such tensions in different parts of the country, such as in the London area, but there are not in the diocese of Wrexham. There have been integration issues, but they are wider issues, in terms of Polish children staying together, initially, in the classroom or in the playground. However, schools have worked hard to encourage integration. Young children are also, largely, quick at learning languages.

[109] **Ann Jones:** Who from the local authorities wants to answer Chris's question first?

[110] **Ms Mocko:** I will start on the interpretation and translation issue, and whether we should move money from interpretation and translation to language classes. Language classes need to be resourced so that people have the opportunity to acquire a language. However, there will always be a need for interpretation and translation, and the danger is that we might forget that if we put all the money into language classes.

[111] I will give you an example. My father-in-law was Polish. He came to this country after the second world war. He spoke English, and spoke it all the time, but, on occasions, he would not understand what he was being told, particularly if it was a sensitive situation, such as if he was at the doctor's, and he would completely misunderstand something. In that situation, he would have benefited from having an interpretation and translation service. Particularly as he got older, it was important that services ensured that he understood what they were putting to him.

[112] **Ms Grainger:** On schools, and particularly Roman Catholic schools, there is a potential for pressure on the admissions to those schools. When, and if, we get to that point, that would be a critical issue for us to address. It is constantly under review through our English as an additional language provision. A strong position from the Welsh Assembly Government on migration and integration, and on our general perspective on these issues as a nation, would be helpful in that context. That links very much to questions around translation and interpretation. Where people have limited English or Welsh, there will always be a need for some level of provision of translation and interpretation. Certainly, where there is a legal connotation, there is a requirement to have people who are suitably qualified, and I know that that would be a critical issue for the police.

[113] However, in the longer term, if we want new communities to integrate into our English and Welsh-speaking communities, they need the language, and we need to be clear about how that is going to be resourced. There is an important question here about whether we are talking about ESOL, WSOL, or both. That is an important principle for Wales, and the Assembly is the right institution to give the lead on that. As I said before, we have taken a practical approach in Wrexham—people need information to get them started; the grapevine is then a good way of getting information out to people, but we need to get them started, and their own language is important then.

[114] **Ann Jones:** Did you want to come back on that, Chris?

[115] **Christine Chapman:** No, that is fine, thank you.

[116] **Ann Jones:** Bethan has the next questions.

[117] **Bethan Jenkins:** Thank you for your presentations. I will speak in English, because it seems that there is a problem with the translation equipment.

[118] I have three questions, on three different areas. I am interested in child poverty. I accept the problem with the data, but have you had any communication with child poverty network groups? We need to identify children from migrant families, who are in higher pockets of poverty than others, and that must then be reflected in policy and in our targets for eradicating child poverty. How do you believe that may have a negative impact on reaching those targets, and what can we do to try to look at that more holistically?

[119] Secondly, what assessments have you made of local action plans or schemes? I talked to the women of Caia Park Partnership Ltd earlier, who said that they appreciate the effectiveness of the 'Myth Busters' leaflets, but they also said that it mattered who distributed those leaflets, and the effect that they could have on the local community—if it was just anyone delivering the leaflets, they may not be taken into consideration. It made a difference that they were from that area, and that they were listened to and respected as citizens in their community. What are you doing in that respect?

[120] Thirdly, how are you working with organisations such as Unite Against Fascism, in view of the rise of the BNP? I am active with UAF in Swansea in trying to ensure that there is activity not only around election time, but throughout the year. I know that you have community activities; how are you sharing that best practice with other parts of Wales?

12.40 p.m.

[121] **Ann Jones:** Who wants to pick up on those questions, which were quite general? Gill, shall we come to you first, or are you still thinking?

[122] **Ms Grainger:** The element of the question that I feel qualified to respond to is that about communication channels and which ones we use to get information out to the wider community and, to be more candid, which ones are more likely to be believed. We are working through our community cohesion strategy. There is a strand in that to consider our media and communications, and our plan is to work much more closely with the local press and wider media.

[123] I agree with colleagues from Caia Park that the 'Myth Busters' information was good as far as it went and it still has a good value, but our experience tells us that we need to give a range of information from a range of sources, and that that can be done in different ways. The housing information booklet that is now out gives a wide range of information that is of interest to the whole community: those who are resident in local-authority-owned properties,

those who might wish to be, and those who just have a general interest in the area. It also addresses some of the issues that we know are out in the community, for example, the question of whether migrant workers are getting lots of houses from the council. The pressure for that has come about from the sale of council properties that are now in the private sector domain and have become houses of multiple occupation but which look just the same as the other properties in a street. So, we are looking at other communication channels, but I reiterate my earlier point that I believe that the Welsh Assembly Government has a strong role to play in saying, 'This is the stance for Wales in terms of migration and integration. This is our perspective and this is what we believe in'. That would enable local authority areas to take that further at the local level.

[124] **Ann Jones:** Trevor, do you have a comment to make?

[125] **Mr Jones:** I will refer back to the previous question if I may, about lessons to be learned. We are all learning. In Flintshire, the numbers are different to those in Wrexham. There are lessons to be learned from agencies and learning together. It is not just about formal qualifications or educational services; it is about the culture too. We need to know about the culture of the people who are moving into our communities, because that knowledge is very limited at present. We do not understand their culture and they do not understand ours and it is about recognising those needs. We mentioned alcohol and other issues, which are quite visible, but other things go on that we have not got to grips with yet, and that is about culture and lifestyle. There needs to be a joined-up approach, but the Welsh Assembly Government needs to take a lead and say, 'This is where we are coming from in Wales. This is our stance. We want to embrace and celebrate our culture'.

[126] Again on lessons learned, we are currently undertaking a celebrating diversity project in Flintshire, which is a celebration not only of people who have moved into the area in recent years, but of those who are the third or fourth generation. That is another way of taking a positive approach to enabling people to access other services, to get involved in the community in which they live and not to be separated off because we only do things for that community in a given language or whatever. So, those lessons are there but it is about our communities celebrating and working together.

[127] **Ms Lowry:** I have a few things to say in response to the questions. You asked about switching budgets from translation to ESOL. I am not sure that there are budgets for translation; it just becomes a reactive thing in that we have to spend money on it, as opposed to being proactive in that regard. It needs more of a decision to say that we would put so much money into ESOL. I believe that ESOL is the more sustainable approach to not having to provide translation, or as much of it, in the future. So, I support the ESOL approach for integration, but I acknowledge that there will always be a need for translation at some level.

[128] You also asked in your question how we are now able to cope with the sudden influx of change in the communities. From our experience in Wrexham, although we do not have any predictions and do not really know, I think that just through our experiences we have better systems in place in terms of how we are now working across all of the agencies, so we would not be so scared to respond. We now have a better system to have all the agencies in place and ask, 'Well, how are we going to respond?'. That is just through lessons learned. We still do not know when that might happen, but we have better systems in place.

[129] I will try to answer the three questions that you raised. On Unite Against Fascism, I am not sure that we have a straight answer for you, but we just signed a pledge at our executive board meeting yesterday. One of our initiatives has been to develop a One Wrexham Charter. That is a certificate, a pledge saying, 'We want Wrexham to be a welcoming place; we will stamp out issues of racism and so on and will welcome new communities into the community'. It is something that the council has signed up to, with all

local service board partners and businesses and so on. Yesterday, at the executive board meeting, the main political leaders agreed to sign up from their political parties as well. So, although it is not an affiliation to the national Unite Against Fascism organisation, it is a local pledge to bear beliefs collectively in Wrexham.

[130] In terms of how you would reach child poverty targets, again, the approach in Wrexham is that we are not necessarily looking at delivering different services to different communities, but delivering mainstream services in such a way that all communities can access them. It is about the inclusion approach. If we are doing that, we can make sure that all our existing services are able to reach all communities, so it is about integrating and mainstreaming the needs of all of our diverse communities.

[131] **Mr Thomson:** I have just a quick point in relation to anti-fascism and the BNP. Of course, I play a completely straight bat on this because I am not a political beast, but I would assure you that a part of my job is ensuring that every political party stays within the law. I do not think that I can say any more than that.

[132] In relation to child poverty, my organisation perhaps comes into that in terms of child protection. There are what I believe to be very robust, established frameworks for identifying issues of child protection, which are sometimes—not always, but sometimes—linked to poverty, and I am quite content with those.

[133] **Mr Jones:** On child poverty, it is interesting that we have talked about the lack of accurate data, regionally, nationally and locally. That would therefore suggest that, in looking at poverty and actions to deal with child poverty, we will struggle, because if we are looking at a national programme—I might mention Communities First or Communities Next as regeneration programmes—and you do not have accurate data, right now, on our migrant-worker families and where they live, families may become secondarily caught in the poverty trap. It is an unknown. I would agree that we need those data, but they are not there at the moment.

[134] **Bethan Jenkins:** That is what I was getting at. If you cannot measure it at the moment, the targets cannot be correct and we may not be accessing those people who are in the most extreme circumstances.

[135] **Mr Jones:** Exactly. On the other points regarding Unite Against Racism and the BNP, I know that, on a local level, there are couple of small things that we are doing, but it is more generic. For instance, through a development grant, the local authority funded our race equality network, last year, to do race equality training in 50 per cent of our secondary schools. There is also a small project, this year, involving another charity, Show Racism the Red Card. So, it is just about engaging with pupils so that they get on board with the equality agenda, rather than a particular target.

[136] **Ann Jones:** Eleanor, you are next, but, Mark, I have not forgotten you.

[137] **Eleanor Burnham:** I asked a question at a previous meeting in Cardiff about the role of the Office for National Statistics. My understanding of a particular bit of testimony was that the ONS is not doing its work properly. How does that link in to the statistics that are available to you in Wales? I would have thought that if the Office for National Statistics, as a UK body, were doing its job properly, it would be able to help you with those issues.

[138] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone have any views on the ONS?

[139] **Eleanor Burnham:** I think that Gill is desperate to come in.

12.50 p.m.

[140] **Ms Grainger:** Discussions around data have been going around and around for a considerable amount of time. My understanding is that the ONS is struggling, because it does not have the mechanisms or the systems in place currently—it is almost as if we need a count-everyone-in, count-everyone-out system. It is looking at how it can develop them, and particularly how, in the next census, it can smooth out some of the problems with the previous one, in addition to addressing issues of migration. However, it has the resources, the knowledge and the expertise with which to address this, although it acknowledges that it is difficult. You can get individual data sets, but how to put them together seems to be an intractable problem; it is about finding a way to make intelligent use of what we can get rather than focusing on what we have not got.

[141] **Mark Isherwood:** To comment briefly on Unite Against Fascism, I appreciate that none of you can engage at a political level in your various offices, but the good news is that all the parties in the Assembly are working together, both nationally, and in north-east Wales and across north Wales on this issue. I declare that I am a vice-president of Searchlight. The Hope Not Hate campaign has been focusing on the positives, which is something that you can do without engaging in party politics, and I am pleased to hear from what you are saying that that seems to be the approach that you are taking. I know from previous meetings in Wrexham that that is very much the lead that you have taken with the One Wrexham campaign.

[142] Linking that into the ‘Myth Busters’ point, which Bethan raised and you responded to, the problem was not the content of the leaflets, but their source. How could you rebrand the message to get it out under the banner of an organisation that we know would garner public trust? Perhaps it could be a community or voluntary organisation, such as Citizens Advice, or perhaps that is something that you are already working on. Shall I do this in sections or shall I ask all my questions in one go?

[143] **Ann Jones:** Do them all in one, we will all write notes, and I will ensure that they all get answered.

[144] **Mark Isherwood:** Thank you. In terms of the policing issues that Phill raised, when I went out with some of your officers in Wrexham in an unmarked car, there was a drink-driving call. We pulled the car over, and fortunately the driver was not over the limit, and so was not drink-driving. The passengers were Polish and the driver could not speak English, but fortunately there was a passenger who could translate. Had there not been, as they were not in a custody suite, what impact could that have had? Would we have had to take them into the station, what would the impact on resource have been and how common would that be? You highlight the fact that migrant populations are no more or less likely to be victims or perpetrators of crime, but what, if any, has been the pattern of race crime in this context? We read a lot about this, but what is happening on the ground?

[145] In terms of working together, we have heard a lot about what individual local authorities are doing, and how you are working on a partnership basis in your county. In addition, I think that Flintshire expressed concern that it did not always know of good practice in partner organisations, including perhaps other counties. We now have the regional partnership initiative, following Beecham, with a regional partnership board aimed at improving co-operation and collaboration in those areas where you can achieve better critical mass, better cost efficiency and deliver more by working together. So, what attention are you giving, across authorities, to delivering more, perhaps in translation services or other services, by working together?

[146] In terms of housing, I know that there is some good practice, particularly in one south

Wales local authority, which, working with the voluntary and private sectors, is ensuring that landlords do not go on an approved central letting list, unless they have passed the housing health and safety rating system. Are you doing that and what thought are you giving to that, because those powers are now available to you, and certain good practice has been established in Wales?

[147] I have two final points. When I went out with North Wales Police on the beat in Wrexham on a Friday night, your officers, Phill, were telling me that there was an increasing trend of Polish people, in particular, investing in Wrexham. These people are not just engaging the problems; we are talking about people who have perhaps been here for a few years, who are setting up businesses and buying property, and so on. That perhaps ties in with the skills agenda and how we can integrate and promote that good practice, the success stories and the contribution to the economy that is being made in that regard.

[148] Could you comment on the recent press coverage of the fact that more people from the Polish community, in particular, over the last year, have left the UK than have arrived here? Have you seen a trend locally and a change in migration patterns?

[149] **Ann Jones:** You have the list of questions. Who is going to be brave enough to start off?

[150] **Mr Thomson:** The first issue that was referred to was that of our stopping a driver for a breath test. Whether or not that would require translation services depends on the circumstances. If a driver does not understand the breath-test procedure, then, of course, Language Line is available to us. If more in-depth translation is needed, it would need to take place at the police station with an independent interpreter. It depends on the circumstances. As I have already said, that has resource implications for me.

[151] Your second point was about race hate crime. Fortunately, in Wrexham and Flintshire, race hate crime levels are low. The race hate crime that we encounter is low level—it is basically name calling. Most migrant workers from eastern European countries do not look any different to the indigenous population. Most of the name calling is directed at people who do look different. So, I think that is where they fit into that.

[152] In terms of these communities investing in Wrexham, although the evidence is only anecdotal, I think that they are doing so. I will link that to your last point. I must stress that I only have anecdotal evidence, but my perception, particularly in terms of the Polish community, is that, initially, the people who came across were young men in the main and that their intention was to earn some money and go back to Poland to assist their families. However, we started to see the opposite happening, with their families coming out to this area, but that is also only anecdotal.

[153] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone else wish to respond to the other issues that Mark raised?

[154] **Ms Mocko:** With regards to the issue of Polish people leaving, which was reported in the *The Sunday Times*, I do not think that we have seen any difference yet in Flintshire. We have anecdotal reports of a Lithuanian population growing in the Flintshire and Deeside area, but there is no real evidence yet; it is all about people's perception, which may or may not be accurate.

[155] I would need to take your question on housing and what is happening with private landlords back to our housing department for clarification.

[156] On working regionally, local authorities have an equality officers' network working across north Wales, so we have been working together on our race equality schemes. We are

trying to share good practice.

[157] **Mark Isherwood:** Are you considering sharing resources for shared service delivery?

[158] **Ms Mocko:** One of the things that we are going to look at is how we can provide interpretation and translation. We are all doing our own research on face-to-face translation, and we will pull that together and look at how we can move forward together on that.

[159] **Mr Jones:** Just to add to that, in terms of working together, officers from Flintshire are going tomorrow to the north west to a conference on the situation of migrant workers one year on. It is about looking at good practice and learning from our neighbours. Flintshire and Wrexham are the gateways to north Wales, and we have many common issues.

1.00 p.m.

[160] We have a considerable number of migrant workers in our areas, as was mentioned earlier, such as those in the Deeside strip who migrate daily in and out of Flintshire. We could say that they do not have an impact on services, but we are unsure about that and there is a lot that needs to be looked at in that regard. So, from tomorrow, we hope to learn from people who are going through similar experiences in north-west England.

[161] **Ms Mocko:** Having a close connection with Wrexham County Borough Council has enabled us, through Gill, who has been very helpful, to share information, which we have found valuable.

[162] **Mr Wilcock:** I have not seen any evidence to suggest that the numbers are falling. Taking Flint and the cathedral, I would say that, on a monthly basis, numbers are growing, not as quickly, but they are growing. It is true to say that once people have established themselves in their local communities, they start bringing their children over, who are often left behind with grandparents. So, we have seen a number of families coming into the area.

[163] There are growing Polish communities in areas such as Abergele, Rhyl and Bangor, where, up until now, the Polish priests have not been that active, but are beginning to be more so now. Who knows how many people there are; we do not know the numbers, but we can all guess, as we have done here, and they are certainly growing. In my own parish of Flint, we have parishioners from Lithuania, Latvia and the Czech Republic, so that is also evidence. There are examples of parishioners seeking advice and setting up businesses, and I know of two successful examples in Wrexham, where the people involved sought advice and help from the local community.

[164] **Ms Lowry:** I just want to reiterate what has been said about the feeling of whether there are more or fewer people. There is certainly not a feeling that there are fewer people, but that the growth has slowed down. That seems to be the anecdotal feedback that we are receiving, so there is nothing coming through to support the press article.

[165] In terms of housing, we will also have to refer the detail back to our housing department, but the registration of houses in multiple occupation has been a key piece of work that has seen more resources, particularly since the change in the tenure of private sector housing. However, I think that that only covers houses of six or more occupants, so there are many houses that do not fall into that banding. There is a huge backlog of housing that would need to go through that registration as well, and the resource to do that has been quite limited. The regional partnership board offers an opportunity for us to network more across north Wales, and that may be something that could be put to them. However, I do not think that there has been much debate around that.

[166] Gill may want to comment on how we could re-brand the ‘Myth Busters’ leaflets. We are always keen to try to work with all of our receivers of information to ensure that the information is branded and delivered in a way that will be communicated effectively. This leaflet will only meet a certain grouping of people. Due to demand, we will have to reprint another few thousand copies of the leaflet. So, the feedback on this leaflet, by demand alone, appears to be positive.

[167] Gill, do you want to say more about how we can communicate in a variety of ways?

[168] **Ms Grainger:** Whether the ‘Myth Busters’ leaflet works depends on relationships. That is key to all of the work that we do. If people talk to each other and develop a relationship, even at the simplest level, that is when you break down the barriers and get to a level of understanding, where integration begins to happen naturally.

[169] We are taking forward, in partnership with the Caia Park Partnership Ltd, an integration toolkit. That sounds rather grand but, in practical terms, it is a basic and straightforward guide for grass-roots organisations that want to encourage new communities to join their organisations. So, the target groups for the toolkit are angling clubs, drama groups, mother and toddler groups—the real grass-roots organisations, where relationships begin and the myths start to evaporate. We see that as a key part of our integration and cohesion work, to directly tackle the myths. Equally, in our cohesion strategy, we know that we have a lot more to do in relation to our media and communications work, and we certainly need to work more closely with the local press. We are working with voluntary and community organisations, including the Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham, which is our umbrella group and which has signed up to the ‘One Wrexham’ charter. It will be supporting us in getting the information out to the wider voluntary and community sectors. That gives us a network that is specific to challenging these sorts of myths. We will be doing it under the AVOW brand, rather than through the council, and by working on our partnership strengths. So, we are trying a range of angles.

[170] In terms of links with other local authorities, Becky responded to the point from a regional point of view, but the point that I would make is that the WLGA has a specific role around co-ordination. The Assembly has a migrant worker sub-group, a cohesion group is being developed, there is a research group, and the Wales consortium for refugees and asylum seekers is taking on migrant workers. It is enough of a struggle to get the work done in Wrexham without dealing with so many different groups. If the Assembly could provide some clarity as to the organisation and arrangement of this network, that would be very helpful.

[171] As a final comment, on our work on race hate, we are in the middle of a pilot project and are focusing on race hate because we feel that it is a particularly pressing issue for us. However, we have the full support of our local service board partners in taking this forward, and, in the coming financial year, we will be rolling it out across all our partner organisations—as I say, it is just a small pilot project at this stage—and it will be broadened out to address all forms of hate crime, with the idea being to encourage an increase in reporting rates. We will also provide support to victims and potential victims, and we hope to get better data from that about what is happening in our communities around race hate, so that we can be more proactive in tackling it. Obviously, the police are a strong partner in taking that forward. Running alongside that, next week we will start to put in place a publicity campaign to tackle racism, among the wider general public and through working with schools on a specific project.

[172] **Mark Isherwood:** I have two quick responses, if I may make them.

[173] **Ann Jones:** You may, very briefly.

[174] **Mark Isherwood:** First, the housing issue was raised with me by the National Landlords Association Wales, and I am sure that the association would be happy to work with you if you wanted to establish more information. Along with Father Adrian and Trevor here, I should mention that, as a resident of Flintshire, I was asked, as I left Caia Park, whether we could establish communication between the two communities, involving the community centres, and so on. They asked whether I could pass on links from the Flint community to the Wrexham community, so I will have to speak to you afterwards about that.

[175] **Ann Jones:** That is helpful, thanks very much. I like being away from Cardiff bay—I will use the Chair's licence once again and ask an extra question. I wanted to talk to you about this awful habit that is developing among migrant workers, particularly male migrant workers, called hotbedding. For those who do not know, it refers to a situation where there is a group of eastern Europeans—I would not say that they were usually Polish, because I think that the Polish migrants tend to come over as families—that come over through an agency and live in a house in multiple occupation, but no-one knows whether there are six of them, or 18, or 24, because as they work shifts, when one of them gets out of bed, another gets into it. That is hotbedding, and there is evidence of that further along the coast as well, in towns like Rhyl and Abergele. The agency that is responsible for bringing them over docks their wages significantly for accommodation and transport costs, and often these people come over with the intention, as you said, of supporting a family back in their country of origin.

1.10 p.m.

[176] Do you have any evidence on how you have managed to stop that happening? You clearly have some good cohesion community programmes to integrate people, but how can we stop this? Have the police seen an increase in the number of younger people doing this, who then have no access to healthcare or services because they rely on this agency to tell them where and when to go. Should we be concerned about that?

[177] **Mr Wilcock:** I was not familiar with the term, but I know the situation well, and Polish migrant workers will often come to the priest or to a parishioner and explain their frustration with it. Therefore, who are such agencies accountable to, and who monitors their work?

[178] **Ann Jones:** I have just been told that it is the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and we are going to try to talk to that authority.

[179] **Mr Wilcock:** I am sure that there are more qualified people to say how we should address this, but it is a huge issue, and it is one of the things that parishioners often mention to me. On numerous occasions I have met people who have gone to an agency and have come back in tears because either they do not understand what it is saying, they have been badly treated, they have no guarantee of work or they are promised work and then do not get it, so they sometimes do not know where they stand. You get the feeling that the agencies are not really playing fair. The work of agencies and their accountability is a big issue.

[180] **Ann Jones:** Phill, do you want to comment on that?

[181] **Mr Thomson:** In the early days, when we first started to see the migration, many of those who came over were with agencies. I can only speak in a local context, but they were with agencies that provided their accommodation, paid their wages and took the stoppages out, and so on. It was referred to earlier by Gill. I am not saying that this does not still go on, but those companies have now moved out of this area and we have displaced them. Increasingly, we find, as an organisation, that the people with whom we deal are with more

reputable agencies, but I am not saying that it does not happen any longer. I know that this is of concern to some of the local trade unions. I have met the local Transport and General Workers union, and I have met my counterpart in Shrewsbury, because they seem to have the same issue that we had some years ago, and work on that is ongoing. I should not say more than that at the moment.

[182] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone else have anything to add to that?

[183] **Ms Grainger:** It was a significant issue for us and that was part of the reason why the migrant worker action plan was drawn up. Robust partnership action was taken at that time. However, part of the partial solution in Wrexham is our distribution of information to the migrant community so that it knows what is not acceptable. Going back four years, people assumed that that was how things worked around here, so they put up with it. However, there is now much better information and the police officer who speaks Polish has been instrumental in getting information out to people so that they understand what is and is not acceptable and can then make alternative arrangements.

[184] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone else want to comment briefly?

[185] **Ms Macko:** In Flintshire, the housing department is issuing leaflets on rights and responsibilities in the housing context to inform people that they do not have to put up with overcrowding. Furthermore, while they are living in overcrowded accommodation and not registered anywhere, they could be missing out on the opportunity, for example, to apply for council accommodation.

[186] **Ann Jones:** Unfortunately, not all agencies are signed up to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority. I am not saying that every agency that brings workers over treats them in this way, but if they have signed up to this package, they are often more vulnerable than those with whom we are dealing and trying to settle into communities. I am grateful to Father Adrian for saying that, because it is an important issue. They do not feel confident enough to break away from the agency, for fear of something happening to the family at home, or stopping the money, or whatever.

[187] **Ms Mocko:** I think that some of the queries that have come through the Open Door Project related to that, so that has been a way for them to get some advice about their rights.

[188] **Ann Jones:** Rebecca, do you want to add anything?

[189] **Ms Lowry:** I have just one thing to add on that. There were a couple of incidents about four years ago, when some 14 to 18 people were found to be residing in a property in Wrexham, and that was dealt with. Since that time, I recall a report 12 months ago. People with concerns, such as neighbours, will report on it, so we will find out somehow. That report was investigated, but turned out to be unfounded. Therefore, in numbers, we do not believe that that has been a recent issue.

[190] **Ann Jones:** Gill, do you want to add one last thing?

[191] **Ms Grainger:** Yes. I just want to say that businesses and the organising bodies of businesses have a strong role to play in getting the information. The workplace is the one place where we are sure that people will go, because they are paid only if they work. So, if we could engage better with businesses, that would be a good way of doing it.

[192] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. We are running desperately short of time. Eleanor wants to ask a quick question and Chris wants to come in after that. We will have a quick sum up from the panel, and that will be it.

[193] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae gennyf gwestiwn byr—eto yn Gymraeg; waeth inni ddefnyddio sgiliau ein staff. Mae pryder am y diffyg defnydd a wneir o'r cymwysterau a'r sgiliau da sydd gan bobl sy'n dod i weithio yma. Nid wyf yn siŵr beth yw'r ateb, a hwyrach y gallwch ein helpu. Os yw rhywun o wlad Pwyl yn meddu ar radd neu radd uwch hyd yn oed, a oes unrhyw ffordd iddynt ddefnyddio'r cymhwyster hwnnw? Sut y gallwn eu galluogi i ddefnyddio'u cymwysterau? Yr wyf yn sôn am feddygon, milfeddygon neu bobl eraill â chymwysterau proffesiynol mewn meysydd eraill. Mae hyn yn achosi pryder, a bu inni siarad am hyn ym Mharc Caia gynnu. Nid wyf yn siŵr gyda phwy mae'r cyfrifoldeb dros hyn. A allwch ein helpu? Beth ddylem annog Llywodraeth y Cynulliad—neu Lywodraeth San Steffan os nad oes gan y Cynulliad ddigon o rym—i'w wneud am hyn? Diolch, Gadeirydd, a diolch i'r panel. Bu'n fore diddorol iawn.

Eleanor Burnham: I have a brief question—again in Welsh; we may as well put the skills of our staff to good use. There is concern about the lack of use made of the good qualifications and skills of the people who come to work here. I am not sure what the answer is, and perhaps you can help us. If someone from Poland has a degree or even a higher degree, is there some way for them to use that qualification? How do we enable them to use their qualifications? I am talking about doctors, veterinary surgeons or people with professional qualifications in other areas. This is a cause for concern, and we talked about it this morning in Caia Park. I am not sure with whom the responsibility lies for this. Can you help us? What should we encourage the Assembly Government—or the Westminster Government if the Assembly does not have enough powers—to do about this? Thank you, Chair and thank you to the panel. It has been a fascinating morning.

[194] **Ann Jones:** I think that we touched on the skills issue earlier, but Eleanor asked whether there were any recommendations that you would like us to make. Does anyone want to answer that one briefly, and then I will bring in Chris?

[195] **Ms Grainger:** Qualification equivalence is a significant issue for the migrant community; there is an organisation called the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre.

[196] **Eleanor Burnham:** Where is that located, in case we do not have the details for it?

[197] **Ms Grainger:** I will give you the full details in a moment. However, there are difficulties for people to access that: it is expensive and potential employers often do not understand the equivalence mechanism. So, there is a big piece of work to be done there about explaining to potential employers what these qualifications mean, and whether the university of wherever is actually a university as they would understand it. So, there is a big information gap that needs to be explored for us to take up the capacity and the benefits that our new migrants bring.

[198] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone have anything else to add?

[199] **Mr Jones:** Yes. Our local regeneration partnership recognises that highly skilled migrant workers coming in can also present a challenge. It has been said by a couple of our agencies, particularly Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus, that, once these workers have overcome the language barrier, they do well as they are so highly skilled, and that can create tensions with the indigenous population in some areas, and is an issue for community cohesion. In Flintshire, for instance, we have issues with the need to enhance the skills of the local indigenous population. So, we need to work together on finding that balance in the future, recognising that there is a need to provide opportunities for migrant-worker families to get into those highly skilled jobs, but also looking at the challenge of meeting the needs of the indigenous population to enhance its skills.

1.20 p.m.

[200] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone else wish to add anything? I see that you do not. We will therefore move on to Chris's last question. I am afraid that it will have to be the last question, as we are running out of time.

[201] **Christine Chapman:** I have a specific question, which is probably to Phill. Do you have any comments on any problems to do with the trafficking of women in this area? We are having this debate currently, and Amnesty International has produced a hard-hitting report, which talks about hundreds of women having been trafficked into Wales.

[202] **Mr Thomson:** We are aware of the issue. There is a pan-Wales operation going on on this as we speak. Certain premises have been identified, outside and within this division, and action will be taken. We are very aware of the issue, but I am not sure whether I can say any more about that.

[203] **Ann Jones:** Okay, thanks. That brings us to the end of the meeting. I thank you all for your presentations, and for joining in this open debate. We have got an awful lot out of it. I noted that the committee clerks either side of me were busily scribbling away during the meeting. We have thoroughly enjoyed the meeting, and I hope that you feel that something positive will come out of it. You will each get a copy of the report once we have completed it, and we will also send you a copy of the transcript of this meeting to correct, if necessary.

[204] Therefore, I thank you all, but particularly Chief Superintendent Phill Thomson. This is probably one of his last official engagements, certainly with us as the Assembly, as he is retiring. It is much deserved, and he will be much missed from North Wales Police. Thank you very much for all the work that you have done, Phill. That has been outside my area, but you were always there when I wanted to speak to you, so thank you. I am sure that all north Wales Assembly Members appreciate the work that you have done on our behalf.

[205] **Eleanor Burnham:** Hear, hear.

[206] **Ann Jones:** I also wish to thank the representatives from Wrexham and Flintshire councils for coming along today, and Father Adrian. That was a useful evidence session.

[207] The committee will meet again on Thursday, 13 March, when we will take further evidence from TUC Cymru. I am sure that we will feed some of the points that have been made today into that meeting, as well as the points from the Polish Welsh Mutual Association, though I am conscious that Phill told us that it is not only the Polish community that we need to concentrate on. However, we have had some successes with the Polish community, which is why we wanted to come to Wrexham, because it has a good story to be told.

[208] I thank the staff at NEWI for accommodating us, and for helping us to set this meeting up. I also wish to thank our interpretation and broadcasting staff, who have done a good job as ever, and our ushers whom we have had to bring up with us. Unfortunately, we also had to bring the Assembly Police Unit, Phill, but I know that we would have been safely looked after by you, but there we are. It is an opportunity for the Assembly unit to come and see the good work that North Wales Police does. I also thank everyone who has been sitting in the public gallery. The meeting has been a pleasure. I hope that you think, as I do, that it has been useful. Without further ado, I declare the meeting closed.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 1.23 p.m.
The meeting ended at 1.23 p.m.*